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Organise!

The magazine of the
Anarchist Federation

Issue 78 - Summer 2012

Organise! is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF). It is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate debate on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers.

We aim to produce Organise! twice a year. To meet this target, we positively solicit contributions from our readers. We aim to print any article that furthers the objectives of anarchist communism. If you'd like to write something for us, but are unsure whether to do so, why not get in touch first? Even articles that are 100% in agreement with our aims and principles can leave much open to debate.

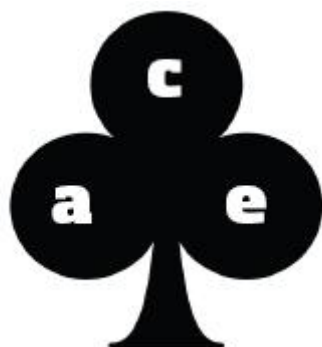
As always, the articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the collective viewpoint of the AF. We hope that their publication will produce responses from our readers and spur debate on.

The deadline for the next issue of Organise! will be August 31st 2012. Please send all contributions to the address on the right. It would help if all articles could be either typed or on disc. Alternatively, articles can be emailed to the editors directly at organise@afed.org.uk

What goes in Organise!

Organise! hopes to open up debate in many areas of life. As we have stated before, unless signed by the Anarchist Federation as a whole or by a local AF group, articles in Organise! reflect the views of the person who has written the article and nobody else.

If the contents of one of the articles in this issue provokes thought, makes you angry, compels a response then let us know. Revolutionary ideas develop from debate, they do not merely drop out of the air!



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This issue of Organise! has been put together very much with an eye on the Saint-Imier international gathering in August 2012. This assembly in Switzerland celebrates the 140th anniversary of the founding of the anti-authoritarian international in 1872, where the movement that was to become the class struggle anarchist movement was revitalised and found new direction after the horrors of the crushing of the Paris Commune and the travesty that the first international workers' organisation - the First International - had become. More importantly, Saint-Imier 2012 it is where those committed to building an anarchist-communist, or 'social anarchist' society, will also take stock and re-orientate itself in an international context. In addition, our own international – the International of Anarchist Federations – will be holding its Congress in Saint-Imier, parallel to the main event, and Organise! fans are most welcome at its open sessions. This issue therefore contains a perspective on the Anarchist Federation drafted by some of those who will be attending saint-Imier. The article will be the starting point for our intervention there, although you will find us on many panels and in meetings on everything from the arts to nationalism. And expect us to be very vocal in helping the movement work out what its future direction should be. This issue has an international flavour, therefore. It comments on the situation in arenas of struggle affected by the 'Long Arab Spring', specifically Syria and Turkey, as well as in on parts of Europe which western anarchists could engage with more: Romania and Hungary, and on countries about which anarchists in the West have more established approaches: Cuba, Greece, Portugal and Spain. We also included a considered response to an unhelpful intervention made at the last London Anarchist Bookfair at our meeting on the struggle of sex-workers to self-organise. In addition, we offer

another anniversary article, critically marking the significance of a very much misunderstood early industrial movement: Luddism.

First, some thoughts on where we find ourselves in the rapidly evolving struggle against austerity and for a free and equal society.

Organise! editors recently received a little zine about the anarchist movement called *The Scoundrel*. It's a cheeky title, like *The Idler*, and is just as useless for engendering mean-

ingful change, also unashamedly advocating 'doing nothing'. This is because ideology is an 'infection' and there is 'not a lot' that we can do about capitalism except wait. Presumably we are waiting for an insurrection which will happen spontaneously, without any groundwork? *The Scoundrel* doesn't address that. But in the meantime, 'Given my sincere pessimism about the possibilities of actively destroying capitalism', the only thing for it is 'Rather like the medical profession's Hypocratic (sic.) Oath, we should do no harm'. We quote it to scoff at its anarcho-miserabilism, obviously. But it might strike a chord. Who has not thought at some point in the last couple of years, "What's the point trying to change anything. It doesn't make any difference"?

On one level, such despondency at the moment is understandable. It's not as though the recession(s) and rising levels of poverty and inequality are making the working class flock to our banners. The most recent resurgence of anarchism was not a response to the current economic crisis but to a variety of more positive factors slightly longer ago, when

it felt like there was enough anger and vision to fight war, neo-liberal ideology and environmental disaster successfully. Maybe the student protests were the last phase of that feeling of social power and potential. They were an affront to both inequality and passivity.

Now we are almost entirely on the defensive. We still have to fight those things, but seem further from being effective. The world has been plunged into a situation in which

even in western Europe, people cannot feed their families. Households are plunged into fuel poverty and have to choose between food and heating. Food banks are opening all over. This would have been unthinkable a few years ago for people with British passports. It was destitute asylum seekers that used them. 'Skipping' for food was a lifestyle choice for activists making a point about surplus production and waste. Now people with jobs do it. We have no security in social housing and many more are homeless. Some people with jobs are paying in rent what people who own their houses pay as a mortgage; but the former have no chance of saving for a deposit and will be at the mercy of landlords for decades to come. How many people can say that they have job security? Recent university graduates are as likely to work via a job agency as to be embarking on a 'career'. Migrants who came here legally to work are living on the streets, too poor to return home.

The result of such insecurity is that people are increasingly needing to rely on the state, and the state – we hardly need to say it – could but

Editorial

What's in the latest Organise!

won't support them. The state's answer to the crisis is to ditch its responsibility to spend workers' taxes supporting people who can't support themselves economically. Now Atos & Co. ensure that people with disabilities or mental health problems that mean they cannot do sustained paid work are being kicked off the sorts of benefits that once made their long-term situation manageable. They now join people in the other benefit categories, which in themselves are being diminished and withdrawn, with people are being forced to work for free for big companies. Taxation policies actively attack the lowest earners and pensioners, but the press laughs at it, treating it like a joke by referring to the 'pasty tax' and 'granny tax', when it is naked class warfare.

So what should we do, and is there any point doing it? The first wave of resistance to the new economic reality has passed. Occupy and UnCut spread the word effectively that there was a groundswell of awareness of and opposition to the excesses of capitalism. Also, that the ConDems lied, and lied again, and are still lying. These movements have probably done more to spread those two specific messages to the wider public than anarchists have. But there is nowhere to go from that critique of *bad* capitalism and *bad* politicians except into the political process at one level or another, because the logic of replacing them with fair capitalism and truthful politicians stays intact. But there are no such things! This is a logic that is hermetically sealed off from what is really wrong, and from what is possible as an alternative. Of course many people in Occupy and UnCut know this, but they didn't say it when they had the world's attention. And so another mode of resistance came and went without fundamentally changing anything, or carried on for the sake of carrying on, not knowing what else to do.

This realisation easily leads people – activists included – to be tired and

despondent about their potential and to feel powerless. What can they do? Unlike the people of the Arab Spring, who have moved from being ruled by dictators towards representative democracy, we have that 'democracy' already. This is why people feel they cannot change things; because the system we have seems to be the only process open to us. Vast numbers of people don't 'not vote' because they are anarchists, but because they know there is little point. After years of Labour – and the more generalised international collaboration of the parliamentary left with neo-liberalism – we are in a worse position that we were under the Tories. We really are!

But this is exactly the point where we have to make an intervention, in ideas and action. We can provide an analysis that explains both why our dreams and aspirations will always be thwarted by the system, but that there is a way out.

The bottom line is, they can't stop us if we all rise up. But we are still a long way from that happening, because exposing the system and offering a free and equal future is not enough. To potential revolutionaries, anarchism is a nice idea, but how could we get there? The material reality of people's experience makes it seem insane to risk what little security you have on a Utopian dream. So it is not just important to tell the truth about what is going on. It is necessary to show how Revolution is attainable; that is, step-by-step and through hard work. There are many stages, including set-backs. But a set-back doesn't mean that all is lost. In fact set-backs are part of the process, because we learn by getting past them.

So, the process towards Revolution is not a case of all or nothing. That is to misunderstand it. It is not the case that if we spread the word enough and get enough people together with the right analysis, that there will be a sort of snowball effect and everyone will take to the streets. It isn't so much a tipping point in class anger

that we need, as a tipping point in class confidence.

But there is another essential ingredient needed to get to that point in the revolutionary process: Solidarity! If we admit that there will be set-backs on the way to a free and equal society, that is to admit that some people will suffer, and apparently more so than if they had settled for a quiet life. So it is essential to demonstrate that we are in this for and with other people, and with a conscious understanding of the significance of one struggle in relation to the rest. There is no 'quiet life' to be had anymore for most people. So we need to spread the doctrine of active Solidarity as an anarchist strategy, as well as that of anarchism as a goal.

Anarchists, more than any other revolutionary movement, have been at the forefront of solidarity historically, in the workplace, the community, and with prisoners. We have a lot to learn from historical examples, but here let's note a more recent form that is not only exposing capitalism and class war and symbolically opposing them, as Occupy and UnCut have, but actively undermining them in a way that everyone, whatever their level of confidence, can take part in.

Solidarity networks are becoming slowly but surely more widespread. They are an exciting form of struggle because they bring together individuals enacting key tenets of anarchism; self-help and mutual aid, solidarity on a class basis, collective direct action, and de-centralised and highly flexible organisation. These networks form around key ideological principles and support individuals and group 'cases' where it is realistically possible to win the case through sustained solidarity and direct action. Very importantly, the 'victim's grievance becomes generalised and they switch from being victims to becoming owners of their own case, and then becoming experienced actors in resolving cases more generally. In this way, winning a case is not a matter of champion-

ing one person but demonstrating that a victory is a victory for all, that this strategy works and, it must be said, showing the class enemy what we are capable of and that we can force its submission.

In terms of who the 'enemy' is, it is worth noting that in the UK, it is often someone in the new economic sector that 'brokers' capitalism – for example job agencies (such as in the case of the Office Angels victory in 2011) and 'letting agencies' (as in the, already successful, case against illegal fees being charged in Scotland). Such campaigns also target specific bosses and landlords themselves, of course, and are effective where tenants would otherwise have to take landlords to court but not be able to afford to, and in cases that trades unions wouldn't trouble themselves with. Such campaigns include Glasgow Solidarity Network and Nottingham Solidarity Network, as well as the inspirational Seattle Solidarity (SeaSol) in the U.S. They owe much to campaigns such as Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty and London Coalition Against Poverty, which likewise take up issues on a case-by-case basis where the state fails to protect the people it is supposed to serve and facilitates our exploitation instead. How successful they will be remains to be seen, and organisational structures within them need to be carefully considered and subject to on-going critique, to eliminate informal hierarchies and ensure individual accountability to the group. But reading about them and being involved in them feels like the western working class is trying something potentially very significant.

But anarchism is about personal and individual responsibility too. Campaigning at this micro-level is time consuming and tiring. Campaigners give up elements of their family and social life to show practical solidarity for people they hardly know. Anarchists see this as sowing the seeds of something bigger that can operate without us needing to be the 'leader-

ship of ideas' anymore. So it is vital, if such initiatives are to continue to be successful, that the people whose cases are taken up remain part of the network, as an advertisement for it and to give active mutual aid in their turn: from Isolation, to Activism, to Anarchism! This is why anarchism is both a goal and a strategy for achieving it. It is not simply a philosophy or a utopian structuring

anarchism as a fashionable pond to dip in and out of). For another thing, as well as attracting people, they have to know that we will stand by them. If we have good systems of solidarity in place, it becomes more realistic to try to persuade people that anarchism is attainable in the longer term.

If we do this, then the other side of the coin is that it is more damaging



of ideas. But this is not to say that any and all action is effective. We need to evaluate what we do at each stage, because what we do will be opposed and mistakes are costly. The first stage is propaganda that helps explain what is going on. Is it effective in making our message and ideals clear and relevant? The next is gathering together in groups, campaigns and organisations, temporary or long-term, best structured to spreading these ideas and taking action. For one thing, this has to be in ways that can draw in exactly those people who have been reached by our propaganda and must not consist in the main of anarcho – dilettantes and tourists (who won't put down roots ideologically or in terms of sustained work and accountability to other people where they live, work and struggle, but see

to discourage taking action than it is to fail in that action. We have to get it right and win next time, not retreat into a pointless rejection of purpose or conviction. Attempts to demobilise anarchists are worse than 'doing nothing'. We are at a low ebb, it's true, but the struggle can't be read just in the here and now but in the context of what has been done and what could be done. Let's re-group and re-vitalise at Saint-Imier, being inspired by the actions and achievements of comrades from other countries (often doing far more than us and in far worse situations), develop a newly-informed international perspective, and come home with new positivism: Unashamedly.

HISTORY

THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION: IN THOUGHT AND STRUGGLE

The AF has its roots in a number of small anarchist groupings active in the 1970s. In addition, the founding members were inspired by the rich anarchist tradition on the Continent, especially France. Taking what we thought was best from the past and from abroad, the goal was to create an anarchist communist organisation, firmly based on the class struggle or 'social anarchist' tradition.

The project received crucial impetus with the bringing on board of the innovative magazine *Virus*. The Anarchist Communist Discussion Group was then launched at the Anarchist Bookfair in October 1985. We received remarkable interest in our project and by April 1986, there was enough stability to formalise the organisation into the Anarchist Communist Federation. Although there is some historic continuity with earlier anarchist groups in Britain, the federation was mainly a new phenomenon, drawing on people new to anarchism in the 1980s. We started out with a set of aims and principles, which remain largely intact, but there has still been considerable development in our politics, as new people join and offer new perspectives, and as we develop our ideas in the course of what is going on in the class struggle itself. In the late 90s we changed our name to the Anarchist Federation, not because we had changed our politics, but for pragmatic reasons.

The central plank of our principles, like all anarchist organisations, is the recognition of the need to bring an end to capitalism in all its varieties as well as the state, which can never be used as a vehicle to properly transform society. In addition, we believe that these objectives can only come about through a social

revolution, where the working class organises itself to overthrow the system both ideologically and physically. Our definition of the working class is broad, reflecting the fact that capitalism has undergone significant changes. A social revolution can only come about as a result of the will of the vast majority of the population, including office and shop workers, public sector employees, the unwaged, women working in the home, children and retired people, as well as the traditional industrial workers. Anarchism is not about individuals changing their lifestyle and hoping capitalism will go away, but is about individuals changing themselves and being changed as part of a general social struggle.

But we never fetishise or glamourise violence, recognising that the use of violence can brutalize, being a 'blunt instrument', can lead inadvertently to working-class casualties, and can produce new hierarchies. The revolution will primarily come about through non-military means, as we develop our power through a variety of social, economic, political and cultural forms of resistance. It is to this end that we work. Nevertheless, we realise that physical confrontation with the state it is unavoidable; it will not go quietly but will defend property. Therefore we do not hold pacifism to be a point of principle.

Exploitation and oppression take many forms and extend into all parts of our lives. One important principle of the AF is that it is not just class exploitation and oppression that needs to be abolished. Although we are a 'class struggle' organisation, this struggle is social and personal, as well as economic. Therefore, we argue that anarchists must fight on a

number of other 'fronts'.

For example, we believe that the oppression of women pre-dates capitalism and will not automatically disappear with its end. Sexism permeates the working class and also the anarchist movement and it will require particular struggles to rid ourselves of this legacy. At the same time, we do not see struggles against sexism as totally separate from those against the overall system of hierarchy and oppression. Recently, the women's movement has been in decline and this is reflected in the lack of focus on specifically anti-sexist struggles in our propaganda and our activities. This is something we are trying to deal with - how not to be gender-blind in our analysis of the working class and the class struggle. We also recognise that there may be instances where women will need to organise as independently in order to develop ideas and confidence, and we applaud those initiatives aimed at developing anarcho-feminism. However, we do not support 'cross-class' alliances, which end up benefiting mainly middle class women. For example, 'equal opportunities' policies have largely meant that women have equal opportunities to become bosses and managers, politicians or media personalities.

The Anarchist Federation has also been in the forefront of developing revolutionary perspectives and practice within struggles around sexuality and gender identity, confronting any bourgeois domination of Lesbian-Gay-Bi-Transgender-Queer movements and routinely confronting capitalism at Pride events. Because woman and LGBTQ people at times need to organise in our own interests, or for mutual support even within the anarchist movement, the

AF has its own women's and LGBTQ caucuses.

The social revolution must bring an end to all forms of prejudice, therefore racism too needs to be combated within the working class itself. We have seen a growth in racism for a variety of reasons. Misplaced fears against economic migration and 'false' claims to asylum, and hysterical responses to 9/11 and 7/7 compound the problems of decades-old ingrained post-colonial racist cultures. As such, much of our propaganda and activity has been directed at building anarchist resistance to racism and fascism, on the streets where necessary. But there we refuse 'unholy' alliances with reactionary religious groups. Nevertheless, like the rest of the British anarchist movement we have had limited success in attracting members from the full spectrum of ethnic backgrounds. We recognise that suspicion of the motives of opportunist left-wing political organisations



plays a part in this. As with women and LGBTQ people, people of colour may need to organise themselves even within revolutionary organisations. We consider that our practice and propaganda play some role in correctly analysing, undermining and confronting racism nonetheless. We hope that our practice, in the workplace and community, will help divisions within the working class to be overcome.

We also recognise the special forms of oppression and discrimination experienced by people because of our

age or our mental or physical ability. Unlike capitalists, anarchists do not value people on the basis of their economic contribution and exploitability as paid workers. Where such groups are dependent on the welfare state, our activity as anarchists in our own defence economically in the current period will be vital in spreading confidence and direct action amongst us. But discrimination runs deeper than economics. Anarchists must not perpetuate the stereotypes we receive, from the media for example, about elderly or disabled people, anymore than we do about different races, genders and sexualities. We work towards insults in this sense being confronted just as much as homophobia, racism and sexism. Indeed, anarchists must never turn a blind eye to any kind of domination and should be prepared to combat signs of discrimination at all levels. However, we do not believe that we should be calling on the State for help. Prejudice and reactionary practices will only disappear through

activity and struggle, enabling people to change in their core, not just on the surface.

In terms of the workplace, the nature of Trade Unionism in Britain has posed many problems for us when trying to decide on a workplace strategy. The unions are not only reformist but are often totally implicated in the exploitation of the working class. Our experience led us to adopt what some may call an 'anti-union' position. We argue that people should not take up paid positions in the union and that in many cases there is no point in even being a member

of a union. There is no point in trying to 'democratise' the unions or try and make them more combative. It is in their nature to negotiate with capitalism, not to undermine it seriously. They cannot be reformed. This position has caused some difficulties because as most workplace activity takes place within the context of the official union, what do we actually do? We have argued that we should be trying to organise informal groups of militant workers, whether they be union members or not. The aim is not to establish an alternative union structure, which would only end up becoming another reformist union, but to be a source of revolutionary propaganda and a catalyst for action. In practice, our members take a very pragmatic approach to organising in the workplace. Members adopt whatever strategy seems most effective for furthering struggle and resisting exploitation. Though we do not advocate anarcho-syndicalism as an overall strategy, we agree with the formation of structures which group anarchists as workers or across industries, in order to further anarchist influence in economic struggles. Several of our members are also members of the Industrial Workers of the World or the Solidarity Federation-IWA. The main principle of all our workplace activity is to build up effective, revolutionary, non-hierarchical forms of organisation, whatever name is given to them.

Just as important is another 'front' of which we fight: the community. We are aware that community in the 'traditional' or idealised sense does not really exist. But there are issues that affect localities where people live. These issues include transport, provision of public services and the effect of the environment on health. Though these issues can be raised in a workplace context, effective action requires a broader organisational base, incorporating people as both producers and consumers. The locality is also the context in which we engage in anti-fascist, environmental, welfare, anti-war and anti-religion campaigns. Though members will

raise these issues at work, we stress the importance of organising local actions and distributing propaganda at the community level- on the streets, in public meetings and through direct action. Members work with other class-struggle or social anarchists to set up local groups with the aim of raising awareness of anarchist ideas amongst the wider working class and initiating action in our defence or to further goals common within our communities. Finally, we have a strong internationalist perspective and are particularly critical of national liberation movements and ideologies. There can be no 'better' government, however representative it is of the peoples it governs. The only way we can achieve true liberation is through internationalism, which refuses to choose between oppressors. History has shown that the 'lesser of the two evils' soon turns out to be just as 'evil'. Meanwhile, you have abandoned your own principles and weakened your own movement. Our members in Ireland have pioneered, in very difficult conditions, an anarchism that refuses to take sides with either nationalism. It is only by building up the international anarchist movement that we can effectively challenge all oppressors, and therefore we are active members of the International of Anarchist Federations and have played a role in enabling the formation of social anarchist federations in other countries.

Organisation

We are organised on federalist lines, which means we are a federation of individuals and groups with no central political apparatus. This does not mean that we have no decision-making structure. Not to have a formal structure usually leads to informal leadership cliques with more influence than other members. We have one national conference and three national delegate meetings a year, which take decisions on our general orientation, strategy and action. However, these decisions are

reached through extended discussion in our Internal Bulletin and on our internal on-line forum. We use 'direct democracy', in that members of local groups take their group's opinions to meetings, as opposed to 'representing' them and having individual power. Local delegates and nationally appointed officers are therefore functionaries, with no power to operate outside their mandate. They are recalled if they either overstep this or fail to carry out what they have been tasked with. It is very rare that we have anything that is not generally agreed after discussion.

to undermine the organisation. One of our central concerns is, therefore, how to ensure maximum participation of all members and how to avoid formal and informal hierarchies. After all, it is our experiences that will provide the basis for alternative ways of organising society. We do not always succeed in achieving the standards of participation that we aspire to. However, we are continually reviewing our practice. Though the structures and mechanisms for participation may be in place, we recognise that there are many individual reasons why some are more dominant than



We aim for consensus in decision-making, but we do not fetishise it. If a consensus cannot be agreed upon and we feel that a decision must be reached nonetheless, then we can move to a vote. The decision must be based on a two-thirds majority. This is to ensure that we are moving forward as an organisation. If we do vote on anything, the vote is first open to any member to register a negative vote. If the decision is still made, then groups and/or individuals are still free to not implement the decision as long as they do not seek

others, related to issues of confidence, age, experience, gender and educational background. Therefore it is not enough just to say that the organisation is non-hierarchical. It is necessary to actively encourage participation, through rotation of tasks, involving individuals in small groups and commission work and helping to build confidence through workshops and educationals.

We are an organisation of activists and propagandists for anarchy. We publish and distribute a bi-annual

magazine, Organise! and a monthly free bulletin, Resistance . We also produce a range of pamphlets, posters and stickers. The aim of our propaganda is primarily to spread anarchist ideas throughout all sections of the working class. However, Organise! is aimed more at those who are politicised to a greater extent and therefore focuses on new analysis, debates and theory that will provoke discussion in the anarchist and wider political movement. In addition to distributing propaganda, individual members are engaged in a wide variety of activities, in the workplace, in local anarchist or anti-authoritarian groups, in universities and colleges, in campaigns and actions against the war, around environmental issues, supporting asylum seekers, and challenging reactionary ideas of religious fanatics and fascists, on the streets where necessary.

But how do we differ from other anarchists?

The anarchist movement has grown in numbers and in influence over the past decade. People have been attracted to anarchism for a variety of reasons and therefore it is a diverse movement, both in terms of ideas and practices. This diversity can be a positive feature of the movement, and the AF recognises that we do not have a monopoly of 'truth' on what anarchism should be. However, there are several principles that we take to be vital, and feel that it is only our organisation that groups all of these principles together. We have outlined these principles in this text, but we will now discuss briefly why exist as a distinctive organisation.

1. Organisation

Not all anarchists put the same stress as we do on formal organisation, at both the national and international organisation. Though strong local groups and initiatives are the basis of an effective national organisation, co-ordination and sharing of ideas must happen on the widest level if the working class is ever to

organise a revolution. In addition, this organisation must be permanent in the sense that it continues to exist and be active regardless of what big events may be taking place or how active particular individuals are (although the Revolution itself would of course make the AF's existence redundant, which is just one way in which we differ from authoritarian communists). We need an organisation that can continue to exist, regardless of whether some individuals drop out or become less active. For similar reasons we need to be



sceptical of investing too much time and effort in 'networks', which come and go, as well as having a tendency to operate with informal hierarchies. However, although influenced by Platformism and not opposed to Platformism per se, we do not go so far as some contemporary Platformists; that is to say, down the route of focussing decision-making and organisational discipline at the centre, which we consider by-passes the legitimate autonomy of local groups to act as they wish within the Aims and Principles.

2. Anarchist Communism

We are part of the anarchist tradition sometimes referred to as anarchist communism. That is to say, we seek the abolition of the state and also of money and private property. We strive for complete freedom and complete equality simultaneously. We believe in the importance of building a political organisation that is based on the working class (in

the broadest sense), and which is active on a number of fronts. This is what distinguishes us from anarcho-syndicalism. Though we are part of the same social anarchist tradition (anarchist communists and anarcho-syndicalists are likely to be in the same organisation in countries like Spain, France and Italy), we emphasise different tactics and strategies. For us, building an anarcho-syndicalist union can only ever form one prong of an overall strategy and even then has to be adapted to specific contexts in line with revolutionary anarchist principles. This is why the AF exists separately from the Solidarity Federation.

Anarchist communism also rejects other forms of anarchism such as green anarchism or 'life-stylism'. Though concern for the environment is a key part of our politics, it does not take priority over any other issue. We welcome the fact that people refuse to conform to bourgeois codes but a revolution will not come about by dressing differently or living in squats. In any case, historical experience has shown that these alternative lifestyles are short-lived, with many soon dropping out and/or becoming key members of the establishment. Anarchism is something to be maintained in all stages of life, even if the anarchist holds down a job, has children, or takes out a mortgage. Anarchists, after all, should be part of the working class, not in their own ghetto of alternative 'activists'. That doesn't mean, however, that anarchists should seek to adopt some stereotyped working class image. The anarchist movement should contain a diverse range of people, not conforming to any stereotype. What matters are one's ideas, practice and commitment.

Similarly, we reject insurrectionism as a strategy to achieve anarchism. Individuals may become frustrated at our inability to strike effectively against our oppressors, but unfortunately there are no shortcuts. It is the everyday organising and struggle that forms the basis for all the more

obvious revolutionary moments.

Individual 'heroics' can never be a substitute for mass action. In addition, individual acts of violence are usually counterproductive, bringing down repression on a movement not yet strong enough to defend itself. As the Italian Anarchist Federation declared after being mistakenly associated with a recent letter bomb- 'Anarchism cannot be delivered through a letter box'. However, there may be circumstances where violent actions are justified, but only when the actions are directly linked and supported by a wider movement.

We must be to develop an anarchist presence within the working class both in the workplace and the locality. The future for anarchism and for the planet lies in anarchism being taken up by a wide variety of working class people in their everyday struggles.

3. Building the Movement

The AF will support and work with any individual or group who shares the general aim of creating an anarchist society that is economically egalitarian. We have our distinctive perspective on how to bring this aim about, a perspective that is part of a long tradition, and will continue to argue for this perspective to be the basis for the building of a strong and effective anarchist movement. However, we also recognise that if this tradition is not to become a historical relic, it must be continually enriched by new ideas and practices. We hope that British anarchism will grow into an effective and influential movement within the working class, bringing together a wide variety of occupations, social groups and generations. This will require long-term commitment and perseverance, through both the 'highs' and 'lows' of political activity. We will do whatever is necessary to contribute to the building of such a movement, as the future of us all depends on it.

GREECE: LET'S GO ONE STEP FURTHER

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY DIMITRI, A GREEK MEMBER OF MELBOURNE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP. THIS ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED ON WWW.ANARKISMO.NET

We are in a situation where new austerity - and other - measures are continually being announced, wages cut, redundancies constantly growing, bargaining agreements hacked to pieces, the number of unemployed and poor people is increasing, social rights and civil liberties are being torn up, where repressive mechanisms and their assistants act more and more like a Mafia than ever before, and where society is being crushed further every day.

As a result there is massive social unrest, as thousands of demonstrators take to the streets and squares either as strikers or simply as frustrated people. There are numerous new attempts at social organising such as the local people's open assemblies and new movements (such as the No Pay Movement), while at the same time the whole social movement continues in its conflict and clashes with the forces of repression and their parliamentary assistants.

The 48-hour strike called by the central union confederation GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers) and ADEDY (Civil Servants' Confederation) on 19-20 October produced a massive, unprecedented mobilisation across the country, as

thousands of workers, unemployed, pensioners, students, schoolchildren, etc. went on strike and took to the streets to show their opposition to the measures being taken by the rotten political system and the plethora of laws that are now destroying our entire society. In Athens, a vast sea of people turned out - one of the largest strikes in recent decades - clearly showing the huge social and political rupture between the great majority of the people and the entire class of political and economic power. As a result, the social plundering has been fully de-legitimised and the only weapons left in the hands of the State and its institution is complete suppression and the salvation generously offered by the world of parliamentary representation.

In particular, the contribution to this process by the PAME (All Workers' Militant Front, a syndicalist part of the Communist Party-KKE), copying the counter-revolutionary practices of social democracy and Stalinism since the 1920s, has tried to block every movement with different characteristics to their own, suppressing all forms of labour and popular radicalisation and preserving and saving the bourgeois parliament building from angry demonstrators. This at-

titude by the PAME/KKE exceeded all bounds when, on the same evening of 20 October, a militant worker and member of this party died because of the murderous chemicals that the police used and the party attempted to link his death to the clashes between the KKE and other protesters. Some other left formations have been moving on the same wavelength (perhaps with more audacity), organizations like ANTARSYA (a non-parliamentary coalition on the anti-capitalist left, outside the KKE) and some of their components, together with some Maoist groups, imploring the Communist Party to give them some attention.

and the parties involved in those institutions, but also some leftist extra-parliamentary forces which have been already deployed in the name of "safeguarding" the constitutional system (from the "uncontrolled" people) and the "organised" movement (that is, institutionalised syndicalist and political representation) and is attempting to control and define the limits of bourgeois normality within which the social anger and indignation can move.

As the crisis deepens and the social war is exacerbated, the challenge now is to bring up the issue of how to finally overthrow social barba-

the name of social change but who are substantially hiding behind the mistakes and systemic choices of the institutionalised Left.

However, the forces of class-struggle anarchists are still small and fragmented and cannot manage the burden of responsibility by themselves. Yet the dominant characteristics of a significant part of the anarchists are still violence for the sake of violence, hostility to any anarchist organisation and aformalistic tendencies that lead nowhere, despite some flashes.

But it is time that this multi-tendency current for unmediated, horizontal, direct-democratic social disobedience and change in society, should develop its own independent, autonomous path of struggle for social counter-power. Through its own instruments, which have no connection with military-style debates, parliamentary and press aformalistic illusions. It needs this social movement to establish its own counter-institutions for the organisation of life on the basis of individual and collective empowerment, solidarity, cooperative economics and direct democracy everywhere. Grassroots unions in workplaces have appeared over the past 3-4 years, there are scattered, local, public and open assemblies, self-managed projects that have timidly begun to appear as a result of the generalised crisis... these all point the way. And there are also the class-struggle anarchists, and also various other militants who share the same views, despite their small and scattered forces and the lack of a relevant tradition... they too must play a multifaceted role.

Let's go one step further. If we are to bring about the social revolution we must begin from a change in our lives towards an organised, creative way! For anarchy and communism!



KKE members Defending Parliament

But apart from the clearly repressive - at the expense of the autonomous and non-party-aligned social movement - tactics by the Stalinists, the miserable attitude by some parts of the protesters must also be condemned, some sectors of which are self-characterised as anarchists and anti-authoritarians, who attacked not the KKE guards, but the simple PAME protesters with marbles and petrol bombs that fell into the crowd. We must condemn these practices in the most categorical manner, as we do the attacks of the KKE guards who used helmets and sticks against any other demonstrators.

However, we can now see that there is a broader "systemic arch" that includes both the State, its institutions

rism, by collectively building a new life on the wreck of the entire old world which is adrift together with its components. Another goal must be to go beyond the limits of the spectacle of mass demonstrations, limits which are imposed by the system and the mass media, and turn the mobilization into something more real, with more concrete action and not just a regular spot on the TV news.

While we are at a historic crossroads, in a situation where the possibilities for social counter-attack and subversion have now occurred and one can no longer hide behind the alleged passivity of society, we have seen, however, the weaknesses and failures of those forces who act in

HUNGARY: THE FAR RIGHT MENACES

Up until 2010 Hungary was ruled by a union of the left in alliance with a liberal party. At its head was Ferenc Gyurcsany from the Socialist Party (MSZP). It operated a programme of severe austerity based firmly on free market and neo-liberal principles. There was much popular anger against the measures of this government and Gyurcsany had to hand in his resignation after he was forced to admit that he had lied eighteen months before, when he deliberately withheld information about the actual budget in his 2006 re-election campaign.

The parties of the right, in alliance with those of the far right, exploited the situation by offering a fake anti-market programme and advancing its protectionist and racist and xenophobic recipes. As a result FIDESZ, a nationalist, protectionist, and conservative party led by Viktor Orban, came to power thanks to its alliance with JOBBIK, a far right party with virulent racist rhetoric and squads of thugs, and with the KDNP, the Christian-Democrat party. This success of the right was even seen in the capital Budapest where a conservative mayor was elected for the first time.

FIDESZ and its allies immediately began a savage reactionary programme starting with a reform of the Constitution. The word Republic was removed from references to the country, now designated simply as Hungary, implying a national monoculture, the rights of minorities were suppressed, the right to abortion and the rights of homosexuals were questioned, the media now came under stricter control and censorship, journalists were sacked, the judiciary came under greater control of the State and an attack on the legitimacy of the right-far right alliance's opponents began.

Orban also instituted a works scheme that was obligatory for the unemployed, in particular targeting the Rom gypsies of the country. These work schemes have been characterised as labour camps by some. He

made a further proposal that these camps should be guarded by retired policemen.

As to the promised anti-market measures, in fact what happened was that the work laws were abolished, education and the public services were decimated. There was a forced reshuffle at the central bank, electoral changes were made so that this new government can still maintain control even when support for it has shrunk. Thus the central bank, the Constitutional Court and the judiciary are far more firmly under the



control of the prime minister than before. All of this is in the context of a deteriorating economic situation. As a result anger among the Hungarian population is mounting. It is organising to oppose the measures of the government. At the present the main organisation participating in this mobilisation is the EMD movement- A Million For Democracy- tied to reformist notions and far from combative and containing strong electoralist currents, especially with the LMP party (Politics Can Be Different). A demonstration of 30,000 took place on 2nd January of this year, in addition to opposition parties attracting the Hungarian Solidarity Movement, based on the politics of Polish Solidarnosc. However social

movements are emerging in this context not tied to any of the parties and based on grassroots self-organisation, often using social networking to organise. As yet they are still a small force and include a movement among the students, opposing the reforms of the universities implemented by the regime.

As a result of the worsening economic situation and the growing opposition, the government will turn to further autocratic measures and will increasingly emphasise a rabid nationalist rhetoric, whilst carrying out an apparent anti-market politics

with a threat to tax the banks and to nationalise some private pension funds. All of this with the intention of securing conditions for a further loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Whilst illusions about the left parties have been dispelled among large swathes of the Hungarian masses, indignation against the authoritarian right administration is mounting. This opposition has to move towards ideas based on self-organisation and mass mobilisation and action. Events of an earth shaking nature as with the Hungarian Revolutions of 1919 and 1956 might yet sweep away FIDESZ and its jackbooted allies.

IT'S CLASS STRUGGLE, JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT: CELEBRATING THE LUDDITES BICENTENARY

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Luddite uprising, a movement led by skilled textile workers whose livelihood was under threat by changes being imposed via the process of industrialisation. Beginning in Nottinghamshire in 1811 and quickly spreading across England, the movement took its name from Ned Ludd, a weaver from Leicestershire who is said to have smashed a mechanical stocking frame in anger in an incident in 1779. The snippet of folklore spread and by the time organised frame-breaking was taking place in 1812, the Luddites would joke that it was Ned Ludd who was responsible for the destruction.



The primary impetus for the uprising was the introduction of new machinery to the textile industry, which were able to mass-produce goods in order to meet increasing demand from burgeoning urban centres. However the quality of these products was seen as poor and damaging to the reputation of the trade. This was set against a backdrop of other grievances such as wage cuts and the introduction of unskilled workers

into the trade. In some regions, this new technology was replacing workers entirely.

Looking at the wider historical context of this period, there are a number of other important changes which occurred during this time. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, large swathes of land were subject to Enclosure Acts, resulting in increasing dispossession of agricultural workers and erosion of the Commons. Taking place alongside other changes in agriculture, land which had previously been communal was now privatised. Food riots were also common throughout this period. There was also a sense of underlying political unrest in Europe within the context of the French Revolution, which set the stage for the uneasy relations between the ruling class and the newly-emerging industrial proletariat. It is within this context that the Combination Act of 1799 was passed, which outlawed trade unions, and the Master and Servant Act of 1823 which sought to curtail workers' organisation. The period of industrialisation as a whole is one which saw the increasing consolidation of class relations and, accordingly, of class antagonisms.

The idea of an 'Industrial Revolution' itself is fairly disingenuous; the changes which developed during this period were not an orgiastic leap into modernity, but rather a gradual process of industrialisation which was met with varying degrees of acceptance and resistance. The period of the 18th and early 19th centuries was one of great change and upheaval. Changes were taking place in all areas of society – social and cultural as well as political and economic. Whereas in the pre-industrial period work was largely artisanal

and carried out from home with the family situated as an economic unit in itself, industrialisation involved intense individualisation, supervision and routine. This period saw the emergence of the factory system and the growth of the urban proletariat. These changes in work organisation affected not only those in growing urban centres but also had a huge impact on agriculture; on levels of supply and demand, and the methods and organisation of the industry itself.

Most descriptions of the Luddites and similar movements focus primarily on the tactics deployed. Property damage was a prominent feature of pre-industrial protest, with the history of deliberate machine-breaking stretching back into the seventeenth century. It is also important to bear in mind the fact that during this period, violence as a tactic existed within a different political and cultural context; in contrast to the prevailing discourse nowadays which presents political violence as an undesirable and alienating tactic, in the context of the 'moral economy' in the 18th century organised violence was often seen as a natural extension of tactics. Eric Hobsbawm famously described organised machine-breaking during this time as 'collective bargaining by riot.' That is not to say that these forms of protest were necessarily chaotic or disorganised, for they often adhered to what has been dubbed the 'protocols of riot'.

Although discussion of the Luddites often focuses on machine-breaking alone, there were a variety of tactics deployed across different regions and different situations. Some would send letters to bosses warning them to remove the new frames and, if

they did not comply, would return at night and smash the machines themselves. This violence was not merely symbolic; officials were well aware that those making the threats were in a position to follow through with them. During the peak of Luddite activity in early 1812, William Horsfall, a West Yorkshire mill owner, was assassinated.

For many months the authorities struggled to identify and capture those involved in the uprising. This was largely due to the tactics deployed as well as the culture of secrecy involved in Luddite organising, with new members being 'twisted in', as well as underlying community support and reluctance to turn in the participants. Early 1812 saw the passing of the Frame-Breaking Act, which offered the death penalty to those convicted of the crime. Subsequently, suppression of the movement was swift and harsh and a mass trial in York in 1813 resulted in executions and deportations to penal colonies.

Although this represented the end of organised machine-breaking in the name of Luddism, the tradition continued in the Captain Swing Riots of 1830 in which agricultural workers in East Kent, and later the whole of southern England, targeted threshing machines as well as engaging in other forms of property damage.

Some have charged the Luddite movement as being reactionary and 'backward'. Indeed, the informal slang usage of the term 'Luddite' implies an ignorance or unwarranted rejection of technology. But the Luddites did not oppose technology in itself, but the introduction of those specific technologies which were undermining their livelihood and facilitating further exploitation of fellow workers, that which was 'hurtful to Commonality.' The purpose of machine-breaking was not only to attack symbols of exploitation, but also to directly damage the economic interests of bosses.

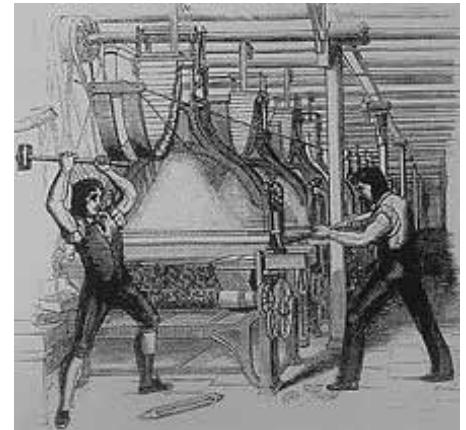
The discourse surrounding the Luddite movement, and the anniversary celebrations in particular, appears to rehash the same tired 'green' vs. 'red' dichotomy when it comes to anarchist approaches to technology, which often misses out on the nuance of both approaches. Technology is not 'neutral'; indeed, in a hierarchical capitalist society it is hard to imagine anything that is not imbued with power relations on some level. Even the most intimate aspects of ourselves, from our sexuality to our mental health, is socially shaped in both execution and conceptualisation. That is not to say that these things are not real or important, but that the clutches of unequal power relations are incredibly pervasive.

Technology is not a monolithic entity, but a series of processes and relationships. In *The Ecology of Freedom*, the anarchist Murray Bookchin outlines his framework of 'social ecology'. Central to this approach is the idea that human domination of nature is a result of the hierarchical domination of humans by other humans. His use of the term 'hierarchy' refers not only to its material, structural manifestations such as political systems, but also to the cultural and psychological aspects of hierarchy which are embedded in both our culture and ourselves. In other words, he essentially views environmental issues as social issues. Following on from this, he claims that in order to change the way we approach technology we must first change the way in which society is organised - 'a liberatory technology presupposes liberatory institutions.'

In looking at the impact of the Luddites, we should take into account not only the immediate effects of the movement but also the impression it has left on our history. Although clearly the goal of resisting mechanisation of the industries in question was ultimately unsuccessful, the level of organisation and systematic destruction of machinery demonstrated the decisive resistance of

working people to degradation and exploitation.

But what lessons can be learnt from the Luddites and what relevance does their struggle have for us today? Many have focused the Luddite anniversary celebrations on a critique of specific technologies such as genetically-modified food and nu-



clear power. Arguably, though, one of the main things that can be taken from this movement is a recognition of the interrelatedness of technology and capitalism, along with the impact this can have on working people. It seems clear, then, that the lessons we should take from the Luddite struggle should not merely manifest as a critique of technology in and of itself, but produce an analysis which looks at these technologies as deeply embedded in class relations. However, simply taking these new machines as a proxy for the systems which created them risks overlooking the very real ways in which people's lives are impacted; while the smashing of mechanised stocking frames was on one level heavily symbolic, these new technologies were also part of a substantive and material attack on workers.

Indeed, we can certainly point to many modern examples in which workers are further exploited through the introduction of new technologies in the name of 'efficiency'. Under capitalism, when these changes are able to be made at the expense of workers, they are. Somewhat ironically, parallels could perhaps be drawn between issues

surrounding the struggle of the Luddites in the nineteenth century and the period of so-called 'deindustrialisation' in Britain and the United States in the 1980s – the decline of traditional industries, processes of deskilling, the use of new technologies to replace workers and so on.

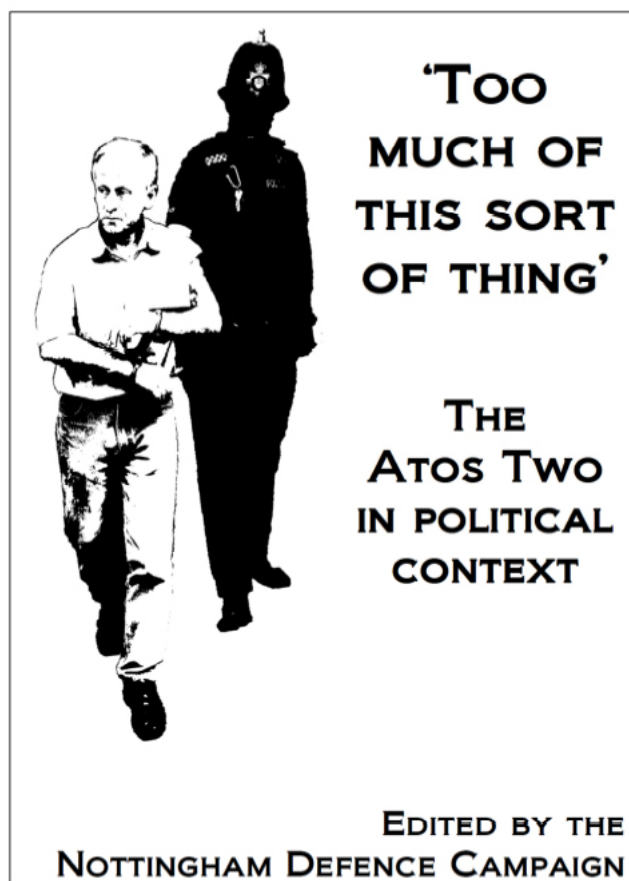
Economist Guy Standing recently coined the term 'precariat' to refer to the growing number of precarious workers reliant on low-paid, part-time, short-term work. Often outside the remit of mainstream trade unions, this has important implications in terms of our strategies in workplace struggles. In the modern era this is intimately linked with the process of globalisation and implementation of neoliberal economic policies, which has a marked effect on women in particular.

The artisan crafters who spearheaded the Luddite movement are sometimes accused of being 'elitist' for wanting to preserve the conditions and reputation of their skilled craft. Clearly, the 'elitism' of workers trying to combat increasing exploitation

and de-skilling is no such thing at all. Undoubtedly however, the Luddite movement entirely comprised skilled male workers, and it seems clear that modern forms of struggle must include all types of workers – skilled and unskilled, male and female (and other), employed and unemployed.

What implications, then, does this have for our class and our relationship with industry and technology? Clearly, the forms which these things take is intimately related to wider social, political and economic forces. It would however be a mistake to focus on this bigger picture at the expense of the very real effects of these structures and relationships. Recognising the socially-embedded nature of technology does not necessarily entail overlooking the harmful effects that all forms of industry currently have - from pollution and global climate change, to the exploitation of other animals, to the long-term and immediate effects on our societies, capitalism and industrial society as we know it is clearly not fit for purpose.

How do we move forward with this? Ultimately by acting collectively rather than individually - the solution is in neither consumer boycotts nor isolated acts of direct action alone, but in developing ways in which we can act together as a class to overthrow capitalism and develop truly sustainable alternatives. 'Sustainable', in this sense, means not only being minimally environmentally destructive, but also being part of a fundamental reorganisation of work which sees an end to alienated labour and a refocusing of human activity towards pro-social and pro-environmental ends, underpinned by values of mutual aid and direct democracy. An anarchist perspective should include as part of its analysis a rejection of the oft-cited 'progress' discourse; true progress is measured neither in technological advancement nor in GDP, but in the steps we take towards a world in which resources are equally distributed and old hierarchies have been abolished.



'Atos Two' pamphlet now available

In September 2011 two Nottingham residents, a retired paediatric nurse and a wheelchair user, were arrested at the local Atos 'Healthcare' assessment centre.

This pamphlet looks into the wider context of their case. It also offers practical suggestions for persons who need to claim disability benefits & support and/or want to engage in direct action.

FREE DOWNLOAD (pdf):

<http://nottingham.indymedia.org/zines/2548>

PRINTED COPIES available (suggested donation £1), email: nottsdefence@riseup.net

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Devastating Welfare?

Professor Harrington, independently review my crippled arse!

Appendices:

On claiming disability benefits/support

From ESA claim to Atos assessment

No Comment!

How to support those in trouble

Further reading

STATEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE IN CUBA: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The following statement was issued following the April 2011 Cuban Communist Party Congress and so is over a year old. Nevertheless, the sentiments expressed should be supported, whilst we have no illusions in the possibility of censors or policemen changing their minds, as might be implied in the statement. Even today there is still illusion, and even among some libertarians, in the Cuban regime. Thus whilst the International Solidarity Commission of the Industrial Workers of the World signed the statement, an article appeared in the July 2011 issue of the IWW paper *Industrial Worker* denouncing the statement and the attempt to set up an IWW branch in Cuba, defending the regime and calling on the IWW to support the creation of workers' states!!

Statement of international solidarity with those in Cuba

The Communist Party of Cuba's VI Congress has just closed with an endorsement of the liberal reforms ("to each according to his labors") promised in the realm of the economy: but along with these come cuts in social services and an increased presence for military and for technocrats in the machinery of government, with a reduction in the presence of intellectuals and workers. In terms of rhetoric and deeds alike, efficiency, control and discipline replace equality, solidarity and partnership. Against this backdrop we have indications of a crackdown in the cultural realm, heralding yet another set-back to Cubans' exercise of their fundamental freedoms. Performing artists find their names blackened by cultural officials-turned-censors engaged in frantic campaigns, the length and breadth of the country peddling false rumors and spurious



accusations.

A prestigious Cultural Theory Center finds its facilities and equipment being sabotaged again by "thieves" who forget to take anything and whom the authorities cannot seem to identify and punish. Poets and community activists are visited by police personnel who threaten to haul them before the courts as "counter-revolutionaries" and to leave them to the mercy of the "people's wrath", thereby demonstrating that said wrath is not "of the people" nor independent of the powers that be who direct it.

Damage to social property, defamation and physical and psychological bullying (and violence) are not only offenses punishable under legal codes the world over – Cuba included – they are also considered acts of State Terrorism. For decades, the Cuban people gave their best efforts to their children and to the world in order to build up a fairer country with universal and high quality culture, health and education despite the irrational and begrudging bureaucracy that always depicted the people's gains as its own creations. Are the repressiveness and lying of such "apprentice Stalins" to go down

in History as the features by which the Cuban process is to be remembered, rather than the day to day heroism of the Cuban people? This is not justice.

But if we are to ensure that this is not the case, then, from below and from the left, we must banish the silence and the self-censorship that underpin the impunity of the censors, that we should never open ourselves up to the charge that we are allegedly "playing into the enemy's hands." The people who today are finding their integrity and their jobs threatened by these actions of the Cuban authorities are deserving of our utter respect, for we have seen them at close quarters in a range of different times and circumstances. They are not, as the official propaganda line has it, hirelings of the CIA, as they just about subsist on the same dismal income as the vast majority of the Cuban people. When they go on trips, they spend their meager savings on publicizing their humanistic creations and on the purchase of the materials they need in order to carry on with their efforts on behalf of a more cultivated country with greater freedom. Whatever help they get from us (in the shape

of some DVD, art equipment or the proceeds of some modest fundraiser) represents solidarity from us male and female workers, artists and students who, in our own countries, resist the neo-liberal, authoritarian policies of the capitalists and their gendarmes in Seattle, Mexico City, Paris, Caracas, San Francisco and Buenos Aires.

What a contrast between our comrades and the bureaucrats comfortably traveling the world in Solidarity Drives, paid for with the Cuban people's money, bureaucrats who defect to Miami at the earliest opportunity and parade their repentance on TV as "freedom fighters"! What a contrast with certain "friends of Cuba" intellectuals who, naively or for hire, mistake the ideals of the Revolution for the policies of the Cuban state and deny to our Cuban comrades the very rights that they demand (and indeed, sometimes, enjoy) under their own bourgeois democratic regimes! The difference in quality, in terms of handiwork and spirit, from those "licensed reformists" who are ready to treat every wheel and turn of the Cuban regime with a fresh coat of theoretical gloss and to indulge in abstract (pseudo) critiques, as long as this suits the powers that be. Our Cuban comrades' only sin is that they have the effrontery to contemplate (and change) their reality without waiting for promises from the Nanny State or Capital's siren songs. They believe in a fuller life, in a community where the unhindered growth of each is the precondition and measure of the unhindered growth of all. Dialogue with and lessons learned from our other worldly struggles, from piqueteros and from zapatistas have broadened their horizons and also allowed us to learn from their historical record of mistakes and popular resistance. They represent the liveliest, most splendid bequest of the Cuban Revolution which refuses to perish despite the canker of bureaucracy. They are (in body and soul) young marxists, anarchists, libertarian socialists, followers of Marti, humanists, feminists, ecolo-

gists, communitarians but, above and beyond any such labels and descriptions, they are decent folk who have risked their lives in the service of others. For which reason we shall not not allow them to stand alone. We know that the forces of domination are mighty, that they control the billy-clubs and cyberspace, punishment and reward, the intimidated and the paid retainers. But we possess the sense of shame and hope against which – as popular anti-im-

perialist rebellions around the globe can testify – despotic power cannot stand. Hopefully there may, in the minds of the censor and the policeman, be some lingering memory of the original commitment given to the Cuban people that hoisted them into power: but, if not, we are ready to launch the mightiest solidarity campaign using every resource available to the law and to progressive public opinion worldwide.

We know our enemies are on the alert : but let them have no doubt of this: SO ARE WE.

Signatures of supporting groups:

- Confederation National du Travail - C.N.T. Le Havre (France)
- Internationaler Arbeitskreis e.V. (Germany)
- iz3w – informationszentrum 3. welt, Freiburg i. Br (Germany)
- Colectivo Editor de El Libertario (Venezuela)
- GALSIC – Grupo de Apoyo a los Libertarios y Sindicalistas Independientes en Cuba (France)
- Federation Anarchiste – FA (France)
- Le libertaire (newspaper, France)
- Colectivo Actores Sociales (Mexico)
- Colectivo Passapalavra (Brasil)
- Movimiento Libertario Cubano
- Frente Anarquista Organizado (Chile)
- Colectivo Feminista Josefa Camejo (Venezuela)
- Equipo Editorial de Insurrectasypunto (Argentina)
- Biblioteca Popular Libertaria "Mauro Mejiaz" (Venezuela)
- Sección sindical de la Confederació General del Treball (CGT) de la Universidad de Barcelona
- Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de la Federación Anarquista Uruguaya
- AK Internationalismus der IG Metall Berlin (section internationaliste du syndicat, Berlin) – Germany
- Asemblea Libertaria del Vallés Oriental – Catalonia
- Ateneo Arte y Cultura de l'Escale de l'Alt Empordà – Catalonia
- El Bloque Anarquista – F.L.L. – Mexico
- Colectivo A les Trinxeres – Catalonia
- Coordinación anarquista de Le Havre – France
- Forschungs- und Dokumentationszentrum Chile-Lateinamerika e.V. –Germany
- Red libertaria Apoyo mutuo – Spain
- FALCLC (Federació Anarquista – Comunista llibertària Catalana) – Catalonia

SOUTHERN EUROPE

AUSTERITY- AGONY AND ANTAGONISM

The worldwide plan to impose new capitalist norms on the masses of people inhabiting this planet can be seen starkly in Southern Europe where three countries are profoundly affected- Greece, Portugal and Spain. The so called representatives of the people have been installed, just as they have in Italy, to impose new hardships on populations already deeply affected by cuts, inflation and poverty. The International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Union are imposing these measures. In Greece despite mass demonstrations, riots, huge strikes and occupations, the administration has imposed a new austerity programme

people massing to protest these very measures.

Meanwhile in the capital of Portugal, Lisbon, the biggest demonstrations in thirty years saw 300,00 people gathering to chant “no to exploitation, no to inequality, no to impoverishment!”. The re-organisation of public transport in Lisbon saw a 50% rise in fares, leading to a mass strike of transport workers. Again the IMF, the ECB and the EU are imposing measures of austerity to cut public spending and pensions to attack employment laws, effecting numbers of hours allowed to be worked, and cutting the amount of holiday time for workers.

ineffective in France as a measure to increase youth employment. The reduction of redundancy payments will mean that workers will receive the equivalent of thirty three days’ pay rather than forty five, and even then a reduction to twenty days if this involves economic redundancies. In addition the probation period for workers starting a new job will be increased from six to twelve months!

All over Europe and indeed the world this seems to be the main points in an attack on the working class- deregulation of employment laws, lowering of wages and salaries, and an end to collective bargaining.

So the crisis, which is THEIR crisis, will be paid for by us with an attack on conditions, wages and pensions. Everything for the exploiters and the employers, and nothing for the exploited. A radical shift in the balance of forces, with the rich gaining more and the mass of the population, workers and unemployed, receiving less. This is one of the biggest heists carried out by the boss class and meanwhile the trade unions have shown their complete inability to defend the previous gains of the working class, bowing to the wish lists of the employing class and their governments. All they can offer is worthless “days of action” which act as safety valves for the anger of the working class.

This only demonstrates the need to jettison the trade unions and look to new forms of organisation to counter the bosses’ offensive, both in the workplace and in the neighbourhood. Nothing is more pressing than this.



leading to a 22% drop in the minimum guaranteed wage, as well as cuts in pensions and the axing of jobs throughout the public sector. The Greek parliament passed these measures to avoid “economic chaos and a social explosion”. A curious comment as if they had looked out of the windows of the Parliament they would have seen just such a social explosion in the form of 100,000

In Spain the government of Mariano Rajoy and his Popular Party of the right has instigated attacks on employment laws again imposed by the Big Bad Three of the IMF, ECB and EU. These will include a reduction in redundancy payments to workers, and a 3,000 euro reduction of tax to companies employing people below the age of thirty for the first time, which has already proved

SPECIAL SECTION ON TURKEY AND SYRIA

The development of a relationship between Syria and Turkey had its foundations before the accession of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) party to power in Turkey, but it was certainly deepened under the AKP with the chief foreign policy agent of the new regime inviting President Assad to Turkey in 2004. This was followed by a free trade agreement which led to a deepening of the arrangement with a visa-free travel set-up between the two states and an unprecedented joint military exercise. Turkey, in its moves to increase its power in the region, announced the setting up of an economic council to create a free-trade zone between itself, Turkey and Lebanon.

Turkey wishes to increase its economic interests in the regions, with increased military cooperation as a corollary. Turkey saw Syria as a valuable market for its products. As a result Turkish exports to Syria shot from \$266 million in 2002 to \$1.6 billion in 2010. The relaxing of border restrictions led to an increasing number of Syrians crossing the border, especially to shop for Turkish goods, with an increase of Syrians visiting Turkey going from 122,000 in 2002 to just under 900,000 in 2011.

Alongside this is the need for Turkey to compete with the other major local power Iran and to wrest influence away from it in Syria. They told their sceptical American allies that an alliance with Assad would weaken Iranian influence in the region. The Turkish state is now deeply concerned about the situation in Syria. It cannot completely cut itself off from the Assad regime, as Iran would

then fill the gap. It also fears another regional rival, Saudi Arabia, which would like to see the end of the Alawi Assad regime and its replacement by a Sunni administration favourable to and heavily influenced by Saudi Arabia. Certainly an old nostalgia for the whole region as an historic area of influence for the Ottoman Empire influences the policies of the AKP. The Turkish state is worried that it will lose Syria as a profitable market and as a transition belt to other parts of the Middle East. As equally important are the Turkish state's concerns about the Kurdish "problem". Any unrest among the Kurds of Syria would have a knock-on effect on the Kurds within the Turkish state, with an unstable Syria providing a useful base for activity of Kurdish independentists organised in the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

The Turkish state would prefer that a rapid collapse of the Assad regime did not happen. It feels that such a collapse might lead to the development of a Kurdish autonomous zone right beside the Turkish border, similar to developments in northern Iraq. As a result it has combined

the massing of its forces on Syria's borders with diplomacy to persuade the Assad regime to push through a number of reforms. However, diplomatic pressure has proved futile and this explains Turkey's increasingly bellicose attitudes, coupled with threats of sanctions to increase pressure. As the situation develops in Syria, the Turkish state risks being robbed of an important ally and an important market and having to stand helplessly by. Equally none of this rules out the possibility of Turkish intervention in the "dangerous" border area populated by Kurds

Turkey: Islamists Attack Evolution

Turkey is now governed by the AKP which professes a 'moderate' Islam. However, this 'moderation' can be demonstrated in the attacks on the ideas of Charles Darwin which began in November 2011. The Turkish Council of the Communication and Information Technologies, a governmental agency, pushed through



measures governing the use of computers in the country. All computers equipped with a parental filter, used usually to block pornographic and paedophile sites if a minor is using a computer linked to the Internet, must now include blocking to sights that favour the ideas of evolution, including sites concerned with Charles Darwin and Richard Dawkins. This would include key words like "evolution" "Darwin" etc. In addition key words like "gay" faced a similar ban in line with the reactionary assimilation of homosexuality to paedophilia. Sites related to Kurdish autonomy and independence were also blocked. Creationist sites which posit the view that the universe and humanity have been created by the conscious actions of a God are perfectly accessible.

Fortunately a wave of indignation against these measures forced the Council to back down. However this demonstrates the offensive led by the AKP government to criminalise evolutionism and legitimise creationism. In 2009, on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, the chief editor of a magazine of popular science, rather like the New Scientist, Bilim ve Teknik, since 2008 under government control, was sacked because she wanted to publish a tribute to Charles Darwin in the form of a section of fifteen pages.

The attack against the theories of evolution has been led by Harun Yahya (real name Adnan Oktar, a Sunni Muslim conspiracy theorist) who attempts to assimilate the ideas of Darwinism and materialism to Hitler, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung and Pol Pot, and to colonialism and racism. This is in tandem by the campaign led in the United States by fundamentalist Protestants. Indeed in a study carried out in 2006 with regards to the percentages of those who accepted the theories of evolution, Turkey came in

34th place, just after the USA, with fewer than 25% of the population. Creation AND evolution have been jointly taught in schools in Turkey since 1985. In 1998 fundamentalists in Turkey increased their attacks on the ideas of evolution, organising several conferences with the help of fundamentalist speakers from the USA. These moves to attack evolutionism go against all the institutions of secularism in Turkey existing since the early twentieth century.

Harun Yahya wishes to unite all reactionary Jews, Christians and Muslims against the ideas of evolution and Darwin, which he held responsible for fascism and the Holocaust!!

Yahya is the leader of a cult that mobilises against evolutionism and, in 2008, successfully used the courts to ban a Richard Dawkins site and the site of the Union of Education and Scientific Workers and the site of the third largest newspaper in Turkey, Vatan. As an ally of the AKP Yahya seems to be setting the agenda. The attacks on secularism and secularists begun in 2002 when the AKP came to power are increasing, with secular schools increasingly suspending lessons for Friday prayer. Increasingly the AKP is supporting private media outlets that promote Islamism. The institution set up by the founder of the modern state, Kemal Ataturk, to stop the politicisation of Islam, the Diyanet, the Directory of Religious Affairs, is now being used by the AKP to issue edicts advising women not to use perfume in public, not to be alone with a male who is not a relative and other attacks on gender equality.

In 2007 millions of people mobilised in Ankara and other cities chanting "no sharia, no coup". These were in the main people who upheld the concepts of secularism and opposed

the attempt by the AKP to soften the divide between religion and public life, whilst at the same time rejecting the plan from some of those in the military to carry out a coup against the AKP. Ironically perhaps, the AKP has embraced many of the values of the Kemalists, the party of Ataturk, in nationalist rhetoric and fulmination against the different ethnic groups in Turkey, whilst of course rejecting the formal State secularism of the Kemalists. It is from these large groups that opposition to both the AKP and the Kemalists could emerge and should link to the need for the working class in the state of Turkey to reject the whole bunch of political gangsters.

Syria

Last year's Arab Spring appeared to have finally pushed up buds in Syria in the last part of 2011 with thousands mobilising against the Assad regime and the resulting murderous counter-offensive involving the bombardment of populous neighbourhoods and summary mass executions. The horror of Homs, the deaths of thousands and the fleeing



of at least seventy thousand over Syria's borders show the depth of the Syrian crisis.

The brutal Assad regime has been in power for many years, supported by the local regional power of Iran and the Russian and Chinese power blocs. The Baathist Party rules there, just as a similar Baathist party



ruled in Iraq. It was at least tolerated by the West because it kept Islamic fundamentalism at bay, and so was supported just like the Gaddafi and Saddam regimes had been in the past. However, unlike Iraq and Libya, Syria does not have large oil resources, and so there is no pressing compulsion for the West to intervene. Syria has diminished as a regional threat to the West in recent years with its withdrawal from Lebanon and its search for a better relationship with the West. Up until recently the Assad regime showed that it could maintain stability. As the then US secretary of State Henry Kissinger said after the Assad regime came to power, Syria was identifiable as a “factor of stability”.

When the Muslim Brotherhood organised an uprising in 1982 in the town of Hama Basharm, Assad’s father Hafiz, then ruler of Syria, launched an offensive that killed at least 20,000 people, on which the West remained silent. Bashar is quite prepared to carry out the same strategy and of course the West will not be prepared to intervene as they did in Libya. Syria has a strong conventional army, which would exact a heavy toll on any invaders. In addition Russia and China are prepared to support their local ally, indicating the increasing tensions between the big powers.

Another factor is the role of Islamic fundamentalism in the conflict. The West has been concerned by its rise in Egypt and Libya after the events of last year. In addition the West has found it difficult to use the democracy card, knowing the role of its local allies in the region, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, hardly themselves committed to bourgeois democracy.

Whilst Syria may be able to rely on the support of Iran, Russia and China, circumstances at home are cutting the ground from under Bashar al Assad’s feet. Lack of dissension was secured whilst the regime could promise economic and political stability. However the economic crisis has hit Syria in the last year with Gross Domestic Product going from 6% growth in 2009 to -6% this year with inflation shooting up to double figures this year. This coupled with the genuine popular revulsion against the barbarities carried out by the regime may well weaken it. But just who are the opponents of the regime embodied in the likes of the Free Syrian Army (FSA)? The regime has traditionally relied on the support of the Alawite religious minority and Alawites are a group privileged by the regime. Pitted against the regime are an assembly of different forces which include Sunni jihadists ready to install a

fundamentalist regime, supporters of a bourgeois liberal democracy and nationalists. Some of these forces are loosely organised by the Syrian National Council and by the Syrian National Coordination Committee. Neither of these groups, at loggerheads with each other, has anything to offer the workers of the towns and countryside, who appear not to be developing a movement of their own. The Free Syrian Army is itself prepared to use the threat of bombardments against the population of Damascus, demonstrating that it is another murderous gang prepared to crush any attempt at workers’ self-organisation if it arises. The FSA has the tacit support of another local power, Turkey, intent on undermining the Assad regime and massing its forces on Syria’s northern borders. Whilst Iranian and Russian military may well be on the ground supporting the regime, equally forces sent in by the allies of the West in the region are also operating within Syria. Five droughts in succession, massive youth unemployment and a huge hike in the price of wheat have aggravated social conditions. Whilst the Arab street might well be mobilising in parts of Syria, it is being manipulated by different political gangs, either those allied to the West, or those of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, with generous donations from the sheikhs in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

None of these gangs should be supported by revolutionaries and neither should the masses in Syria give any allegiance to them. It remains to be seen whether the working class in Syria can develop its own independence and self-organisation under extremely difficult circumstances.

Response to: Prostitution is Not Compatible with Anarchism

This is a response to the authors of the leaflet distributed at the “Sex work and Anarchism” workshop at the London Anarchist Bookfair 2011 (the original leaflet is attached below). The leaflet was written and distributed by people who were in no way connected to the organising of the workshop. It did not clarify on the leaflet who the authors were or what organisation they were from and merely said “London Anarchist Bookfair 2011” under the title. As it was handed to people coming into the room my comrade asked the woman handing it to her who had written it and the woman responded “We did.” This response was at best vague and at worst misleading. Most people handed the leaflet assumed it was written by the organisers and consequently it skewed the discussion until we were able to clear this up. I am a sex worker and was part of organising this workshop. The content of this leaflet concerns me and I would like to respond to some of what is written in it. I’m writing this purely in an individual capacity. In my response I’m going to attempt to counter individually each argument which is used in the leaflet to undermine the collective organising of sex workers. My point overall is that critiques of sex work in no way amount to a justification to attack sex workers’ self-organisation, as ideas about how things ideally should be do not amount to a rejection of attempts to deal with the way things actually are.

The title of the leaflet “Prostitution is not compatible with Anarchism” hints at a confusion between an anarchist response to the present conditions and a vision of what an anarchist society will look like, which

becomes more explicit upon a further reading of the leaflet. Our appeal for an anarchist analysis of sex work, an anarchist mode of organising around sex worker issues, and the support of other anarchists when organising around these issues, in no way implies that sex work is in any way compatible with an anarchist-communist society. While most anarchists would consider the abolition of all work to be an eventual aim, we need to struggle within the system we have now to move forward and to improve our conditions in such a way that lays the foundation for this change. An anarchist analysis of the problems in the sex industry and what problems in our society it feeds into, in no way precludes this. The authors set up a straw man in the first paragraph. They attribute to us the claim that it is sex workers supposed choice to sell sex which justifies our concern for sex workers safety, ability to earn money, and persecution by the state.

However, workers’ safety is important in and of itself. Sex workers are in no better position to choose not to work than anyone else and many workers, including many sex workers, have had little choice in what job they have to do to survive. Though there are some people who may claim that sex workers have chosen this particular line of work, this obviously does not apply to all of us and even those who chose this job over others are merely choosing which form their exploitation is going to take. The authors claim that 90% of sex workers want to exit, and cite a reference that refers specifically to a 1998 study of San Francisco street prostitutes and is not in any way comprehensive. Even if we were to

accept this statistic as generally applicable, it still changes nothing. As someone who has only ever worked in low-paid, unrewarding, service industry jobs, I am fairly confident that anyone asking my colleagues whether they would rather have been doing something else, would be looking at at least that percentage. However the need of workers to organise collectively to better their material conditions is one anarchists should support irrespective of whether the work is chosen or not. Workers who would rather be doing a different job are not in less need of better conditions.

The authors contrast sex workers unions with “workers unions (that) are necessary for essential production”. However, it is not for the sake of the work, or whatever commodities that we happen to be producing at a given moment, that workers should organise. If we are organising for the benefit of the production process, then we’re missing the point. We organise for ourselves. The work we are directed to perform is relevant mainly for tactical reasons – striking workers in ‘essential’ industries use this to their advantage, whilst managers try and use it to theirs. Whether or not the industry we work in is essential or in any way beneficial to us does not make our material interests as workers any less important. The leaflet begins by rightly criticising the liberal notion of choice when it comes to the work that we are coerced by capitalism into doing, yet the same notion is implicit in the authors’ expectation that workers should just choose to work in an essential industry to deserve our support in fighting to improve our conditions – a frequent argument

trotted out by neoliberal ideologists when low paid or otherwise particularly badly treated workers seek to use collective action to improve their immediate conditions.

One argument the authors make is that sex is freely available even under capitalism and that therefore the act of paying for sex is not about sex. People pay for many things which they could find for free even within capitalism. They pay for a number of reasons, for example the convenience, or for the ability to be more specific about the product they are after. While this may be generally problematic, and in the case of buying sex, arguably even more problematic, it does not mean that it is not about sex, even if other factors are present. The authors also claim that because sex is available for free that it is not a commodity. Sex is a commodity when it is being paid for, and it is not a commodity when it is free. Nothing is inherently a commodity. Rather, it is commodified. As depressing as it is, under capitalism nothing is spared commodification. Exactly how disturbing it is when a certain thing is commodified depends on what that thing is and how we relate to it, as a society and as individuals.

The authors criticise those anarchists who fetishise the exchange of money for sex. The idea that there is something liberating or empowering about sex work is lacking in an analysis of the nature of work and is possibly a reaction against the stigma associated with sex work. This results in the sex worker being constructed by some as a subversive queer identity. As with most attempts to counter stigma by embracing the stigmatised behaviour as an identity, countering shame with pride, we become trapped by the structures that oppress us. Attempts to legitimise sex worker activism by insisting that sex work will continue to exist in a post-revolutionary society are neither promoting a

desirable outcome nor one which is in any way a pre-requisite for support in the here and now. However, the authors' attack on these ideas doesn't uphold their conclusions. Were the anarchist movement not to be infested with identity politics we could still reject the notion that we should be ashamed and we would still expect support from our comrades. The false dichotomy between "sex work is good and so sex workers should be supported in their struggle" and "sex work is bad and so sex workers should not be supported in their struggle" ignores the actual material needs of sex workers in and of themselves.

Attempts to abolish sex work before any other work is as naive as the war on drugs but with the additional logistical problem that it involves a commodity which can be produced at any time by anyone. Given that society is organised the way it is, with a large group of dispossessed wage workers, with poverty and unemployment, and with the gendered division of humanity and all that entails, it's no surprise that some workers, overwhelmingly women, end up selling their capacity to perform sex work. While everything is infected and distorted by capitalism, an analysis of how sex is affected by this does not invalidate the need for sex workers to struggle to improve their conditions. We should be able to rely on our comrades' support in this as solidarity between workers is a vital part of the struggle against capitalism.

This is the leaflet to which the author of the above article objects, reproduced for information only, not because Organise editors consider it a useful contribution to the debate around sex work.

Prostitution is Not Compatible with Anarchism
LONDON ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR
2011

The concept of women's 'choice' to sell sex is constructed in line with neo-liberal and free-market thinking; the same school of thinking that purports that workers have real 'choices' and control over their work. It suggests that women chose to sell sex and we should therefore focus on issues to do with "sex workers's" safety, ability to earn money, and persecution by the state. Whilst women's safety and women's rights are paramount, the argument for state regulated brothels and unionisation is reformist at best, naive and regressive at worst. Even the proposal for "collective brothels" ignores the gendered nature of prostitution, and its function in supporting male domination.

An anarchist response should demand the eradication of all exploitative practices and not suggest they can be made safer or better. Anarchist Perspectives: Anarchism comes from a Greek word meaning "freedom from domination". It is premised on "the essential decency of human beings"; a desire for individual freedom and intolerance of domination (Woodcock). It calls for radical and revolutionary social change, not reformism. Underpinning beliefs include: Opposed to domination and all hierarchies, including gender hierarchy (Goldman). No state apparatus is needed (Kropotkin). Social justice is part of our human nature (Godwin). Social change will occur through collective action (Bakunin). Those with power will surrender it for the common good (Godwin). Mutual aid and reciprocity results in an exchange between equals (Proudhon). Humans can be sovereign individuals who participate in voluntary association (ie not for payment) (Kropotkin). Women's emancipation must come from themselves "First be asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second by refusing the right to anyone over her body" (Goldman).

Questions from an Anarchist Perspective

1. The question: Why do men believe they have a right to buy sex?

Analysis: Gender is a power-based hierarchy and prostitution is one manifestation of that power inequality. The overwhelming purchasers of sex (from women or from men) are men. The entitlement for men to purchase sex is dependent on their privileged hierarchical position and the subordinate position of women. Women from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are overrepresented in the sex industry.

Solutions: Men should be encouraged to relinquish their hierarchical power, not supported in maintaining it.

2. The question: Why do men pay for sex?

Analysis: Prostitution is “a financial transaction for sex”. Sex is freely available, even in the current capitalist system! Consensual sex can be negotiated between any adults with no financial exchange necessary. Therefore the act of paying for sex serves another purpose: it allows the man to assert power and control over that which he has purchased. The assertion of power and control by the man, and the domination of the woman are part of the transaction. It is not about sex.

Solutions: Men who buy sex should be challenged on their abuse of power and control over women.

3. Question: Are unions or collectives of “sex workers” the answer?

Analysis: The majority of women sell sex primarily because of lack of alternatives. 90% of women involved in prostitution want to exit, but have limited choices (Farley, 1998). When people are exploited, we support them, not the exploiters. Workers unions are necessary for essential production: sex is not a commodity - it is freely available to everyone. Unions or even collectives of people selling sex to men ignore the issue that the act of purchasing sex is problematic within an Anarchist analysis. Normalising power imbalances and inequalities does not make them reduce or disappear; they are only reinforced.

Solutions: People should have equitable choices in how they live their lives. The majority of women in pros-

titution to do not have a range of equitable choices. Men who purchase sex do have choices. Anarchists should challenge the status quo of gendered power hierarchies by questioning men’s right to purchase sex, rather than supporting ways that makes [sic] it easier for men to exert power and control over women, and thereby alienating themselves from human nature.

Other radical ideas

If women have limited choices, men aren’t doing them a favour by paring them for sex: just give them the money. People who think that prostitution is a service for socially isolated men should offer to have free sex with these men.

People who think prostitution is the

same as any other manual work, but better paid, should try to earn a living wage from it on the Romford Road. (The majority of women are not working as “highly paid escorts”). Those who fetichise [sic] the exchange of sex for money are not Anarchists... or radical in any way, but promote human beings [sic] alienation from each other.

An afterthought on feminism
Feminism brought the notion of “the personal is political” into consciousness. The requirement from a feminist analysis to examine interpersonal interactions as either supporting or challenging gender hierarchy results in the same conclusions: the act of men purchasing sex makes them complicit in the subordination of women as a group.



Culture

Steinlen and Delannoy - the anarchist illustrators



Theophile Alexandre Steinlen was born at Lausanne in Switzerland in 1859. His grandfather was a water colourist and portrait painter and taught drawing. His father, who worked for the Post Office, always had a hankering to be a painter himself. As a child Steinlen had a deep love for animals and this love persisted in adult life above all in his many illustrations of cats that have proved lastingly popular. He studied at the Faculty of Letters at Lausanne. It was here that he read *L'Assomoir*, the social novel by Emile Zola on the subject of alcoholism among the working class which had a profound effect on him. He also had a veteran of the Paris Commune, Georges Renard, as a teacher. He was an indifferent student, and his uncle Vincent, recognising his artistic abilities, got him a job creating designs for fabrics at Mulhouse in France. He stayed with this job for two years. Armed with a letter of recommendation for a fabric designer, Steinlen, by now in his early twenties, moved to the bohemian neighbourhood of Montmartre in Paris in 1881. There he met Adolphe Willette, the painter and illustrator, who was already contributing to the booming French illustrated press. He encouraged him to start contributing illustrations to this press. He began illustrating for the magazine of the cabaret Chat Noire (Black Cat) and he met the Montmartre singer Aristide Bruant there, made famous by Toulouse-Lautrec in his celebrated poster. His residence in Montmartre meant that he met many poets and painters, among them Lautrec himself, the composer Erik Satie, the poets Mallarmé and Verlaine, the

playwright Alfred Jarry, and many others. He also contributed to other magazines like *Le Mirliton* but his most significant collaboration with the illustrated press was the ten years that he worked for *Gil Blas Illustré*, to which he contributed more than 700 designs.

Deeply moved by the appalling social injustices he saw around him, he used his work as an illustrator to depict these injustices. He visited women's prisons and the mines and made many sketches of what he witnessed there. As a friend of the writers Emile Zola and Anatole France, he supported the campaign for the Jewish officer Dreyfus framed as a

Steinlen

"The humanity of the street, the working class, the uneducated, the exploited, were the pervasive subject of Steinlen's art" (Color Revolution, p. 8, Cate and Hitchings (1978))

spy. Steinlen had at first developed socialist ideas but in Paris started to move more and more in an anarchist direction after his initial involvement in the Dreyfus campaign. He started contributing to the anarchist press. Among these was *Chambard Socialiste*, which had a syndicalist outlook. From its first appearance on 16th December 1893 he began supplying illustrations signed *Petit Pierre*. The *Chambard* was a four page weekly with a circulation of 20,000. He stopped contributing to *Chambard Socialiste* just before the mass

prosecution of French anarchists in July 1894 and was forced to move abroad to Norway and Germany for six months.

Other magazines to which he contributed his work were *La Feuille* of the anarchist Zo D'Axa and the paper *La Révolte* edited by the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin, as well as *L'Anarchie*, *Le Libertaire* and *Le Temps Nouveaux*. His participation in the anarchist movement allowed him to meet painters who supported the anarchist cause like Signac, Luce, Pissarro, and Van Dongen. In 1903 he supported the anarchist colony at Aiglemont in the Ardennes, visiting it on several occasions and contributing illustrations to its publications. The frescos that he painted on the walls of the colony indicate that he most likely spent some considerable time there. Steinlen also contributed to other illustrated papers like *Le Rire* (The Laugh), *La Caricature* and *Simplicissimus* and well as the biting satirical *L'Assiette au Beurre*.

Despite his increasing success, Steinlen was informed by strong anarchist sensibilities and refused to let his fame go to his head and for this he was greatly respected among other artists. Steinlen adopted an internationalist position on the outbreak of the First World War and maintained this position throughout it. He thus became an isolated figure among the illustrators of the period. When the illustrated press went into a rabid patriotic frenzy, he became an isolated figure among the illustrators of the period; Delannoy was dead, and other anarchist illustrators like

Grandjouan and Jossot had been infected by the patriotic dementia. In the aftermath of the War Steinlen appeared aged and often depressed. He died in Paris in 1923 on the eve of a new exhibition at the age of sixty two. He remained an artistic champion of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden until the end. In one of his illustrations, still relevant for today and its bonus swilling bankers and embezzlers, he depicts a workman being led away by two policemen, sighing as he goes: "Ha! If only instead of bread I had stolen a hundred million!"



eral Albert d' Amade, depicting him as a butcher, in a butcher's apron with his hands covered in blood, he was tried and condemned to a year

in prison and a thousand francs fine on 26th September 1908. Because of appalling conditions in the prison he fell ill and was freed after four months, following a campaign led by the writer Anatole France. He was soon in trouble with the authorities again, following a series of anti-militarist illustrations he had produced, but his health had been irrevocably shattered and he died of tuberculosis less than two year later on 5th May 1911, at the age of thirty seven.

Aristide Delannoy was born at Bethune in France on the 30th July 1874. Obsessed with painting, he took courses of drawing and painting with the artist Pharaon de Winter at the school of Fine Arts in Lille. He followed this up with a course at the school of fine arts in Paris in 1897. He exhibited at the Salon des Independents in 1904. However, his painting did not bring in enough money to support himself and his family and so he turned to providing designs for the French illustrated press. He developed anarchist convictions and began supplying drawings for *L'Assiette au Beurre* from 1901 onwards. Equally he began to contribute sketches and drawings to a range of anarchist, libertarian and antimilitarist papers, including *Les Temps Nouveaux*, *La Guerre Sociale*, and *Les Homme des Jours*, for the last of which he provided 150 cover illustrations.

Les Hommes du Jour was founded by Victor Meric and Henri Fabre in 1908. Its first issue was a big success, with a cover by Delannoy depicting the head of Clemenceau on a pike. For his activity Delannoy was put on a list of political suspects by the police from 1903 onwards and he was brought in for questioning on several occasions. As a result of a caricature of the gen-

The Sparrows' Nest

Run by a collective of dedicated Booklings, the Sparrows' Nest was established in late 2008 as a 'Centre for Anarchist Culture and Education' in Nottingham. Its library and archive holds an ever growing collection of books, papers and pamphlets, open to everyone.

The Booklings need your help to finance running costs, enlarge the collection and to preserve the precious and often fragile papers in the collection!

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LETTERS

On Jo Freeman

Dear Organise! folks,

I noticed that you referred to Jo Freeman's article on "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" in the article "25 years of the AFED reviewing the last 5 years of the Anarchist Federation" in *Organise!* magazine Issue 77 Winter 2011. It is very saddening for me to see Freeman's article referred to again and again by anarchists, when she was never really interested in or involved in the anti-authoritarian social movement, never involved in the anarchist movement or the anarchist women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s that I participated in.

When the issue of how to organize anti-authoritarian social movement groups comes up, and people start to think about Jo Freeman's article, I think that anarchists should definitely read Cathy Levine's article "The Tyranny of Tyranny" 1979. It would also be worthwhile to read: "A Review of The "Tyranny of Structurelessness": An organizationalist repudiation of anarchism" by Jason McQuinn from *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, Issue #54/Winter 2002-2003, Vol. 20, no.2, pp. 22-23. (Both publications are in The Anarchist Library: <http://theanarchistlibrary.org>).

Freeman was and is probably a sincere leftish liberal politico, and she may have been one of the founders of the women's liberation movement, as she claims, but, she was not part of the anti-authoritarian tendency, and she was not grappling with the problems of how to organize social movement groups from an anti-authoritarian perspective. You can read a biography of her on her web site: by Jennifer Scanlon <http://jofreeman.com/aboutjo/scanlon.htm>

From this biography you can learn some things about her history which I will quickly note and excerpt here: You can learn that she attended the University of California at Berkeley from 1961 through 1965, where she was active in the Young Democrats (a group interested in helping the Democratic Party to improve), and in SLATE, a campus political group, lobbying to remove the campus ban on controversial speakers and to promote educational reform, writing for the SLATE Supplement, which evaluated teachers and courses from a student perspective,

and working in local "fair housing" campaigns. In 1963 through 1964, Freeman was involved in the Bay Area Civil Rights Movement, organizing and participating in demonstrations demanding that local employers hire more African-Americans. She attended the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City to join the vigil of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which was demanding representation for black Democrats in the party convention. She was also involved in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, often as a critic of the radicals in the leadership.

Freeman helped start the Chicago chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW, a decidedly mainstream organization). She worked on various NOW committees, participated in NOW demonstrations, and was active in chapters in various other cities. In 1976, Freeman went to both the Democratic and Republican Conventions as a reporter for *Ms.* magazine.

After Freeman graduated from college she went to Atlanta to work for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Beginning as a summer volunteer, and joining the SCLC field staff and for a year and a half worked in various southern counties, doing voter registration, political education and community organizing.

In 1972 she ran for Delegate to the Democratic Convention committed to Presidential candidate Shirley Chisholm. As a result she attended the 1972 Convention as an Alternate with the Chicago Challenge that unseated Mayor Daley's machine delegation. Freeman sought to understand and analyze what she saw as the usual rivalries, jealousies, manipulation and undermining she experienced and witnessed in three papers she wrote under her movement name, Joreen. "The BITCH Manifesto" (1969), "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" (1970), and "Trashing: The Dark Side of Sisterhood" (1975).

Freeman became a lawyer in 1982 and currently is in private practice in New York City where she has served as counsel to pro-choice demonstrators and to women running for elected office. She also dabbles in local politics.

While Freeman may present some good criticism about the functioning of informal groupings in the kinds of political organizations she has experienced, she does not address the broader issues of how to overcome entrenched hierarchies being established and reestablished that anti-authoritarians need to deal with.

For a new and better social world,
Sylvie Kashdan

Organise! reponse: The Leeds Women's Group of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists (ORA) first published a British edition of *Tyranny of Structurelessness* in 1972, and the Kingston Group of the Anarchist Workers' Association (AWA) brought it out as a pamphlet later in the decade. The edition of Freeman most easily available in print to Anarchists since is *Untying the Knot*, which we ourselves use and have published, which contains Levine's 'Tyranny of Tyranny' as well as 'Tyranny of Structurelessness'.

It has been regularly re-published by anarchist presses so it is disingenuous to think that this has not been raised before within the anarchist movement. We are less concerned with Freeman's trajectory than with the ideas contained within the pamphlet. Anarchists already had a pretty profound critique of the tyranny of formal structures. It was those informal structures that now concerned us, especially when we are arguing for organisation and formal structure within the movement. We feel that Freeman's insights into how informal elites exercised undue influence within a movement (be it the women's movement or the anarchist movement) are still relevant and we continue to see this undue influence within the movement of today. We always look towards ways that guarantee effectiveness and at the same time avoid or lessen the influences of both informal elites and bureaucratisation within formal structures.

Two letters from Richard Roberts
Dear Organise On 'UK Un-masked'

The publication asks the reader to make known if they find the content thought-provoking or otherwise so here goes:

First of all I would like to say that I felt that the article was a very useful attempt to address some of the issues arising from the TUC organised protest against the cuts held in March and succeeded, I

believe, in its aim of 'making anarchist views of the events of the day more understandable to other sorts of people on the march...' It was also correct to counter the accusation that an 'otherwise peaceful protest' as the coverage of the day portrayed it, was in some way hi-jacked by a wantonly violent minority.

As the article suggests, responsibility for the coverage of the events lay with the editors. Peaceful protest is not a story and therefore undue focus of the coverage was on the occupation of Fortnum and Mason and the other damage done to Private Property. Why do we get no news coverage of the takeover of Lambeth Town Hall and the many Peoples Assemblies events that have been a recurrent theme over the past 3 months? Your analysis is correct, it is not a story if it is a peaceful event and if not then the vested interests of the state and press do not want a story that suggests continuing opposition to the actions of the coalition government. Instead they wish to portray that all those people who still feel angry are just isolated groups or individuals who are powerless to change anything.

The State narrative is that peaceful protest is good, it goes something along the lines of "what a good government we are to allow you to protest peacefully. You have had your say, now just go home. Look everyone – all over, now back to work." And the state remains 'defiantly indifferent' and ignores protest just as it did the anti-war protests. Nor did Vince Cable have any compunction on the 27th about making clear that protest will have no effect.

As for violence, for me the issue is one that is central to parliamentary democracy. It was an issue dear to Carlo Pisacane, the translation of whose essay on revolution is reviewed elsewhere in the publication. Parliamentary democracy is merely a front for the real power relationships which control society and protect the interests of capital, namely those dependent upon economics. Without transforming the economic basis of society and its interrelationships, there is no point in political reform. Universal suffrage is a sham. However, even if, for the sake of discussion, one accepts the validity of parliamentary democracy, surely it is based upon an implicit contract between government and voter. The government contracts with the electorate that it will carry out those promises it made prior to the election on which basis the electorate cast its votes. Whilst we have a history of so-called majority

governments with less than 50% of the votes cast (let alone of those eligible to vote) and therefore illegitimate, and a catalogue of broken promises to varying degrees of cynicism, the election of 2010 is particularly striking in its illegitimacy. It's only claim to relative legitimacy, even on a par with previous governments, is that it has interpreted the will of the people in a way that suits its own purposes. In truth the only feasibly legitimate government even on the flawed basis of our electoral system, would have been a minority Conservative Government. However, with their obvious(?) superhuman abilities, Clegg and Cameron were able to rise above it all and fashion the government in their own image, having been able to interpret the meaning of the totality of the millions of votes cast. One can hear the very strong echo of Pisacane's ridiculing of Mazzini's religiosity and urging of the Italian nationalists under the slogan of God and the People as if he could interpret both.

The other party to this electoral contract, the electorate, promises in return to accept the view of the majority. This acceptance is evidenced by their agreement to abide by the law. They are allowed to protest, but this must be peaceful protest, even in the face of unreasonable behaviour of those in attendance to protect and ensure the safety of all. Without going too far off piste, it is of course of the utmost importance to protect Property, since in a capitalist system we have come to be defined by and very closely identified with our Property. As shown by Quentin Skinner in his 'Essay on Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War' as quoted in my book on Pisacane, since the struggles between Parliament and King Charles any attack on Property has been seen as tantamount to an attack on a man's person. However, with the breaking of this contract at the heart of our Parliamentary democracy, then in theory the electorate is released from its agreement to protest without violence.

Three subordinate issues come to mind at this point: firstly it is important to differentiate, as is done elsewhere in the magazine, between individual property as a means to provide oneself with the wherewithal to meet basic human needs and 'Capitalist Property' the ownership and control of which enables the Capitalist to exploit his fellow humans and enables him, to paraphrase Pisacane's iteration of Malthus and Beccaria, to take several places at life's banquet to the exclusion of many who have no place; secondly, there is, as quite rightly pointed

out, a difference between violence against Capitalist Property and gratuitous violence against individuals. The gratuitous bombs used against people in the late nineteenth century were, according to some sources (e.g. Pernicone: Italian Anarchism), as likely to have been thrown by the security forces with the aim of discrediting the anarchists. The acceptance of violence against a form of Property which has been appropriated from the ownership of all is worthy of debate. Thirdly, even the State's attitude towards violence is ambivalent at best and hypocritical at worst. The Western (and Eastern) Powers have a history of supporting armed risings provided the anticipated result is considered likely to be beneficial to their own interests. A good example of this is the support for and part funding of armed uprisings in Italy against Austrian and Bourbon rule providing it was under control of the monarchic Piedmont, whereas a socialist or even merely republican revolution was not acceptable. The attitude of France and Britain is well documented by Pisacane in letters, articles and books. More recently we have good examples of Statist ambivalence in Tunisia and Egypt and hypocrisy with regard to violence in Libya. As usual with history, the winner (or more powerful) writes it. Whether violence is good or bad depends upon context – an issue Pisacane also deals with in his essay *La Rivoluzione*.

Your article points out the bad press anarchism has with respect to violence and we have briefly touched upon it above. It is important to reiterate the differentiation between violence against people and violence against Capital and gratuitous violence of any kind. The reviewer of the book on Pisacane mentions Pisacane's identification with Propaganda of the Deed as an early proponent thereof whose words were used by Cafiero to encourage violent activity. Pisacane's philosophy is most appropriate as part of the discussion that is to be had about violence. The reviewer perhaps slightly misinterprets Pisacane's view: at the basis of his insistence on action was the belief that ideas and books do not make revolutions; it is the reality of suffering, the deeds and actions of others which create revolutions. To rise up against authority shows what can be done and acts as an example for others to follow. Whilst he supported the actions of Agésilao Milano in his attempted assassination of King Ferdinand and fought against the armed militia in Padula, he ordered his men not to fire at the mob of locals who in launching a frenzied attack on his band at Sanza, believing them to be brigands and murderers rather

than liberators, brought an end to the Sapri expedition and his life in 1857. Departing from Proudhon's influence Pisacane did not believe that revolution was possible without violence.

The piece suggests that violence for the purpose of terror is counterproductive, whilst not expressed in those terms, I believe that Pisacane's actions and beliefs would support that contention.

Richard Roberts

On review of Richard Roberts' book Carlo Pisacane's *La Rivoluzione*'

The reviewer of my book 'Carlo Pisacane's *La Rivoluzione*' (*Organise!* #76) makes an interesting comment in the penultimate paragraph of his review: "Pisacane's ideas appear to have had no effect on younger republicans and had nothing to do with the welcoming reception given to the anarchist ideas of Bakunin from 1864 onwards." It is a comment that I certainly recognise from my following of the historiographical debate which commenced with a disagreement between Max Nettlau and Aldo Romano over Pisacane's political influence. To summarise, I think subsequent writers, particularly non Italians, have tended towards the view expressed by your reviewer. Quentin Skinner humorously shows us the consequences of trying too hard to establish 'causal' links between political ideas and I tend to agree with authors such as Ravindranathan and Rosselli who followed Nettlau's line that Pisacane's influence on Bakunin was non-existent. On the other hand I question their suggestion at the other end of the scale that his contemporaries were unaware of his political ideas. Garibaldi for one would have been very aware of Pisacane's opposition to any form of dictatorship, an opposition which Gramsci was later to criticise.

Having read Pisane's letters to a number of political friends, his political ideas were very clear, nor was the knowledge of those thoughts confined to the addressee of the letters. Political correspondence of the age shows how such letters tended to be shared between trusted groups. Fanelli, the organiser of the local secret committee with whom the Sapri expedition was orchestrated could not have been unaware of Pisane's political ideas, albeit secondary to the nationalist aspects. Further, it was Fanelli who was active in the *Libertà e Giustizia* group and who worked closely with Bakunin after his arrival in Naples.

There is no question that Pisacane, if only through his example and sacrifice, was influential along with other martyrs for the cause, in the fight for an independent Italy, as recognised by Garibaldi in his visit to the scene of Pisane's demise. There are also a couple of recent Italian authors who suggest that Pisane's influence was rather more substantial and who therefore act as a counterbalance to the argument most recently found in Pernicone's recent well constructed and very readable work '*Italian Anarchism*' and summarised by the reviewer.

Firstly I refer to Leonardo La Puma who said in the Foreword to his '*il pensiero politico di Carlo Pisacane* (1995) "In the final part of this book I have tried to make a modest contribution to an historiographical problem of not secondary importance: the reluctance, notwithstanding some recent works, with which those in the field persist in not recognising the true importance of Pisacane in the history of Italian socialism and political thought." Next, more recently Italia Cannataro (2002) says in his '*Carlo Pisacane e il federalismo dei comuni*': "In the pages of a Roman daily newspaper, in August 1857, one reads: 'Today, groups of anarchists from Rome and the Provinces come to Rome for this gathering in order to commemorate Carlo Pisacane, to whom the Socialists as well as the Republicans lay claim and whom the Anarchists call their own'."

Whilst all authors have recognised the rediscovery of Pisane in the evolution of Italian anarchism by such as Cafiero and Merlino, certainly La Puma suggests that the issue is not entirely resolved and Cannataro that even prior to the arrival of Bakunin, Pisane was known and respected for his political ideas by groups including the anarchists.

My research continues.

Richard Roberts

Organise! response: We welcome your further research on the influence of Pisane on emerging Italian anarchism. We based our own views on Pernicone's book. We welcome research into anarchist history where it can clarify any misconceptions or fill any gaps and notice that this research is developing rapidly.

Aims & Principles

of the Anarchist Federation

1 The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2 Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

3 We believe that fighting systems of oppression that divide the working class, such as racism and sexism, is essential to class struggle. Anarchist-Communism cannot be achieved while these inequalities still exist. In order to be effective in our various struggles against oppression, both within society and within the working class, we at times need to organise independently as people who are oppressed according to gender, sexuality, ethnicity or ability. We do this as working class people, as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for us. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4 We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5 As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6 It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without their use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7 Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot

play a part in its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different from ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8 Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9 As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

10 We oppose organised religion and cults and hold to a materialist analysis of capitalist society. We, the working class, can change society through our own efforts. Worshipping an unprovable spiritual realm, or believing in a religious unity between classes, mystifies or suppresses such self-emancipation / liberation. We reject any notion that people can be liberated through some kind of supernatural force. We work towards a society where religion is no longer relevant.