

# ORGANISE! 91

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# WHO'S ARMING TURKEY?

The locations of companies that arm and support Turkey in its war against the Kurds

## RAYTHEON

FIFE/SALFORD/HARLOW/  
LONDON/GLOUCESTER

WAS APPROVED BY THE US GOVERNMENT LAST YEAR TO SELL \$3.5 BILLION WORTH OF PATRIOT MISSILES TO TURKEY.

## LEONARDO

BRISTOL/LONDON/LINCOLN/  
EDINBURGH/BASILDON

F-16 JETS USED BY TURKEY TO BOMB AFRIN INCLUDE LASER TARGETING SYSTEMS PRODUCED BY LEONARDO. ITS SUBSIDIARY, AGUSTA WESTLAND, HAS DEVELOPED TURKEY'S ATAK HELICOPTER WITH TURKISH AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES. LEONARDO IS PART OF MBDA, DEVELOPING MISSILES FOR TURKEY.

## HARRIS

BRIGHTON/WOKINGHAM

PROVIDES ELECTRONIC WARFARE SYSTEM FOR THE TURKISH F-16. HARRIS IS SOON TO MERGE WITH ARMS GIANT L3 TECHNOLOGIES.

## THALES

BRISTOL/BELFAST/READING/CRAWLEY/  
STOCKPORT/CAMBRIDGE/DONCASTER/GLASGOW

DEVELOPING MISSILES WITH TURKISH FIRM ASELSAN. ALSO PART OF MBDA, DEVELOPING LONG-RANGE MISSILES. WORKING ON THE GENESIS PROJECT WITH TURKISH STATE-OWNED ARMS COMPANY HAVELSAN.

## LOCKHEED MARTIN

LONDON/READING/GLASGOW/  
LINCOLN/GLOUCESTER

WORLD'S LARGEST ARMS COMPANY. COLLABORATES WITH TURKISH AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES TO PRODUCE F-16. HAS BEEN WORKING WITH TURKISH FIRM ROKETSAN SINCE 2015 TO SUPPLY TURKEY WITH CRUISE MISSILES. IT IS ALSO DUE TO SUPPLY TURKEY WITH F-35 FIGHTER JETS.

## BAE SYSTEMS

LONDON/BRISTOL/FIFE/GLASGOW/DUBLIN

UK'S LARGEST ARMS COMPANY. OWNS JOINT VENTURE WITH TURKISH ARMS COMPANY NUROL. SIGNED DEAL IN 2017 TO JOINTLY DEVELOP TURKEY'S TF-X FIGHTER JETS WITH TURKISH AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES. PART OF MBDA, DEVELOPING LONG-RANGE MISSILES FOR TURKEY. MAKES SOFTWARE FOR THE F-16 JET & IS KEY PARTNER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF F-35 JET.

## MBDA

BRISTOL/BOLTON

JOINT COMPANY FORMED BY BAE (UK), LEONARDO (ITALY) & AIRBUS (NETHERLANDS). SIGNED A DEAL TO DEVELOP LONG RANGE MISSILES FOR TURKEY. HAS OPENED NEW MISSILE FACTORY IN BOLTON.

## AIRBUS

OXFORD/NEWPORT/  
BRISTOL/  
LONDON

PART OF MBDA, DEVELOPING MISSILES FOR TURKEY.

## CLARION EVENTS

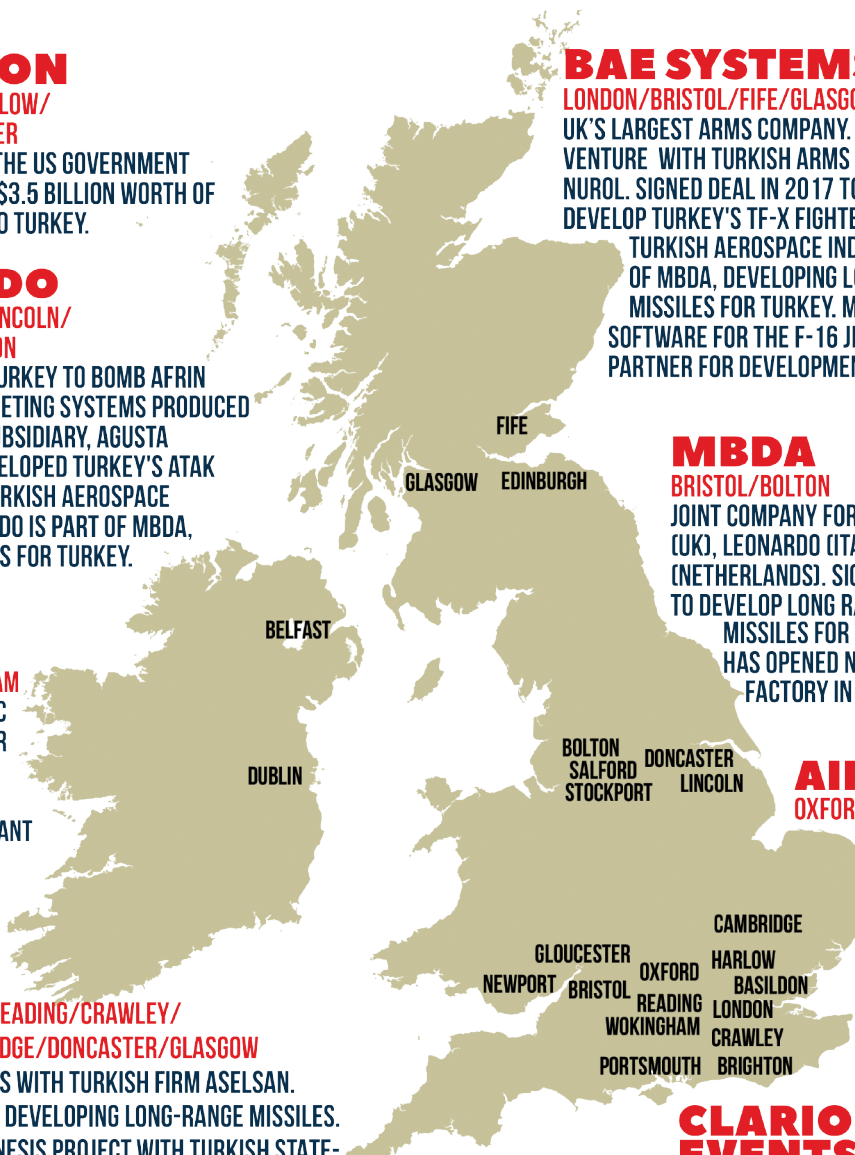
LONDON

ORGANISES THE DSEI ARMS FAIR. ALL MAJOR TURKISH ARMS COMPANIES ATTEND, ALONG WITH MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES. ARMS DEALS ARE REGULARLY DONE DURING THE FAIR. THE NEXT DSEI IS IN LONDON IN 2019.

## AXA

LONDON

FRENCH INSURANCE COMPANY WITH A 0.12% INVESTMENT IN ASELSAN. 84.5% OF ASELSAN IS OWNED BY THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES FOUNDATION, WHOSE CHAIR IS PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN. AXA'S SHAREHOLDING IS SMALL, WHICH MEANS THEY MIGHT DIVEST IF PUSHED.



# WHO'S ARMING TURKEY?

The locations of companies that arm and support Turkey in its war against the Kurds

## BAE SYSTEMS

LONDON/BRISTOL/FIFE/GLASGOW/DUBLIN

STIRLING SQUARE, 6 CARLTON GARDENS, LONDON SW1Y 5AD

GOLF COURSE LANE, NEW FILTON HOUSE, FILTON, BRISTOL BS34 7QW

GCS VEHICLES, NH5 ABBEY WOOD, STOKE GIFFORD, BRISTOL BS34 8JH

NORTH WAY, HILLEND INDUSTRIAL PARK, HILLEND, DUNFERMLINE, FIFE KY11 9HQ

ACA SITE, ROSYTH BUSINESS PARK DUNFERMLINE, FIFE KY11 2YD

SOUTH STREET, SCOTSTOUN, GLASGOW G14 0XN

LEVEL 5, BLOCK 4 TOWN CENTRE, SANDYFORD ROAD, DUNDRUM DUBLIN 16 A4W6

## RAYTHEON

FIFE/SALFORD/HARLOW/  
LONDON/GLOUCESTER

HEADQUARTERS:  
KAO ONE, KAO PARK, HARLOW CM17 9NA

QUEENSWAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, GLENROTHES, FIFE KY7 5PY

1 GEORGE STREET, UXBRIDGE MIDDLESEX UB8 1QQ

CYBER CENTRE, LEY COURT 3 BARNETT WAY, BARNWOOD GLOUCESTER GL4 3RT

CYBER CENTRE, EXCHANGE QUAY, SALFORD QUAYS, SALFORD M5

## MBDA

BRISTOL/BOLTON

GOLF COURSE LANE, FILTON, BRISTOL BS34 7QS

LOGISTICS NORTH, M6 1 JUNCTION 4, BOLTON BL5 1BT

## LOCKHEED MARTIN

LONDON/READING/GLASGOW/LINCOLN/GLOUCESTER

CUNARD HOUSE, 15 LOWER REGENT STREET, LONDON SW1Y 4LR

350 BROOK DRIVE, READING RG2 6UU

2/3 THE SKYPARK, 8 ELLIOT PLACE, GLASGOW G3 8EP

CASSIDIAN LTD, QUADRANT HOUSE, CELTIC SPRINGS, COEDKERNEW, NEWPORT NP10 8FZ

AIRBUS HELICOPTERS, OXFORD AIRPORT, KIDLINGTON, OXFORD OX5 1QZ

## LEONARDO

BRISTOL/LONDON/LINCOLN/EDINBURGH/BASILDON

UK HEAD OFFICE: SIGMA HOUSE, CHRISTOPHER MARTIN ROAD, BASILDON SS14 3EL

8-10 GREAT GEORGE ST, LONDON SW1P 3AE

430 COLDHARBOUR LANE, BRISTOL BUSINESS PARK, BRISTOL BS16 1EJ

2 ALPHA COURT, KINGSLEY ROAD, LINCOLN LN6 3TA

CREWE TOLL, 2 CREWE ROAD NORTH, EDINBURGH EH5 2XS

## THALES

BRISTOL/BELFAST/READING/STOCKPORT/CAMBRIDGE/GLASGOW/  
CRAWLEY/DONCASTER

BRISTOL BUSINESS PARK, COLDHARBOUR LANE, STOKE GIFFORD BRISTOL BS16 1FJ

1 STATION SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE CB1 2GA

MANOR ROYAL, CRAWLEY RH10 9HA

4 CAROLINA COURT, CAROLINA WAY, DONCASTER DN4 5RA

350 LONGWATER AVENUE, READING RG2 6GF

1 LINTHOUSE ROAD, GLASGOW G51 4BZ

ALANBROOK ROAD, BELFAST BT6 9HB

ASHURST DRIVE, BIRD HALL LANE, CHEADLE HEATH, STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE SK3 0XB

## HARRIS

BRIGHTON/WOKINGHAM

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS:  
1010 ESKDALE ROAD, WINNERSH, WOKINGHAM RG41 5TS

EMBLEM HOUSE, HOME FARM BUSINESS PARK, BRIGHTON BN1 9HU

## CLARION EVENTS

LONDON

BEDFORD HOUSE, 69-79 FULHAM HIGH ST, LONDON SW6 3JW

## AXA

LONDON

5 OLD BROAD STREET, LONDON EC2N 1AD

MANY OF THESE COMPANIES HAVE FURTHER UK ADDRESSES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER COMPANIES ARMING TURKEY: VISIT [CAAT.ORG.UK](http://CAAT.ORG.UK) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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**Organise!** is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF). As anarchist communists we fight for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst communities, and people are free to reach their full potential. We do this by supporting working class resistance to exploitation and oppression, organise alongside our neighbours and workmates, host informative events, and produce publications that help make sense of the world around us.

Organise! is published twice per year with the aim to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate debate on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers. To meet this target, we positively solicit contributions from our readers. We will try 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, then feel free to contact us through any of the details below.

You may have noticed that this edition has a new look and feel. We've tried a few different things out with this issue and we'd appreciate your feedback on what you think works and what you think isn't.

The articles in this issue do not represent the collective viewpoint of the AF unless stated as such. Revolutionary ideas develop from debate, they do not merely drop out of the air! We hope that this publication will help that debate to take place.

For the next issue of Organise! articles can be submitted to the editors directly at: [organise@afed.org.uk](mailto:organise@afed.org.uk)

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**BREXIT AND WORKERS  
WHAT'S THE SCORE?**

**We've previously written** a few things about the 2016 referendum which led to the process of Britain's exit from the European Union. As the time gets closer we look at what the currently uncertain situation means for workers. Before we get on to the specifics, we make some more general points about Brexit. In Org. 97 we said:

*Much media space is devoted to speculation about what Brexit will mean. There is even some doubt about whether despite May's strong assertions that she will make Brexit work, that it will go ahead. She certainly is taking her time about it. After all, key sections of the British ruling class did not want Britain to leave the EU. They want the cheap labour and the financial sector is concerned that it will lose its central role in international financial markets. Also, the Scottish response to the outcome, which could lead to independence, would be a major blow to UK Ltd. One thing is certain: the working class will continue to suffer from low wages and high housing costs, poor working conditions and job insecurity and cuts in public services and the welfare state.*

*We don't think the outcome will offer opportunities for a 'socialist Britain' as some leftist supporters of exit from the EU have argued. There may be less trade with the EU but instead it will be others, such as China and India, which will step in. We have already seen May's cosy up to the Chinese [state] and the London Mayor Khan appointing an Indian millionaire to be his advisor on 'opening-up' London. Within days of the referendum, a Japanese company bought up a British one. So we are really just changing one set of bosses for another. What does matter is the reasons why most people voted to leave: immigration. The EU was about free movement of labour for capital, but at least there was free movement. Leaving the EU can only mean that there will be pressure to curtail immigration. The rise in attacks on migrants from Eastern Europe is a sign of the mentality of some far-right and racist elements in the working class. This xenophobia is a major obstacle to building an effective working class revolutionary movement.*

If we add the centrality of the Irish border question to the ongoing headache for politicians and a major concern for people living both sides of the border, the situation has not exactly moved on from our initial analysis, in spite of the blow by blow negotiations.

## **Impact of Brexit on workers**

Being fought on the basis of sovereignty with a large dose of English nationalism, Leave was always going to legitimise discrimination against foreign workers and act to erode those workers' rights in Britain more than Remain would. This is because European legislation offers some protections to migrant workers from within the EU and also includes some protection of human rights of non-EU people, as well as the 'freedom of movement' afforded by the treaty and in the Schengen area.

Of course, the European Union is a capitalist institution working in favour of the bosses to keep workers exploited efficiently. Capitalism likes free movement of people so that the workforce can go to where the work is at its own expense. Because of obsession with sovereignty and national identity, migration has dominated the discourse of Brexit. However, those in charge of capitalist economies like Britain's, which has moved towards knowledge-based (quaternary) industry, are still going to want to manage the workforce required to support it. So at the same time as putting massive pressures on workers with fewer skills or less education, 'at home' bosses will also continue to look globally for workers who can fulfil the needs of the modern economy. Ideally it wants people who will not need too much healthcare, can look after their family with what they are earning, and pay taxes, whether they are British citizens or not. Brexit in no way means moving back to a less knowledge-based economy.

As well as in industry, a real crisis will continue to exist in services, especially health and social care because the neo-liberal state and business alike do not really want to pay to support people at home who are ill, have a disability or are older with greater health needs, that means they are less productive. The state (especially under the Conservatives) is not prepared to pay more to local authorities and may be more than prepared to see them cut services further leaving people to fend for themselves, using this as a justification to bring in privatised alternatives. Controlling the workforce overall includes bringing people in from abroad with more precarious positions – tied to the employer for fear of losing residency status or with controlled periods of employments – something Brexit will help make easier. Non-EU workers are already bound to their employer unless they can find another job quickly and easily. »

This was a major part of the beef at Fawley oil refinery (the 2009 struggle that led to Gordon Brown's oft misquoted 'British Jobs for British workers') as Italian workers were essentially indentured even though they were EU, kept on-site in portacabins earning vastly less.

***“The situation for lower paid workers who might consider coming to UK after a break with the EU looks particularly grim”***

Even if Britain remains in Europe there would still be the continued threat of multinational (e.g. American-owned) companies being invited to run the NHS and other services. With a suitable Brexit agreement, and even with 'no deal', it may simply mean that EU companies will be able to do this as well, with favourable tax conditions if they play the game and don't insist on workers' rights alongside being allowed to operate in UK. Some of the industries that would no doubt be interested would be in construction, energy, IT, research, education, as well as the health and care providers. This is a gamble though as they will need to make the wages attractive enough so that it is worthwhile for someone to work in UK while having no right to stay outside of the job, relative to opportunities for work in the person's home country or another EU country where they would have the right to settle. A lot of the above will depend on whether Britain stays in the Customs Union as this will influence how goods move around and this in turn will influence where businesses need workers to reside to make profit. It will also depend on how freely the EU will allow its member states to trade with Britain post-Brexit.

On the other hand, multinationals based in Britain and British-owned companies alike will not hesitate to move abroad if more advantageous to them than staying. Even small British-owned companies already operate abroad. When US companies like Motorola abandoned their production lines in Mexico for Asia, British companies quickly moved in to pick up the factory space and the skilled local workforce – such was the flexibility that globalisation allowed. British companies could decide to move some or all of their operations to Europe if profitable and if allowed to do so, with the support of the state.

## **Migrant workers**

Overall European migrants make up 5% of the population in England and an estimated 3.5-3.8 million EU citizens in the UK will be required to apply for settled status post-Brexit. For EU workers in Britain now, there is massive uncertainty about residency status as it's not clear how and if they will be allowed to stay after Brexit. Again the situation for non-EU migrants is instructive. Non-EU workers can generally get a visa to stay in UK for up to 6 months. However people from non-EU countries are already making difficult choices if they are allowed to stay and work longer, some working overtime to hit the required wage threshold to be able to work in UK on their own or with family (which is a higher threshold). Also, it is probably not common knowledge to many British people that the minimum annual earning threshold for non-EU workers was raised pretty well overnight in 2016 from £25k to £35k leading to many US and Australian workers having to leave (as reported in the media at the time), which was subsequently lowered back to £30k in 2017. Is very likely that the government will fiddle with the rules a lot like this after Brexit making relocating to UK very risky for lower paid workers.

The body that has made the most detailed recommendations about European Economic Area workers coming to UK post-Brexit, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), published a report in September 2018 – recommendations from which are not substantially affected by May's most recent Brexit 'deal'. The headline from the MAC was 'No preferential access' for EEA citizens after Brexit (something lovingly rephrased by Theresa May in November 2018 as stopping EU migrants "jumping the queue" versus workers from Australia or India). It also lumped workers of different occupations or skill level into the same scheme except possibly a separate seasonal agricultural workers scheme. Any low-skill gap would apparently be filled by family migration linked to other workers (e.g. spouses) and an expanded Youth Mobility Scheme (allowing younger people to come to UK for 2 years 'working holiday' from named countries) which seems unlikely to be fulfilled in practice since it is known that many YMS migrants take higher skilled posts albeit on a temporary basis. So the main change after Brexit is for the category of 'Tier 2' sponsored workers to include European in addition to non-European workers with the removal of a cap on the annual number of visas which is currently 20,700 people at the £30k level mentioned above





(rising to £60k above the threshold), plus some other amendments. These are precisely the practically indentured workers mentioned above and this recommendation would put most skilled migrant workers in the same boat, once freedom of movement in the EEA is lost. However, in order to placate the anti-immigration lobby, May subsequently suggested that visas for lower skilled workers could be limited to 11 months and have restrictions on families, which would act to prevent or discourage settlement.

Another recent development was a pilot project in November 2018 that the government launched, focussed on universities, health and social care, which they are using to work out the scale of the task, how to administer the scheme, and to fast-track some key workers the state does not want to lose. These are already workplaces with considerable casualised and/or mobile workers. 16% of university researchers are from other EU states and 23% of academic staff in biology, mathematics and physics are EU nationals. Furthermore, EU immigrants make up about 5% of English NHS staff overall, 10% of registered doctors and 4% of registered nurses. However, a major criticism was that the pilot scheme started with the worker only and not family members, leading to criticism from both Wales and Scotland health secretaries, plus trade unions criticised the £65 fee and are demanding that employers pay this on behalf of the individual, such that the fee has already been covered by some institutions.

'British workers'

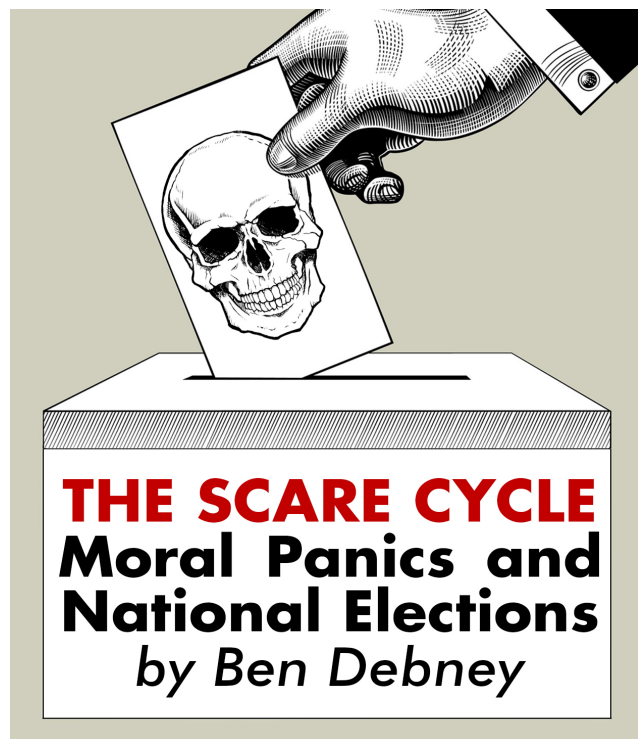
Workers who are British citizens will face ongoing economic pressures due to austerity as now, worse if the economy takes a dive. And there are a good number of gender-related workplace issues that are created by Brexit. Although incorporated into the 2010 Equalities Act, equal pay for women arises from the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Rights of part-time workers (pensions, parental leave entitlements) and protections for pregnant women at work also come from the EU. Imposition of employment tribunal fees was fought using EU law by Unison in 2013 on the grounds of it being discriminatory because the majority of low paid workers are women. After Brexit, it is quite possible the UK government could try and amend the law in the interest of the economy. Furthermore, the government has already indicated that women might need to choose home over work in order to look after elderly relatives post-Brexit if there is a social care staffing shortage! This kind of statement, from the DHSC in August 2018, only shows how controlling the state is prepared to be if necessary.

While we don't yet know what will happen, it's clear that Brexit has serious consequences for workers. The situation for lower paid workers who might consider coming to UK after a break with the EU looks particularly grim with a constant eye having to be kept on wage levels and time worked. Even higher paid workers are likely to have jobs that are tied to their employer, and risk losing residency if their employment ends, so taking industrial action will be riskier. At home, women are likely to be adversely affected and equality legislation could well be put to the test. »

Although quite speculative, it seems hard to see how the state will control migration to such a fine degree (such as work visas of less than a year) without additional checks by NHS and other bodies, which could end up making introducing national identity cards for the whole population more likely. The last time a national ID scheme was proposed and defeated (by No2ID and the anarchist campaign Defy-ID in 2005-9), it was migrants (notably asylum seekers) who ended up with biometric ID cards - and biometrics were added to passports around the same time. Furthermore, the move to more electronic record keeping in the NHS and e-Gov means they are more able to track individual entitlements, although not without some opposition to the 'hostile environment', against workers becoming 'border police' e.g. 'Docs Not Cops'.

### Opportunities

On the brighter side there may be opportunities to fight for better pay, if workers stick together. In our workplaces and political organisations we need to keep alert and see how we can support each other. Workplace meetings are a good start, especially so that migrant workers are not isolated. While we cannot do much about the process of Brexit as this is in the hands of the politicians, we can get ready for its consequences. This should include being ready defend co-workers and comrades who may face leaving the UK if they fail a yet to be determined residency test, mounting anti-deportation campaigns it comes to that (anarchists who have prior experience with No Borders and migrant solidarity have a lot to give here). We also need to keep an eye on what is happening in other countries. Whilst workers have experienced relative freedom of movement in the EEA, and with more countries being part of the EU, it should have been easier to point out common class interests, although the British Left has failed to make much of this recently, being focussed on domestic politics and the far right. On a practical level, having the EU has arguably made direct resistance easier – coordinated action against borders and in support of migrants (within and from without the EU) and against international economic summits of the political class. Anarchists have been at the forefront of this transnationalism and our own international blossomed in this period to include the Balkans, for example, so we hopefully have something to work with and build upon. ■



**“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them”**  
- H. L. Mencken

As a general rule, democratic theory tends to represent actors within representative democracies as essentially rational beings who, despite a tendency to be corrupted by the exercise of power, follow a rationality that can be accounted for. Rational choice theory, for example, sees individual choices, understood to be the result of one or another form of reasoning, as the basis of social phenomena. At the more sophisticated end of the spectrum, democratic theory will even acknowledge some level of dysfunctionality in traditional institutions and argue for reform of their corporatist tendencies, as one might argue for managing the symptoms of cancer without pretence or hope of effecting a cure. But the point remains.

Far less understood or accounted for, for the most part, is what Maurice Brinton has called the irrational in politics. Working-class electoral support for radical reactionaries proposing austerity programs that would hurt them was not, Brinton felt, especially rational. The average working-class voter of middle age, far from being open to democratic politics, was probably 'hierarchy

conscious, xenophobic, racially-prejudiced, pro-monarchy, pro-capital punishment, pro-law-and-order, anti-demonstrator, anti-long haired students and anti-dropout'. Trying to discuss measures for the redress of working-class grievances would, Brinton felt, 'almost certainly meet not only with disbelief but also that positive hostility that often denotes latent anxiety', a fact that led him to conclude that 'certain subjects are clearly emotionally loaded'. Cognisant of such, the noted US journalist and satirist H. L. Mencken wrote at some length on what Austrian psychologist Wilhelm Reich would later, in analysing the nascent national socialist movement, refer to as the 'mass individual'. Ideas, Mencken noted, 'leave them unscathed; they are responsive only to emotions, and their emotions are all elemental — the emotions, indeed, of tabby-cats rather than of men':

*Fear remains the chief of them. The demagogues, that is, the professors of mob psychology, who flourish in democratic states are well aware of the fact, and make it the cornerstone of their exact and puissant science. Politics under democracy consists almost wholly of the discovery, chase and scotching of bugaboos. The statesman becomes, in the last analysis, a mere witch-hunter, a glorified smeller and snooper, eternally chanting 'Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum!' It has been so in the United States since the earliest days. The whole history of the country has seen the melodramatic pursuit of horrendous monsters, most of them imaginary: the red-coats, the Hessians, the monocrats, again the red-coats, the Bank, the Catholics, Simon Legree, the Slave Power, Jeff Davis, Mormonism, Wall Street, the rum demon, John Bull, the hell hounds of plutocracy, the trusts, General Weyler, Pancho Villa, German spies, hyphenates, the Kaiser, Bolshevism. The list could be lengthened indefinitely; a complete chronicle of the Republic could be written in terms of it, and without omitting a single important episode. It was long ago observed that the plain people, under democracy, never vote for anything, but always against something. This explains, in large measure, the tendency of democratic states to pass over statespeople of genuine imagination and sound ability in favour of colourless mediocrities.*

By mid-century, Mencken's observations had enjoyed development at the hands of political scientist Richard Hofstadter, who outlined the 'Paranoid Style in American politics — a style of mind, not always right wing in its affiliations ... [characterised by] heated exaggeration,

suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy'. This made the persecution complex a key facet of political discourse, Hofstadter argued, systematising grandiose conspiracy theories after the style of the 'clinical paranoid', who exhibits a 'chronic mental disorder characterized by systematic delusions of persecution and of one's own greatness'. While both he and the demagogue are 'overheated, over-suspicious, overaggressive, grandiose and apocalyptic in expression', however, only the clinical paranoid feels the 'hostile and conspiratorial' world to be 'directed specifically against him'. The spokesman for the paranoid style, on the other hand, finds it directed 'against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not him alone, but millions of others'. This is a significant difference, in that

*Insofar as he does not usually see himself singled out as the individual victim of a personal conspiracy, he is somewhat more rational and much more disinterested. His sense that his political passions are unselfish and patriotic, in fact, goes far [as] to intensify his feeling of righteousness and his moral indignation.*

Such observations carry down to the present moment with a conspicuous salience. Criminological research into US national elections finds that the political preferences of white Americans are often shaped by stereotypes of African Americans as 'lazy, welfare-dependent, violent, or demanding special favors'; in other words, that 'race cues often racialize white public opinion', and 'racial messages do shape the political response of white citizens', in the manner described both by Hofstadter and Mencken. When the political responses of whites feed into crime policy, this research finds the primary source of information to be what is reported by the corporate press, which as a result of the stereotyping of minorities becomes the basis of government initiatives in that regard. 'There is no evidence that political elites' initial involvement in the wars on crime and drugs was a response to popular sentiments', notes Katherine Beckett:

Public concern about crime was quite low when candidate Barry Goldwater decided to run on a law and order platform in the 1964 presidential election. Similarly, when President Ronald Reagan first declared a 'national war on drugs' in 1982 and when he called for a renewal of this campaign in 1986, fewer than 2% of those polled identified drugs as the nation's most important problem. Nor is »

the most recent reincarnation of the crime issue a response to popular concern, although the public's attention has certainly shifted in that direction. Only 7% of those polled identified crime as the nation's most important problem in June 1993, just before the legislative debate over anti crime legislation began. Six months later, in response to the high levels of publicity these legislative activities received, that percentage had increased to 30%. By August 1994, a record high of 52% of those polled were most concerned about crime. Gallup Poll analysts concluded that this result was 'no doubt a reflection of the emphasis given to that issue by President Clinton since he announced his crime bill in last January's State-of-the-Union Address, and of the extensive media coverage now that the crime bill is being considered by Congress'.

alone to make up their own minds, as those who aspire to power scapegoat convenient targets for policy failures. H. L. Mencken, observing this in the 1920s, wrote that 'the whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed, and hence clamorous to be led to safety, by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary'.

*“the witch trials were in  
Europe from an actual  
they were to neutralise*



© The Library of Congress

Beckett concludes by noting the irony of official data indicating a decline in the prevalence of most types of crime during this period. The facts of the situation notwithstanding, racist cues provided by the political class became the basis for a series of exercises in scaremongering, not least of which was the use of the scare campaign over black criminal Willie Horton by George Bush Snr. during the 1988 presidential debates, culminating in a moral panic over the 'knockout game' in 2013. The prevalence in US national elections of scaremongering using the paranoid style to take advantage of the strong vein of irrationalism in politics is more than sufficient to invite the re-framing of the democratic election cycle as a 'scare cycle'. The scare cycle contrasts with the theoretical notion of election cycles as forums for dispassionate policy debate, places where the voting public are presented with the facts and left

### **Moral Panics and the Scare Cycle**

One of the main problems in coming to terms with the menacing of the public with an endless series of hobgoblins is that it involves deception as a matter of course; furthermore, the capacity to carry out scapegoating campaigns also implies the power to control the meaning of words, which in turn implies the power to silence criticism. Hence scapegoating campaigns have typically only proved identifiable as such long after the fact. In the past few decades, however, sociological research into moral panics, in concerning itself with episodes in which 'a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests', has expedited the process of identifying scapegoating narratives, offering critical insight into the production of imaginary hobgoblins.

In the seminal *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, sociologist Stanley Cohen explored the reactions of local communities and media outlets to youth-related disturbances at a number of English seaside towns in the late 1960s. The youth involved belonged to various subcultures. He argued that a process of 'deviant amplification' was at play.

*... designed ... to save  
... existing threat than  
... rebellious peasantry."*

Since the disturbances were largely little more than a series of brief clashes between rival youth subcultures, the reaction was disproportionate to the threat presented to the communities concerned. Despite producing no lasting damage to life or limb, they were presented publicly as the beginning of the breakdown of society. It was argued that the media reaction was consciously instigated as a kind of morality play by community leaders who, perceiving a threat to their privilege and power, were anxious to reassert both - paradoxically rendering themselves both cause and cure of the problem. Seeking to make sense of this paradox, Cohen referred to a manual for disaster response groups, outlining an almost identical process for the process of 'deviant amplification', or 'the production of deviance' - the production, in other words, of imaginary hobgoblins with which to terrify the public and stimulate the desire for draconian laws that could be used later for other purposes. Cohen quoted Howard Becker to the effect that 'deviance is created by society ... Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular persons and labelling them as outsiders'. Deviance as a social phenomenon, then, depended far more on who had the power to define the meaning of the word and impose their own definition on popular discourse than on the particular characteristics of anyone thus labelled. In practical terms, this meant that rather than responding to social crises with constructive actions addressing the grievances of those involved in conflict, the 'moral entrepreneurs' responsible for the panic sought leverage through deviance production to rehabilitate the ideological foundations of the status quo and the legitimacy

of those who represented it. In providing the power structure with a way to polarise public opinion, it also provided them with a hobgoblin or bogeyman with which to sow terror, smear critics and opponents on the basis of guilt by association, and reposition themselves as public saviours under crisis conditions of their own making. The labelling process became the basis for scare campaigns that would trigger primitive 'fight or flight' responses in the public, which could then be harnessed for political purposes. Thus 'social control leads to deviance', Cohen pointed out, not vice versa.

Given the requirement that there be control over the channels of mass communication, deviance production was, by definition, an elite-controlled process. In Cohen's study, suppression of the root causes of the youth disturbances by a sensationalist corporate media looking to sell newspapers was a critical factor in the successful engineering of moral panics. Thus, youth alienation created by high unemployment and the fear of change in older generations triggered by the rise of youth culture were not considered. Overwhelmed by events, and either unwilling or unable to address the actual causes of the problem, older and more established community members took the easy option of demonising disaffected youth as hoodlums and thugs, and the media took advantage of the situation for their own purposes.

In such cases, where unethical, immoral, harmful, dangerous and even criminal behaviours need reconstructing as morally just and right, the group of behavioural traits understood in social psychology as 'moral disengagement' turn out to be particularly useful. In contrast to cartoonish stereotypes of villainy as the result of a sociopathic rejection of morality per se, research into moral disengagement recognises that we rarely reject morality outright; rather, we apply it selectively. Broadly, the mechanisms of moral disengagement include:

1. Displacing or diffusing responsibility (*everyone does it, it's normal, and so on*);
2. Misrepresenting injurious consequences as beneficial to the victim (*they like it, it's good for them*);
3. Demonising and dehumanising the victim (*they are bad/evil, therefore the rules we have for regular people don't apply*); »

4. Articulating a self-defence in morally absolute terms (*those who aren't for me are against me; willing conflation of criticism of ideas/ attitude/ conduct/policy and attacks on person and rights*).

Insofar as it constitutes a means of dehumanising or demonising of the other, deviance production can therefore be seen as a form of moral disengagement. To the extent that this is the case, moral disengagement would seem to be intimately associated with moral panics in constituting one of its characteristic facets. If moral panics create a safe space for scapegoating, the mechanics of moral disengagement act as the engine of deviance production and moral panics. While not all forms of moral disengagement appear in every episode of deviance production, moral panicking over external threats will characteristically involve falsely associating dissent, criticism, questioning, challenge, doubt, or failure to worship with the requisite level of awe, with attacks on one's person and rights on the basis of the persecutory tactic of 'guilt by association'. Deviance production will inevitably depend on a logic that boils down to victim-playing, victim-blaming and the 'false dilemma' fallacy (those who are not for us are against us).

The false dilemma becomes the basis for an a priori confusion, as noted, of object and relation, in which dysfunctional, unjust and irrational social relations that produce crises can be swept under the rug in the name of persecuting the deviant stereotype now characterising a victimised group. There can be no dysfunctional social relations if they are not even acknowledged to exist. Neatly summarising this fact in defending his declaration that 'the means of defence against foreign danger, have been always the instruments of tyranny at home', founding father and author of the US Constitution James Madison pointed out during the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1777 that 'among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war whenever a revolt was apprehended'. Few have taken issue with him; the Romans too, it seems, were preoccupied with imaginary hobgoblins, not a small part of their legacy.

## Hobgoblins in History

The historical background to moral panics provides further insight into the nature of scare cycles. Historical inquisitions, show trials and kangaroo courts provide precedents for today's kangaroo court of public opinion, where trial by inquisition has been replaced with trial by a mass media devoted to the use of deviance production and victim-blaming to expedite the manufacture of consent. As *Trumbo*, a recent Hollywood film on the subject reminds us, Hollywood in the 1950s fell to ideological hysteria and authoritarianism as screenwriters and directors were called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and asked to answer the question: 'Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?' Those called before the Committee who refused to answer or to betray friendships by naming their associates were held in contempt and blacklisted from the motion picture industry as communists, in the name of defending democratic norms.

In a climate of moral panic, what belief system the accused subscribed to was immaterial; what mattered was that they had been identified as non-conformists. The Committee did not even need testimony to achieve its task; J. Edgar Hoover's 'Security Index' became the basis for the actual function of the HUAC as 'inquisitorial theatre'. Said a HUAC investigator to the *Washington Star* in 1957: 'We wouldn't be able to stay in business overnight if it weren't for the FBI'. In this respect, the HUAC operated on the same basis as every other form of the proverbial kangaroo court throughout history. The accused did not appear before the Committee to argue a case, but to demonstrate deference to the Committee and allegiance to the status quo (and the vested interests behind it). Those who failed to submit to such ideological policing, specifically aimed at Hollywood with a view to purging the cultural beacon of the Western world of crimethink, received the mark of otherness for daring to doubt the right of the HUAC to assume the role of thought police. Since the HUAC operated on the principle that 'those who are not for us are against us', it was taken for granted that refusal to venerate the Committee with the requisite level of awe was tantamount to a vote for Stalinism.

In the same vein, throughout the three centuries of the European witch-hunts, opposition to burning at the stake was identified with giving

aid to witches, or even with being a witch oneself; thus does the very first line of the unhinged and misogynistic witch-hunting tract, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, declare that anyone who doubts the existence of witches is a heretic. If you cast doubt on the official orthodoxy or think for yourself, the Brides of Satan win - as do the communists, or indeed the terrorists.

Much like the HUAC, the witch trials were less designed, as Silvia Federici has revealed, to save Europe from an actually existing threat than they were to neutralise a rebellious peasantry. Lately released from their feudal bonds by the decline of the feudal economy and the experience of famine and pandemic, mass deference to theocracy became notably lacking; fearing for its temporal power, the Catholic hierarchy turned to other means to protect itself. Much like the HUAC, the witch trials functioned as show trials to identify and persecute dissenters and nonconformists, terrorising those ensnared in their web with the prospect of burning at the stake, and forcing them to name their associates in ritual punishment for disobedience and nonconformity while providing the theocratic Terror with new targets. Other notorious kangaroo courts, such as the Stalinist show trials of the Great Purge of the 1930s, performed the same function. Dissidents were arrested as counter-revolutionaries and forced to give up names of their associates to avoid the firing squad; in this instance, as in the others, opposition to abuses of power was equated with support for capitalist reaction - if you think for yourself, the counter-revolutionaries win).

In all of the above examples, the climate of elevated emotions they produced functioned as an enabling narrative for persecution based on a fear of the other and the equally great lust for revenge, with the aid of an appropriate victim mentality and willing blindness to the difference between being criticised and being attacked. The success of this approach depended on the viciousness and vociferousness of the scare propaganda enabling it, and on the opportunities available to those so motivated to attack their political opponents in the name of upholding justice. The HUAC is especially instructive for us today in demonstrating how completely pre- and anti-democratic dynamics of fear, revenge and mob justice can weasel their way into formally or purportedly democratic systems of government, and the great damage they can do. History might exonerate the victims and condemn the perpetrators, but it can never recover what

was lost to and by victims. Likewise, the hundreds of thousands of innocent lives destroyed by show trials tilting after witches, counter-revolutionaries and other deviants and evil-prone misfits can never be reclaimed, even if history later condemns the institutions that took them.

## Hobgoblins and the News Cycle

The essential problem of historical show trials is the fact that the moral-panic narratives upon which they turned could be reinvented in other forms, giving rise to new deviant stereotypes, new persecutions and new blood lettings. This is complicated by the characteristically deceptive nature of scapegoating propaganda, and the difficulty of combating the hegemony of the corporate mass media. One particularly courageous attempt to confront this problem has been the vastly underrated seminal study of corporate propaganda by Alex Carey in his *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy*, which examines, among other things, the origins of the HUAC. Commenting on the origins of what became the public relations industry (or these days 'strategic communication'), Carey notes 'three [twentieth-century] developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy' - factors of particular significance where the national election cycle is concerned, paradoxically enough. In a remarkable passage, while ruminating at some length on the historical relationship between these three developments and Hofstadter's 'paranoid style', Carey describes a three-stage process for the reconstruction of ideological orthodoxy under cover of what is essentially moral panic:

*1. A threat (real or imagined) from outside the United States achieves a dramatic impact on popular consciousness; 2. This effect occurs at a time when liberal reforms and popular hostility to the large corporations and the power they exercise are perceived by conservative interests as a profound threat from inside the U.S. social and political system. Finally, 3. The two perceived threats merge, to the discredit of the internal reforms and of any political party, persons or policies associated with them.*

We would do well to recall that this was published in 1995; I have read no eerier foreshadowing of the future than this. Some of Carey's examples are »

referred to above, others may be found in earlier periods of American nativism. Carey's description of corporate propaganda in the United States recalls instances of deviance production evident in premodern and totalitarian societies, raising serious questions as to how deeply entrenched the basic assumptions fuelling them are in our own period. While some might read conspiracy theorising in such commentary, note what Edward Bernays, the 'Father of Public Relations', wrote in his own work on the subject: 'the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society' -

*Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of ... It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind, who harness old social forces and contrive new ways to bind and guide the world.*

Alex Carey notes that this 'conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses' takes the form of the development of a corporate narrative that identifies the particular, sectional and partisan interests of a burgeoning corporate power with the common interest of the nation as a whole. In this narrative, defenders of partisan economic interests were provided with a means of blame-shifting by wilfully conflating criticism of one's conduct with attacks on one's rights and person, as per the false-dilemma fallacy associated with moral disengagement. It was unthinkable that one could criticise prevailing economic and social orthodoxies because they deserved it; within the binary mode of thinking, one could only be for an increasingly oligarchic status quo, or outside and against America.

It was blinkered thinking of this kind that gave birth to the HUAC. A paradox is conspicuous here in that the HUAC acted in the name of defending democratic norms while using methods previously associated with the Great Purge and the European witch-hunts. A direct comparison is unnecessary to show that the dynamics upon which the HUAC turned the production of deviance and victim-blaming based on a victim complex enabled by a tendency to identify doubt in the prevailing orthodoxies with giving aid to the evil-doers - were

identical. The false dilemma was equally serviceable whether the kangaroo court took an institutional form or the form of 'inquisitorial theatre', sustained by public opinion shaped and moulded by public-relations narratives designed to 'pull the wires which control the public mind'.

## **Australian Hobgoblins**

The recent history of election cycles in Australia bears out this point, the most glaring example being the fallout from the terrorist attacks of 2001. Katherine Gleeson notes that this was one of several gifts of heaven-sent manna received by Prime Minister John Howard, who in using terrorism for electoral purposes set a precedent for all who followed on the basis of deviance production and scapegoating, the oldest tricks in the book. 'Historically,' Gleeson writes, 'provoked attack offers leaders an extraordinary opportunity for increased political legitimacy' -

*With an election looming and trailing in the polls, the chance to engage Australia in what was perceived publicly as a legitimate war was arguably too good a political offering to pass up. According to McAllister, the Labor Party held a 13-point lead over the Liberal Party in the first six months of 2001, and looked set for defeat were it not for the vote-turning issues of border protection and terrorism. Polls throughout the world reflected the reality that voters opt to support the incumbent government in times of uncertainty and existential threat; Howard rode this wave with great success. He was remade as something of a war leader in the style of his great mentor Robert Menzies; he became the 'deputy sheriff' he had aspired to two years prior; he successfully wedged the ALP on security; he took on a new image as a gutsy conviction politician; and he promised Australians security against that which they feared (rationally or otherwise).*

As a precursor to the torrent of xenophobia and Islamophobia unleashed in September 2001 came the Tampa affair (in August that year), in which 438 refugees from Afghanistan were rescued by the eponymous Norwegian vessel in international waters, then denied entry into Australia. Together with the 'children overboard' affair in October, in which the government lied about refugees throwing their children into the water as their boat sank, these incidents were widely regarded as the catalysts for the Coalition victory in the November federal elections. Ian Ward noted that 'these events



were part of a carefully calculated Liberal Party strategy to revive its flagging electoral stocks' - one whose wild success offered a clear precedent for elections to come. While it has never been illegal to seek asylum in Australia, Howard nevertheless declared on 3AW radio his belief 'that it is in Australia's national interest that we draw a line on what is increasingly becoming an uncontrollable number of illegal arrivals in this country'. Such comments were dabbling in both deviance production and moral disengagement; the labelling of refugees as 'illegals' demonised and dehumanised them while allowing Howard to play the victim of this threat to Australia's national interest, and to victimise those who were already victims of a war he had played a part in starting.

These were also characteristic features of the children overboard affair, where on the eve of the 2001 election the Howard government claimed that asylum seekers had thrown their children into the sea as their fishing vessel sunk. These claims were false - at the time of the alleged incident the boat, with 223 people on board, including fifty-six children, was still afloat and limping back towards Indonesia. A Senate inquiry established to determine what had happened later concluded that '[t]he story was in fact untrue', and that the Howard government had known they were false accusations prior to the federal election. The report

explicitly noted that these false claims were 'used by the Government to demonise [asylum seekers] as part of the argument for the need for a "tough" stand against external threats and in favour of "putting Australia's interests first"'. Despite these and subsequent findings against the government's claims, the timing of a second Senate inquiry prior to the 2004 election permitted the affair to dominate that campaign too, once more helping to return the Howard government to office. Such was its distain for Howard's '[cynical exploiting of] voters' fears of a wave of illegal immigrants by demonising asylum seekers', that even the usually ultraconservative Australian newspaper entitled one story, 'PM's Credibility Blown out of the Water', adding that 'this disturbing saga still has a long way to go'.

Not one to let facts get in the way of inquisitorial theatre, however, Howard continued to campaign on 'border protection', to great media fanfare led by papers like The Australian, famously declaring that 'we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come', and continuing to stir the pot with comments to the effect that 'this campaign, more than any other that I have been involved in, is very much about ... having an uncompromising view about the fundamental right of this country to protect its borders.' »



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SO Border protection was never in question, though Howard's insinuation that it was carried the implicit assumption, rarely challenged by the mass media, that Australia's adherence to international refugee conventions was undermining Australian sovereignty. Howard's victim complex in this respect reflected his moral disengagement, manifest in his victimisation of unfortunates later found to be legitimate refugees - many of whom eventually resettled in New Zealand.

Rick Kuhn notes that this campaign strategy provided Howard with a way to promote the unpopular austerity platform that had seen the Liberal Party lose the 'unlosable' 1993 election. With a hat tipped to the rising figure of Pauline Hanson, whose policies he would eventually appropriate as a strategy to undermine her political support, racism provided an eminently suitable distraction - one that could be combined with Reaganite counter-terrorism narratives and incipient xenophobia in the wake of the September 11 terrorist atrocities in the United States. These inevitably received similar treatment according to the established script. Howard led the way in linking terrorism and illegal immigration, declaring on the AM radio program on 19 September 2001 that 'every country has a redoubled obligation in the light of what has happened to scrutinise very carefully who is coming into this country' - the linking of one existential threat to another being an example of another noted phenomenon that moral panic researchers have called 'convergence'. In another speech, Howard announced that Australian voters 'must also ask themselves who is better able to lead this country in the dangerously different strategic and economic circumstances in which the country now finds itself' - being 'tough on terrorism' was now a campaign platform.

As the basis for the scare cycle, such talk also begat the 'Pacific Solution', whereby refugees to Australia would be warehoused offshore, which by 2005 had cost \$220 million, in addition to the \$336 million spent on a new 800-bed detention camp on Christmas Island, and \$58 on Manus Island. As it turned out, the border protection industry would become a useful Keynesian economic stimulus and job-creation program — for border guards, Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers, as well as their suppliers and outfitters — with few complaints from the paragons of laissez-faire capitalism about state intervention in economic life. Indeed, as one commentator put it, 'stopping the boats is bad for

business'. Howard gloated as he was re-elected that people would 'remember that period that I stopped the boats'.

In 2004, Howard again deployed the rhetoric that had worked so famously four years before. In this, as before, he had the help of Toby Ralph, known these days for taking a job in 2007 for the Australian Constructors Association to develop a strategy for unleashing a 'politically damaging campaign' against the Australian Labor Party unless it toned down its opposition to the government's Work Choices legislation, the Association clearly



recognising Ralph's skill in blame-shifting. Crikey notes that the plan 'was shelved when Labor agreed to postpone its plans to abolish the building industry watchdog'. Howard's re-election speech made sure to make hay with popular fears of terrorism, alleging that 'terrorism has cast a dark cloud over the world', and that 'it is a challenge that must be repulsed, and a challenge best repulsed by us being determined to live the lives of a free and democratic society'. He added, 'whether popular or not, I will never hesitate to do whatever is right and necessary, to protect Australia and the Australian people against the threat of terrorism'.

As the already toxic political discourse was further inflamed by such comments, spilling over into ugly

episodes such as the Cronulla race riots of 2005, Howard pressed on, claiming it was in 'Australia's national interest' to support the continuing war on terror, even as this created the conditions for the rise of Islamic State, as Paula Matthewson has saliently observed:

*While it may be eminently logical to bolster security measures to deal with the rise of organised and lone wolf terrorists at home, it makes little sense to participate in a military campaign similar to the one that caused home-grown extremists to arise in the first place.*



Otherwise preoccupied with the emotions of the moment, however, the kangaroo court of Australian public opinion failed to notice or anticipate the possibility of such developments. In 2003, The Onion quipped: 'If you thought Osama bin Laden was bad, just wait until the countless children who become orphaned by U.S. bombs in the coming weeks are all grown up', as today they now are, with the predicted consequences now bemoaned by all and used as an excuse for further responses along the same lines as those that created the problem to begin with, ad infinitum.

Lacking new major events to seize on, Howard was ousted from office in 2007, although he left a lasting legacy - attack ads from both sides of the

political fence seeking to capitalise on the priming of hateful negativity throughout the electorate. In 2013, newsmedia doyen Laurie Oakes noted with approval that 'Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is turning back the tide on the boats', recalling that 'Rudd once promised not to "lurch to the Right" on border protection' - no one was complaining that he was adhering to Hofstadter's paranoid style too. As the saying goes, however, those who live by the sword die by it too: an unprecedented scare campaign around Rudd's proposed Resource Super Profit Tax (RSPT) on mining radically undermined the government and contributed to Rudd's downfall in June 2010, reminding us of Carey's observation regarding the growth of democracy alongside the growth of corporate power, the latter in this case funding a supreme example of a constructed scare campaign via the amplification of what it meant to be Australian.

***"Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country. We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of..."***

Having taken advantage of the unprecedented corporate-funded scare campaign, Prime Minister Julia Gillard likewise pandered to the prevailing sentiment regarding refugees, eventually managing to have the Australian mainland excised from the migration zone for the purposes of avoiding national commitments to international refugee conventions - something Howard had tried to do and failed, his backbench having determined the strategy too mercenary and dishonest. Following the example of her predecessor, Gillard too died by the sword, this time at the hands of Howard's disciple Tony Abbott, who in making his election strategy the production of deviance through three-word scare slogans demonstrated that he had learnt his lessons well. Abbott declared at around this time: 'What we will ensure is that we are not played for mugs by the people-smugglers and their customers ... we will not be taken for a ride as a nation and a people' - though if he had sincerely wanted to break the people smugglers' 'business model', he only needed to permit the asylum seekers entry into the country in line with international refugee conventions. Not being serviceable to scare-cycle narratives, however, such options were off the table. »

Abbott's use of three-word slogans (for example, 'Stop the Boats') provides relevant context for the recent 2016 double dissolution election, triggered by the failure of a Bill to reinstate the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). Minister for Industrial Relations Senator Michaelia Cash alleged of the construction industry that 'the level of industrial unlawfulness in this sector adds to the cost of every project', thereby hurting productivity (and, by implication, the national good, as per Carey's corporatist narrative referred to above). Cash alleged that the upshot of these attacks on productivity and idealism was that 'Australians pay more'; she and the government remained silent, however, on the rising cost of electricity thanks to the \$48 billion in taxpayer funds spent augmenting the power grid. The failure of the Turnbull government's scare narrative to capture the public imagination in light of such inconsistencies perhaps goes some way towards explaining Turnbull's reversion to xenophobia in the face of low approval ratings prior to the 2016 election. Similar behaviour has also been a marked characteristic of his US counterpart in Donald Trump, both as a campaign strategy and a response to low approval ratings, evidencing Ghassan Hage's contention that 'Muslim-bashing has become de rigeur and widely seen by politicians as a route to popular success', as has war against their countries. This fact certainly proved a salient one for Pauline Hanson, returned at the recent election to the Senate as the spokesperson for her revitalised One Nation party.

***“Election campaigns in Australia over the last fifteen years at least have far more in common with the kangaroo courts of history than contests of policy traditionally associated with representative democracy”***

For his part, the Assistant National Secretary for the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), Dave Noonan, said supporters of the ABCC had

*“... engaged in a campaign of smear and disinformation calculated to induce a moral panic in the community about the construction industry ... The reason for that is simply to persuade the public to accept draconian laws in relation to industrial relations that would not otherwise be acceptable.”*

To the extent that in initiating another stage of the scare cycle the government was reading from the age-old script of moral panicking and witch-hunting, Noonan may have been unaware how right he really was.

## **Conclusion**

As scapegoating narratives become intertwined with national elections and the news cycle - devoted to the vested interests of the billionaires who own and control the mass media and the task of manufacturing consent through deviance production - historical forms of panic-driven scapegoating may be seen as precursors to contemporary varieties. Just as history repeats in the appearance and reappearance of campaigns of persecution carried out by witch-hunts, literal and otherwise, so too is the election cycle being reduced to a scare cycle in which electoral success is measured in terms of the capacity to menace the public with imaginary hobgoblins.

Election campaigns in Australia over the last fifteen years at least have far more in common with the kangaroo courts of history than contests of policy traditionally associated with representative democracy - more even perhaps than the personality contests that have tended to substitute for policy debates in the contemporary period. Where scaremongering becomes a basis of election cycles, its narratives provide candidates with pretexts to reconstruct themselves as defenders of the nation, regardless of their actual track record, or their support for the kind of neoliberal social and economic policies producing disastrous effects for the living conditions and opportunities of majority populations. In doing this, they represent a tacit admission of failure on the part of those seeking to exonerate themselves of blame, and of a broader failure of the system overall.■

(Cited version available online)

# How Does It Hurt?

Re-imagining Violence Outside of Capitalism

by Hannah Levene



**Last month** I visited a friend in New York. In the bookstalls along the streets by Washington Square Park I found a copy of ‘Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist’ by Alexander Berkman. It is a 1972 reprint of the 1970 edition, published by Schocken Books in New York City itself. The same city Berkman came to from Russia, bought on a street he probably walked down. Berkman was imprisoned for 22 years for the attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick, the man who sent an army of 300 Pinkerton men to quash the Homestead Steel Company strike in Pittsburgh, 1892. Berkman travelled by train from New York to Pittsburgh, walked into Frick’s office and shot at him in cold blood.

He believed the act would send a clear message of what the People can do in the face of oppression. It would be the greatest piece of propaganda the cause could have, worth not only Frick’s life but his own. He will kill Frick and he will be hung, all for the cause. In actuality Frick doesn’t die and far from providing a clear message Berkman’s act incites discussion amongst the prisoners, the workers and the anarchists on the use violence in the name of the People. Believing he will be hung and not caring a bit, what Berkman actually gets is 22 years in a penitentiary to think.

The Kate Sharpley Library’s May 17 newsletter includes a review of Berkman’s memoirs. It says: “[Berkman] doesn’t decide that victory will come if the anarchist movement is more fierce or more cunning. Berkman’s achievement is to know that it has to be more human – we need not only persistence but also “hearts that grow not cold”.<sup>1</sup> Let ferocity and cunning be the tool of the oppressor, come the revolution from hearts that grow not cold.

On seeing a public execution by Guillotine in Paris during 1857, Tolstoy remembers “the cold, inhuman efficiency of the operation.” More horrific than any scenes of war, Tolstoy sees the guillotine as a “frightful symbol of the state that used it”. Tolstoy, like Berkman comes to realise, knows it is not cruelty that we should be using, but care. Violence isn’t the job of the People it is the dirty work of the State. »

In 'An Anarchist Guide to Violence', Ruth Kinna's article in the 2016 summer issue of Strike! Kinna reminds us that it is not that black and white: "we must understand the boundaries between violence and non-violence as blurred". To begin with, Kinna states, anarchism is not in general "understood as a condition directed towards the eradication of violence". Instead, Kinna says, "historical anarchists who called for the abolition of capitalism and the state had their sights set on the destruction of the monopoly of violence, something they believed states held, and not the abolition of violence." It isn't the abolition of violence then, but the "destruction of the monopoly of violence," the idea that violence, like everything else, should be communised.

The communisation of the States monopoly on violence is not translatable as the American right to arms. The rights to arms is upheld by structural, systematic mistrust. That each man has the right to defend himself and his family from another man reifies the fallacy that violence is already dispersed equally amongst the people (and that those people are men). Being allowed to own a gun is founded on and perpetuates the idea that the people are violent, unruly, and not to be trusted. This is naturalised and thus unshifting; all they can do is give a gun and grant you the right to shoot your neighbour. But the disassembling of the monopoly of violence is not simply handing out guns or tweeting nuclear codes. Such actions continue to ascribe to current capitalist system which is predicated on us not trusting each other.

Rather, like any reclamation, reclaiming violence involves redefinition. The question is, once violence is everybody's what is it? What does the communisation, of violence look like? What does the decentralisation of violence look like? What does our violence look like? If centralisation is a part of violence in its current form, then decentralising, dispersing violence re-forms it. What is that, or, what are those forms? It isn't that we either support or reject violence, but rather we must ask what does violence look like outside of this system, in our hands? When is it necessary? How does it hurt? How does it interact with autonomy and mutual aid? And what is the use of violence in a society based on trust?

The Curious George Brigade's 'The End of Arrogance: Decentralization and Anarchist Organizing' says:

*Mutual aid has long been the guiding principle by which anarchists work together. The paradox of mutual aid is that we can only protect our own autonomy by trusting others to be autonomous.*

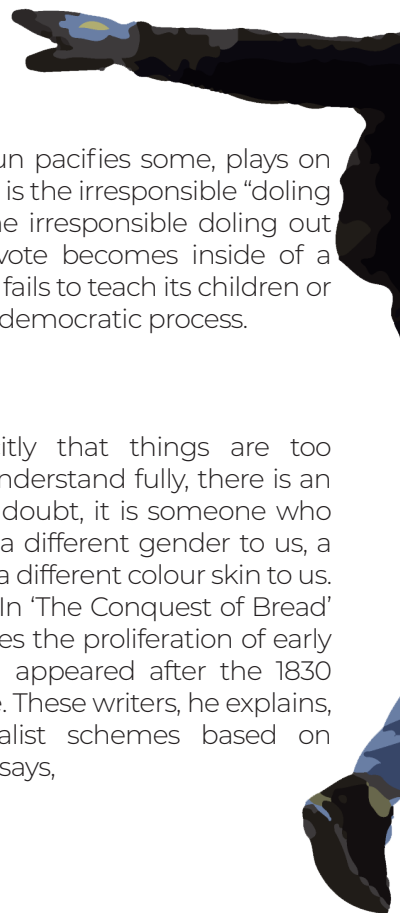
Mutuality and autonomy are inextricable. Autonomy within a capitalist system is cast as the freedom to be better than, it requires having the means, the money to be left alone. But autonomy has nothing to do with isolation or individualism and everything to do with trust. That is, trusting yourself which includes trusting yourself to trust others.

The Brigade continues that super-structures, like capitalism do the opposite of this. They

*seek to limit autonomy and work based on affinity in exchange for playing on our arrogant fantasies and the doling out of power. Decentralization is the basis of not only autonomy (which is the hallmark of liberty), but also of trust. To have genuine freedom, we have to allow others to engage in their work based on their desires and skills while we do the same.*

Being able to own a gun pacifies some, plays on our arrogant fantasies, it is the irresponsible "doling out of power". The same irresponsible doling out of power which each vote becomes inside of a democratic system that fails to teach its children or engage its adults in the democratic process.

We are told implicitly that things are too complicated for us to understand fully, there is an expert for that, and no doubt, it is someone who is a different age to us, a different gender to us, a different class to us, has a different colour skin to us. We cannot be trusted. In 'The Conquest of Bread' Peter Kropotkin discusses the proliferation of early socialist writings which appeared after the 1830 July revolution in France. These writers, he explains, planned intricate socialist schemes based on collectivist ideals yet, he says,



*“writing during the period of reaction which had followed the French revolution, and seeing more its failures than its successes, they did not trust the masses, and they did not appeal to them for bringing about the changes which they thought necessary.”*

How can you write and develop plans for a collectivist way of organising at the same time as distrusting the masses? They made it impossible in doing so, with this disparity at the heart of it, it was doomed to fail.

***“Being allowed to own a gun is founded on and perpetuates the idea that the people are violent, unruly, and not to be trusted. This is naturalised and thus unshifting; all they can do is give a gun and grant you the right to shoot your neighbour. But the disassembling of the monopoly of violence is not simply handing out guns or tweeting nuclear codes.”***

It is obvious, too, that these thinkers did not plan for the socialisation of everything, having such little faith in the people they were certainly planning on keeping violence for themselves. And as such, keeping violence as it is: a monopolised, central legitimated cruelty which is doled out from above or a criminalised reflection of or reaction to that cruelty when exercised from below. It is, again the inherent structural distrust of the capitalist system we are living in which currently frames our definition of violence. In an anarchist communist (with a small c) society, there will be a different violence. Decentralization of everything, including the decentralisation of violence relies on autonomy and trust.

How to build a society based on trust? A decentralised system where we each have a slice of everything and are responsible for that slice. A system which requires new understandings of trust outside of contracts and laws. A definition of trust which includes tenderness and care and understanding. A system which doesn't simply hand us “power” we are not adept to deal with, that same system that ensures we are not »



collectively adept at it, yet hands it out nonetheless. Which casts power as something we can earn within a capitalist system, based on money and means.

In Maggie Nelson's 'The Art of Cruelty' she says: "the mainstream thrust of anti-intellectualism as it stands today, characterises thinking itself as an elitist activity." A society based on trust must dispel the idea that education is a privilege we do not deserve. The capitalist usurpation of education has translated into a cultural prejudice that those who cannot afford it do not deserve it, that it is not for them. That thoughts are something you purchase, that some ideas most people simply cannot afford to know. This is bullshit.

***"In a society based on trust violence as we know it will be a redundant technology, something we once thought we needed, now rendered obsolete."***

Being able to understand is not a privilege. The ideas you have do not make you higher or lower than you are. You are where you are and your ideas are there with you. And when you move your ideas will come too, and they can be passed on, they can be given and shared. Ideas are not linked to status. Thinking is ours to do. Ideas are ours to form. Ideas do not differentiate us from each other, those who think and those who do not think. Ideas are not the opposite of action, it is not a choice between being the worker who works and does not think, or the thinker who thinks because they do not need to work. Thinking is the common denominator, the ideas we have are what we share. That isn't to say that the ideas are all the same but that we can all think, that we can all form ideas, the power to think is ours. Learning is not elitist, it is everybody's. Not only do we deserve it but it is integral to building a society built on autonomy and mutual aid, on trusting yourself enough including trusting yourself enough to trust others.

This is the history of thought in anarchist culture. The autodidact is the self-taught scholar who wants to know, to find out, and to share in ideas. I think of Jose Peirats, the Spanish anarcho-

syndicalist revolutionary writer, who "stressed the role of education in founding a counter-hegemonic revolutionary consciousness – an alternative culture that, in order to flourish, had to be rooted in everyday life." Not just the importance of education, as if it were a separate space outside of everyday life, but the idea that education is a part of what we do. Not what we do in order to get a job, but in order to be autonomous, when to be autonomous is to feel that you know, that you have the right to know, the ability to know, that you are able, that you can help.

The process of turning a centralised system which relies on some people knowing more than others, and on everyone not knowing enough, into a system where everything - knowledge, violence, property - is decentralised, in short, the shift from a capitalist system to anarchism is not a simple process. It is not a switch like the day we switch from a Tory government to Labour government. And, I believe, it is not a coming insurrection, a violent revolution after which everything will be altered. Rather, it is the building of a culture of resistance. The Anarchist Federation defines a culture of resistance as a set of bonds, "connections of trust and common purpose [which] work against the everyday logic of capitalism" They continue "A culture of resistance is the school in which we learn how to be free, how we become through the fight against capitalism everything we will be after it."

Here is your portion of bread. Here is your portion of violence. But I don't want your violence, not as you have used it. Then, who am I to reject violence? As someone who has had the privilege of never having to fight, I'll side with Kinna. "The rejection of non-violence as a primary anarchist commitment is merely a decision to reserve judgement on the use of violence and a refusal to automatically condemn those that resort to it." Meanwhile, there is work to be done towards building a society in which there is no use for it. That no one is hungry enough, or downtrodden enough. That the rubble of the monopoly of violence once toppled will pile up around us for us to make something else out of. So we can imagine what the communisation of violence looks like, what it feels like in our hands and how we can now forge it freshly. In a society based on trust violence as we know it will be a redundant technology, something we once thought we needed, now rendered obsolete. ■

*(Cited Version available online)*



# How to hack into bus stop advertising spaces



**1**

Choose a suitable bus stop location. The main bus stop advert company is JCDecaux, and there are hundreds of sites to choose from.

**2**

Select the 4-way utility key from the kit and locate the attachment that has a large square key shape. This will open the lock on the side of the advertisement shell.

**3**

Insert the square key into the lock and turn clockwise 180 degrees. Don't worry if it doesn't open first time, the mechanism can be stiff. Keep calm and keep trying.

**4**

Once the side panel is open, insert one finger into the bottom of the casing and slide the metal cover up to reveal the next key hole.

**5**

Take the T40 hex key from the kit, and insert it into the small hole whilst keeping the metal cover held up.

**i**

If installing at night time, turn the power breakers off inside the panel - just flick the switch down. You will feel less exposed with the backlight.

**6**

Once the key is located in the lock, turn anti-clockwise through 90 degrees to release the catches that keep the perspex screen closed.

**7**

The perspex cover may have two pistons that open up when you release the catches. Make sure you keep hold of the bottom of the screen and let it rise slowly.

**8**

Roll up the poster that is inside from the bottom.

If the poster you are replacing has a blank reverse, you can re-use it for another installation; if not, you should recycle it.

**9**

Slide your poster into the top of the panel, push it into the clip that runs across the top of the perspex. You may wish to pre-fold a 1cm edge on your posters, for an easier install. A credit card can also help with pushing the poster into the clip.

**10**

Put two hands on the bottom edge of the casing and push back to the frame to re-engage the catches, and close the door. Then walk away; take your time; enjoy the experience.

# THE YELLOW VESTS



**You couldn't have** missed the dramatic footage that filled the news throughout the tail end of 2018, protestors give what for to heavily armed goons as tear gas rained down on them. The Yellow Vest Movement went from zero to revolution seemingly over night, there has been much written about them already however let's just fill ourselves in a little.

In May last year a petition was signed by over a million people in disgust at the state profiteering with a fuel price hike, the final straw of ever growing discontentment caused by years of escalating economic imbalance and the governments ongoing assault on rural communities. Across Facebook groups called for the roads to be block and on November the 127th we saw "The Mouvement des Gilets Jaunes" born with vast demonstrations of some 300,000 people across France. By the 21st of November, 585 people had been injured, including a 63-year-old pensioner was run over by a motorist and a motorcyclist died after being struck by a van trying to get around a barricade. Some 115 police were injured as protestors defended themselves. This call to arms was labelled "Act I"

***"Motorists, citizens: we are being lied to, swindled, dispossessed, and scorned; but now the scorned are in the streets, and the scornful will be removed from power!"  
- Sign at road blockade in Belfort***

The yellow vest formed as asymmetric revolutionary movement, stripped of the influence of political parties and organised in a leaderless, horizontal fashion where demagogues and wannabe politicians are cast out, leadership being informal and temporary at best. The movement has managed to remain leaderless and continues to take action across the nation in a diffused and obfuscated manner which makes it hard for the state to crack down.

Overwhelming populated by the working class from rural areas and the poor peripheries of cities the movement is extremely diverse in character, earlier on it was feared that nationalists and the right wing in general were taking over which was keeping the trade unions such as CGT from giving their solidarity and lead to a lot of misunderstanding amongst the international revolutionary community However it wasn't long before organisations such as Fédération Anarchiste were able to take stock of the quickly evolving

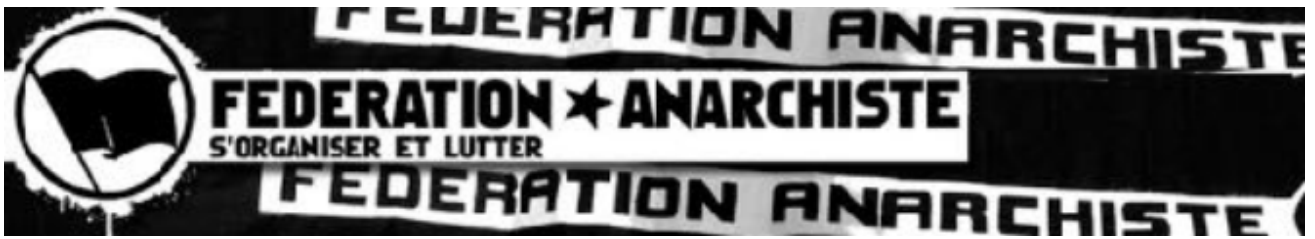
situation and share information on the state of play. This was backed up by videos of Antifascists taking on the right wing during actions, establish a hostile environment for bigots and helping to keep the Yellow Vests free from the coercion of those who would seek to use it as a platform for hate or simply use it as a screen to abuse and attack people of colour.

The Yellow Vest has, much like "Occupy" become an icon for movements around the world, from rallies in Rome to fight draconian anti-immigration laws to Basra where protestors calling for job opportunities were fired upon with live ammo. Here in the UK, we quickly saw a few camps appear online, "Yellow Vests UK", by far the most active tho has been the EDL wannabes and sovereign citizen types fronted by James Goddard who has decided a hi vis makes him a revolutionary taking on the state instead of just another salty racist spewing hate at anyone who'll listen. Saying that there are left wing groups such as the The People's Assembly who took on the Yellow Vest icon and called for an anti Tory rally with the support of Momentum which say 5000 people go for a walk in London.

Meanwhile back in France we are now on "Act XV" and we have seen so very much. Violence and music on the streets of Paris, footage of dozens of police looting shops and to many people crushed underneath their boots, a dozen deaths and a vast popularist movement consolidate to become a real threat the French state. We watch as protestors are habitually attacked with flash balls and take beatings from CRS (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité) who have been attacking the workers since the Renault strikes of 1947. Where this will go? who can say really...It's clear enough that the people are pissed and they are not willing accept the corrupt system that oppresses them and as we roll towards fair weather we're almost certain to see a reurgence in revolutionary fever amongst the French working class.

We look to our French comrades with solidarity in our hearts and hope beyond the riot porn people here are taking notes. We have a tendency to move at the pace of molasses despite having to deal with an increasingly shambolic government and we need to look to the French and start remembering that these streets... these ones right here...

**THEY ARE OUR STREETS** ■



## Statement “about the Yellow Vests”

*Translated by FA*

Several weeks ago, a movement of anger as we have not seen in a longtime appeared in France, totally disorienting the state power. It is understandable and legitimate in regard to the suffered social violence; the diversity of its participants is an indication of how much people are fed up with the successive, more or less hidden, austerity politics. Even if impressive, this revolt is only adding to the recent social movements taking place throughout France in the hospitals, the rail company, universities, high-schools etc.

The main characteristic of this movement is the rejection of representation by politicians and of self-proclaimed leaders. On the occupied roundabouts, new modes of social interaction are being invented. Anarchists approve of this attitude which has always been theirs. However, the revolt will be in vain if it is not followed by proposals.

They exist, for example in Saint-Nazaire or Commercy, and even if they don't fully satisfy the anarchists, they deserve to be supported as long as they are moving toward emancipation.

We are condemning and denouncing the many cases of violent State repression (arbitrary arrests, flash trials, mutilations from police 'non-lethal' rounds and other offensive police weapons) as the only answer to the protests.

The victory of this movement will not be the dissolution of the Assemblée nationale (editor's note: French Parliament) in order to fill it with demagogues/populists and/or nationalists who themselves would not tolerate such demonstrations, but in its disruption through the establishment of self-organising and anarchist federalism. ■

Fédération Anarchiste  
federation-anarchiste.org



# An interview with the Bangladesh Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation

(Originally shared on [www.loveandragemedia.org](http://www.loveandragemedia.org))

**As the garment workers step out on strike** in their thousands to fight for a better pay, only to face police brutality, we present this fantastic interview with the Bangladesh Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation (BASF) which explores the work they are engaged in during these times of struggle for the working class of Bangladesh.

***Please tell us how everything started. Had there been anarchist traditions or a union movement for a longer time? Had there been contacts to organizations in other countries?***

The Bangladesh anarchist workers' movement is less than five years old, born out of the ashes of failed Marxism-Leninism. I recall the antecedent period in Bangladesh history where Marxism-Leninism held hegemony. This was a time of deep faith and affection for the thought of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tsetung, and Trotsky. As far as I understand, none in the movement knew of anarchism as a political ideology and would not know of it until decades later. We revered the hanging portraits of Marxist leaders, we studied their books, and we integrated discussion of their ideas into our daily lives. Our life's pursuit was to become socialist revolutionaries. We were so fervent in our beliefs of a better world that we sacrificed clothing for books, food for paper.

The socialist movement was already active in Bangladesh when my generation moved from studying socialism to helping develop a mass socialist movement. In Dhaka, the capital, we helped in the dissemination of pro-Soviet papers, we joined student organizations, and we participated in interviews. We explained socialism to the people, to workers, from the factories to the fields. Our path was guided by science and freedom of expression, and we spread our ideas without imposing on others. But we faced public rejection and death in our efforts.

When speaking in Muslim-dominated areas, many condemned us as atheists and unrighteous. And where we were not simply denounced, many of us were murdered. Our struggle has been the history of bloodshed. We have lost many of our companions. And although the oppressive apparatuses tortured and killed us, we proceeded ahead with the dream of revolution and continued to take those steps to make the revolution. Our work increased the number of socialist organizations and supporters across cities and villages. These bodies were intent to fight against the tyranny of oppression, against the national military dictatorship and against imperialism.

***“We seek solidarity from sister and brother comrades all over the world. We want to work together with everyone.”***

As early as 1980 we were able to hear about the Soviet Union and China's authoritarian nature and contradictions. We did not believe this was the truth, that “scientific” socialism could be false. Rather, we believed this was imperialist and CIA propaganda. The subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the breaking of Lenin's statue greatly shocked us all. Together with the eastern bloc, the socialist countries of the world changed. They moved away from having even a veneer of socialism and openly embraced a capitalist restructuralization.

This produced a tremendous shock in the thought of our movement. We re-read Marxism's fundamentals over and over. But none of this helped us to better understand the failure of “socialism”.

We did, however, take an interest in the revolutionaries who criticized Marxism-Leninism. This led us to read the works of many anarchists, such as Mikhail Bakunin, William Godwin, P.J. Proudhon, Peter Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Errico Malatesta, Alexander Berkman, Max Stirner, Élisée Reclus, and Noam Chomsky. Their works are not in print form [in Bangladesh], nor are they in Bengali. »

So our medium of learning has been through reading anarchist texts through the internet in foreign languages. By 2012, many of us former Marxists acquired a clear idea of anarcho-syndicalism from our continuous internet studies.

Because I have been involved in tea workers' struggles since 2000, it was among tea workers and close, political friends that we first introduced anarcho-syndicalist practices through the development of The Tea Workers' Council. This council did not bear the name of any specific doctrine or party. Because old, authoritarian ways persisted, a clear articulation of anarchism and a regrouping along anarchist principles was necessary.

As a result, on 1 May 2014, many militants formed a twenty three-member committee of those committed to the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. This committee has fostered the development of anarcho-syndicalist organizations in across 60+ places in Bangladesh today.

Presently, we are receiving help from the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation of Australia to improve our organization. With their help, we are also trying to become members of the IWA-AIT [International Workers' Association – Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores]. We seek solidarity from sister and brother comrades all over the world. We want to work together with everyone.

### ***Why do you think anarcho-syndicalism is a good idea for your lives in Bangladesh?***

I think that capitalism is based on the subordination and exploitation of the working class. Workers are oppressed because they are forced to work under a coercive management regime and they are denied the right to control the use of their own abilities or control their own work.

For the working class to liberate itself from this situation, it is necessary to have a strategy. The strategy needs to be workable and show how it has a chance of achieving liberation. This means that the strategy needs to have a good "fit" with the goal or aim. If the masses are to fight to replace capitalism with a form of

socialism, it is not worth the struggle if the result is just a new form of oppression, run by some new boss class. Thus it's necessary to think about how our strategy can lead to a form of socialism where the masses are actually in control of the society, and workers control the places where they work.

The advantage to anarcho-syndicalism, as I see it, is that it has the best chance of creating a form of socialism where there will not be a new ruling class, and where workers will be in control. The anarcho-syndicalist strategy means building



unions that are controlled by their members, and building broader solidarity throughout the working class. The idea is to build a labor movement that isn't narrowly focused on only fights with an individual employer but has the capacity to fight for more systemic change, and can work in alliance with other social movements. This means that workers have to build solidarity between different sectors, different groups of the oppressed. Only a labor movement of this kind would be able to be a force for basic change in the social structure. Building unions controlled by the members foreshadows workers managing the industries. The problem with other socialist strategies is that either they don't seem able to get beyond

the present society (as with electoral socialism and cooperativism) or they end up putting power into the hands of state leaders, and tend to create a new bureaucratic boss class. Anarcho-syndicalism, on the other hand, is built to avoid creating a new bureaucratic boss class by avoiding concentration of power into a state bureaucratic machine.

***How many groups are there and in which industries / workplaces are they organizing people? In which cities are they placed?***



BASF organizes workers at the lowest levels of diverse industries. Workers in BASF represent sectors from tea garden to food processing to rickshaw making to ceramics to brick-fields to construction to transportation to maintenance work to domestic/factory guards to loaders to sweepers to employed salesmen to grocery shop workers to metal workers.

BASF, already organized about 60 groups in different places, whose membership currently is over 1,600 with 45% women, and only accepts employees as their members.

Despite working in some of the largest and most important industrial sectors, workers receive extremely low wages. For instance, working women in food processing receive 45 Taka (£ 0.41) after an 8-hour work day. Ceramic workers receive 55 Taka (£ 0.50) per day. Moreover, factories don't have proper ventilation, cooling, and supervisors mistreat workers. BASF, through sectoral associations, is organizing workers to demand higher wages, paid holidays, and better working conditions. Sectoral associations allow BASF to form struggles depending on specific needs and maintain sector specific autonomy. Each sectoral association has a secretary and a treasurer, and the secretary functions as a delegate to BASF in federation level decision-making. BASF's student association is working on developing demands for free education for all, while the tea garden workers' association is developing demands for land rights in addition to better wages and working conditions. Patriarchy pervades everyday life and hinders organizing when, for instance, women do not speak up in men's presence in association meetings. This happens less among tea garden workers since men and women work together in the hills. In order to address the lack of women's participation, BASF has made efforts toward building a separate anarcho-syndicalist women's federation.

BASF is working independently and is not yet affiliated with any larger anarchist organization. BASF understands that capitalism is a worldwide phenomenon and has to be addressed at a global level through solidarity across locales. However, such internationalism requires developing a nation-wide organization - a major challenge for BASF. Assembling while being unregistered as an organization can lead to a five-year prison sentence for organizers in Bangladesh. BASF now has legal registration papers that they can use as shield, however it does not have permission from the local police station to assemble, despite having their organization registered. Anarchism still raises suspicion among local power-holders. BASF is vigilant about imperialist/colonialist tendencies among anarchist partners from the global north.

BASF is focusing on the challenges of eliminating entrenched domination in Bangladesh culture. Dominance has been naturalized across society, from domestic »

partner relations, to mullah-believer relation, to student-teacher relation to minister-citizen relation. The person in the position of authority is seen as unquestionable and is allowed full exercise of their sadistic impulses. Our student organizers talk about the widespread practice of “ragging,” where upper class students sexually torture lower class students in universities. When BASF organizers protested widely accepted sexual torture at universities, thousands of people protested their questioning of upper class authority.

People are habituated to think of politics as partisan politics organized in hierarchical bureaucracies. As soon as you talk to people about joining the organization (BASF), they think of being the president, secretary, etc. When they don't get those roles, they lose interest and leave. Among the membership base, workers lose work hours participating at BASF events. These are workers who live hand-to-mouth, unable to pay for food on days they do not work. BASF does not have enough resources (from food to furniture) to bring all of its association members together into long conferences and meetings. BASF has 60 associations and has received interest letters from many more but is unable to integrate all of them or even meet the interested persons in other parts of Bangladesh.

BASF is committed to moving from just wage struggles to building a broader social movement. Opposed to vanguardism, BASF wants to create spaces for collective reflection and action. It believes political praxis requires more education and consciousness raising among wage workers across sectors, but at the moment BASF is only able to organize workers in short duration for immediate needs. BASF lacks the infrastructure for further political education. It does not have an office, library, or community space. It lacks computers, original and translated publications, and people capacity to take on popular education projects.

Despite resource drawbacks, BASF shomitis have generated collective “we feelings” among its members, negotiated higher wages, and engaged in practices of mutual aid within its sectors. After natural disasters in the region, BASF members work together to rebuild fellow members’ homes without any external aid. During health emergencies or family events

like weddings, members pull together their resources to support one other.

BASF encourages other anarchist organization and federations to develop translations of publicly available literature for Bengali readers. There are a lot of people who are reading online nowadays and we can reach them if we have more Bengali anarchist writings. We should write in Bengali from now on.

***Anarcho-syndicalism is an old, but still young idea out of the workers’ movement in Europe. The circumstances in Bangladesh – I guess – are different. Which parts of the anarcho-syndicalist historical/modern practices had been inspiring, which were not useful and had to be dropped/changed? How could anarcho-syndicalism be adopted to your economical and cultural circumstances in Bangladesh today?***

While any modern economy will be complex, the simplicity of a future anarcho-syndicalist economy lies in the fact that it will be defined by a few basic principles. It will be a true anarcho-syndicalist economy if:

- 1) There is no mechanism for profit, or for concentrating wealth and capital.
- 2) Workplaces are collectively run and are controlled directly and democratically by workers.
- 3) Any organisational/administrative bodies are composed only of re-callable, accountable delegates who are elected by mass meetings in the workplace or community.
- 4) Property is held in common (though clearly, we all have the right to our own living space, personal possessions, etc.).
- 5) All work is voluntary, and goods and services equally accessible. Money, wages and prices do not exist.
- 6) There is a significant level of economic planning, but not centralized. Regional or wider-scale planning is for complex and larger scale modes of production. Local production and consumption is not subordinate to regional planning, but is on the basis of self-sufficiency.



An economy that operates under these principles is one that is a lot more desirable and effective in ensuring quality of life than the current capitalist chaos.

There are lots of ways in which people will feel the incentive to work voluntarily, and there are lots of different ways in which local and regional economies might work. Some people may migrate to economies which suit them. Some economies may be simpler, based on self-sufficiency more than anything else; others will be more integrated and produce complex goods.

The options are many, but the principles will ensure that everyone has the time and the inclination to get involved in planning and participating in their economy – a far cry from the present rotten, corrupt, and cynically selfish system we have the misfortune to be saddled with.

Getting from here to there is not going to be easy, but humanity created capitalism, and humanity can replace it. The collective act of wrenching control of our own economic lives from the hands of capitalism is the long-overdue revolution we so desperately need.

The success of replacing capitalism will be measured by how much we take control of our own destiny, rather than simply passing it on to some other power, as previous failed revolutions have done.

Real progress is best made not by producing detailed blueprints (for that way lies the slide into abstract politics and leadership), but by sticking to basic principles, and concentrating our efforts on taking action for real change. Real democracy requires real solidarity – and that means agreeing on the basics and then trusting ourselves and the rest of humanity to get on with it. “Keeping it real” is the key.

Anarcho-syndicalism is a strategy for the working class to free itself from the capitalist regime of class oppression and create a system of libertarian socialism based on worker-managed industry.

This is possible in Bangladesh because it is possible for workers to form unions they directly control. I realize that since World War Two unions became increasingly bureaucratic. That was then, this is now. Unions have obvious problems.

What is needed now is for workers to form new unions they directly control, through general meetings and elected delegate (or shop steward) councils. A more directly worker-controlled and militant unionism, a unionism based on class-wide solidarity, would be a much better form of unionism and it would provide workers with a vehicle for making changes in society.

The basic idea is that unions that are self-managed by their members prefigure and foreshadow a form of socialism where workers self-manage the workplaces, the industries. This is a much better model of socialism than the failed statist models of socialism in the 20th century.

However, the building of self-managed unions is only a starting point. The aim of anarcho-syndicalism is basic structural change in society, doing away with the capitalist regime, its system of class subordination, but also anarcho-syndicalism targets the other oppressive aspects of the capitalist regime — its systemic forms of inequality as on racism and gender inequality, its reliance on a top down repressive and bureaucratic state machine. So the question of how possible anarcho-syndicalism is, has to be interpreted as also asking about the possibility for the transformation of society into libertarian socialism. For this to be possible there would need to be an alliance of unions and social movements of sufficient size, organizational strength and militancy as to pose this kind of threat to the survival of the capitalist regime.

***A big part of anarcho-syndicalist practice is not only being organized in unions but to take the production in our own hands. What about the possibility to raise a collective industry and exchange of goods and labor between Germany and Bangladesh anarcho-syndicalist movement? So to say not only capitalist “fair trade” but collective “revolutionary economy.” Is there a possibility to build up anarcho-syndicalist collectives for a future economy in our way of thinking? »***

It seems that the germs of a possible Bangladeshi/German exchange or the “revolutionary economy” as mentioned are already present.

As of now we do not have the technical or financial means to start co-operatives by ourselves, but we have already considered it as a possibility if the means were to be made available. Funding co-operatives would be something we could do with surplus funds, if we ever have them. It is difficult to have surplus funds when we are still having problems just making sure people have food in their stomach.

As mentioned above, the BASF is currently in a period of rapid growth that it is struggling to keep up with. The task of building anarchist-worthy workplace unions consumes all our time.

But this is seeming all the more possible the more sisters and brothers from abroad talk about this to us. And it is welcomed news that contrasts the immoral spending habits we have seen our entire lives.

We have seen the terrible injustice of stronger nations and their peoples coming to or using indigent nations such as Bangladesh to take advantage of the high purchasing power of their home currencies that is made possible by our cruel impoverishment.

The proposal of such an exchange is in a completely contrary spirit to this. In the least, its solidaric content excites us. I know anarchists and workers in the USA would also like to use such an economy to turn the weapons of the exploiters against the exploiters themselves here in Bangladesh. I am glad to hear others from abroad wanting to do what little they can to help us. If such collectives grew here, its participants would have to carefully chart their development, so that they are in harmony with the general movement and add to its revolutionary character.

I imagine they would socialize their resources, helping to meet urgent organizational and material needs among our rank-and-file that could offer unique opportunities that are not possible outside the framework of such a solidarity economy.

We are seeing successes in our union organizing, and it is difficult to concentrate our efforts elsewhere, especially while our hands are clenched fighting in so many workplaces.

I imagine comrades from abroad would have to come here to offer us technical assistance to make this possible since our hands are so full. This is an idea and sentiment that I hope continues to grow. I thank all comrades who are discussing this.

What about other aspects of a free society – for example how is the question of women emancipation realized in your organizations? What do the female comrades think about it? For the emancipation of women we already formed Bangladesh Anarcho-Syndicalist Women’s Union (BAWU).

The BAWU identifies the cause of women’s oppression as the economic systems of feudalism and capitalism, rather than in a perceived weakness in national character or culture. Most of its ideology has been formulated by its founding members. They focus on the class-based exploitation of women, singling out sex workers, domestic servants and female factory workers as the most oppressed.

They condemn the unequal distribution of wealth and refuse to subordinate working women’s struggle to any other ideological cause. Declaring that “the goal of equality cannot be achieved except through women’s liberation,” BAWU views women’s freedom as something that women must accomplish on their own, since relying on others to give them their rights has not worked up to now and likely never will. Revolutionary change, not reform, is seen as the only way forward.

At this point, BAWU and the ideas it represent is still a new phenomenon to Bangladeshi women. There is a mixture of joy, curiosity, and hesitation. We hope that our liberatory vision and practices continue to grow.

The recent awakening of the anarchist spirit in the Bangladeshi people is causing big social changes that we hope can continue with the broadening of our experiences and

education.

For decades we knew nothing of anarchism, very simple yet profoundly unique ideas that resonate to the core of our essential humanity.

Some of us who have grown up in authoritarian society and discover anarchism later in life have the least grounds to assume that our vision of freedom is the most comprehensive. After all, we lived completely oblivious to something simple and innate for decades, in some cases.

We will continue to be ready to receive and consider new or better ideas that enrich individual liberty and dignity. Some will come from our interactions from other societies. Perhaps we will discover pre-colonialist ways of life that have been hidden from us and reclaim our heritage.

Being open to new ideas is the easier thing, of course. The task of spreading them and defending those who wish to elevate them against innate conservatism in ordinary people and institutions is the more difficult task.

We hope we are cultivating an anarchist generation that will be able to continue this work. We are just the beginning, of course.

***Are there any syndicalist research groups connected to your unions/syndicates?***  
Not yet.

***Do you regularly publish any books or magazines with anarcho-syndicalist content?***

We have taken the initiative to publish a little magazine.

***Is there the possibility to send one or two versed comrades for a rally/connective tour to the anarcho-syndicalist groups and unions of Europe?***

Yes. It is important to share our news and ideas. What are your goals in the next future? How can European comrades support these goals? Our main goals are as follows:

1) The Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation is a libertarian workers' movement organized according to anarcho-syndicalist principles. We aim to create a society based on liberty, mutual aid, federalism and self-management.

2) We believe the working class and the employing class have nothing in common. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and abolish the wage system.

3) In the present we take an active part in the struggle for worker solidarity, shorter hours, immediate wage increases and improved working conditions. And we actively oppose all attacks on workers such as conscription of labor, strike breaking, drives for increased production and longer working hours, wage cuts or unemployment.

4) We want worker/community self-education for complete self-management of production, distribution, social organisation and preservation of a healthy ecological environment. This will come about by worker/community expropriation of wealth and the creation of alternative economic systems.

5) We are opposed to all economic and social monopoly. We do not seek the conquest of political power, but rather the total abolition of all state functions in the life of society. Hence we reject all parliamentary activity and other collaboration with legislative bodies. We believe in fighting organisations in the workplace and community, independent of, and opposed to all political parties and Trade Union bureaucracies.

6) Our means of struggle include education and direct action. To ensure the full participation of all in both current struggle and the future self-management of society, we oppose centralism in our organisations. We organize on the basis of Libertarian Federalism that is from the bottom up without any hierarchy and with full freedom of initiative by both local and regional groups. All co-coordinating bodies of the Federation consist of re-callable delegates with specific tasks determined by local assemblies. »

7) We see the world as our country, humanity as our family. We reject all political and national frontiers and aim to unmask the arbitrary violence of all governments.

8) We oppose all attitudes and assumptions that are harmful and injurious to working class solidarity. We oppose all ideologies and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of people everywhere to control their own lives and their environment.

European comrades can support these goals in the following fields:

1) We need some financial assistance to develop our communication infrastructure for our organizing work. Funds left over would be spent according to our membership's discretion toward necessary efforts, including education, union campaigns, co-operative opportunities, transportation, and food.

2) Our movement is currently growing throughout the country. Improving our communication infrastructure would help our organizing activities in over 60+ locals we have already established and in different industries we currently have a footing in.

3) Translation costs from English to Bengali language.

The Bangladesh anarcho-syndicalist workers' movement is less than five years old, and we are in dire need of printed material to educate and organize. We are undertaking the "Bengali Translation & Publication Project" here in Bangladesh.

We have begun translating some basic books on anarchism written by thinkers such as Bakunin, William Godwin, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Malatesta, Alexander Berkman, Stirner, Élisée Reclus, Noam Chomsky, and so on. Our initial plan is to translate and print ten books to build a strong knowledge base of anarchism in our country.

Most of our Bangladeshi comrades come from very poor family backgrounds, so although the audience and organizers are there to share these books, but the means to finish printing them are still lacking.

You can help us print books with a small donation on our website. Even just one pound would go a long way! You can also contact us if you have any idea about inexpensive ways to print. We will appreciate your help very much.

Perhaps anarchist, Bengali books will be useful for workers who live outside Bangladesh, maybe in your places of action. If you want to organize conferences or pre-order books, contact us through the same means shown above. ■

**Here are the books BASF are working on printing:**

1. *The Conquest of Bread* by Peter Kropotkin
2. *What Is Property?* by P.J. Proudhon
3. *The Anarchist Revolution* by Errico Malatesta
4. *God and the State* by Mikhail Bakunin
5. *Anarcho-Syndicalism* by Rudolf Rocker
6. *Nationalism and Culture* by Rudolf Rocker
7. *ABC of Anarchism* by Alexander Berkman
8. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* by Murray Bookchin
9. *Program of Anarcho-Syndicalism* by G.P. Maximoff
10. *Demanding the Impossible* by Peter Marshall

**Contact BASF:**  
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# STATEMENT FROM BRAZILIAN WOMEN AGAINST FASCISM UK

The presidential elections in Brazil ended with the victory of the neo-fascist candidate Jair Bolsonaro of the far-right party Social Liberal Party (PSL), with just over 55% of the valid votes. After a necessary period of recovery and reflection, we as the Brazilian Women Against Fascism UK group would like to outline what we believe are the next stages of resistance and forms of mobilization that will need to be articulated before the government begins in 2019, but whose weight we already felt in that transition period.

We would like to thank everyone who joined us on October 28 in front of the embassy. Our demonstration was very moving and filled us with strength and affection. The solidarity of all those present, the work done collectively, the Brazilian food, the music, the drums, the dances, the hugs, the hail rain and the occupation of the streets ... Our immense gratitude to all those involved!

Our victory is knowing that we are fighting on the right side of history. Despite the electoral defeat, the campaign against fascism gained a lot of momentum in the last week of the campaign, especially among women. Even though the elected candidate had the broad support of companies and the financial market, as well as much of the mainstream media, the repercussion of the #EleNao (#NotHim) campaign showed that the path of resistance is possible and will become a reality.

Since then, we have received many messages of support and solidarity from other activist movements, unions and academic groups, offering support and solidarity, and invitations to participate in activities and demonstrations

to debate and protest against the advances of fascism in Brazil and in the world. We understand the rise of the far-right as a global corporate phenomenon, based on privileges for the few and the suppression of the rights of the people. Because of this, we believe in the importance of forming a global opposition.



Our movement is a part of and helps build the wider front of resistance of all who oppose Bolsonaro. We are a non-partisan group of women with diverse ideological leanings, but we all have something in common: the strength and the will to fight against the growth of fascism in Brazil. We will not be answerable to the politics of any party, personality or leadership, and we will point out the limitations and responsibilities of each of these. Our main objective is to add and contribute to the resistance, especially of women, in Brazil and internationally.

We are very sorry that Brazilians living in London have also mostly chosen to elect Bolsonaro. It will be necessary to confront this, as we cannot allow his hate speech to be normalized. After the first round of the presidential elections, we saw a wave of violence and attacks on women, blacks, indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ+ community, teachers and people in general demonstrating against the elected candidate. Such a wave did not cease, nor has it diminished with his election. On the contrary, it has increased. Teachers and students were exposed and threatened in various university settings within Brazil, Quilombola communities and Social Movements are being attacked, as well as the entire LGBTQ+ community, among many other attacks. »

The dangers that Bolsonaro presents are not limited to minorities and human rights, but they cover a wide range of issues, including the environmental issue and the old colonial social structures. His policy proposals are aimed at keeping the lower social classes ever lower, so that upper classes maintain their exorbitant profits and absurd privileges, dramatically increasing the giant social abyss in which Brazil has been for so long, with direct attacks on those who oppose and denounce the government.

We understand that it is the task of all social movements in Brazil to form a united front of resistance against the Bolsonaro government. For this to happen, the connection with the international press and social movements is of crucial importance, to denounce the government and to exert pressure against the path of authoritarianism. This is the role that the collective Brazilian Women Against Fascism UK will seek to play. We have a long and arduous road ahead of us and we will need the help of all who are willing and able to build a grassroots base to disseminate information and a support for our fellow Brazilians.

Please get in touch if you want to get more involved and/or have some idea to offer - we need reinforcements as we plan to schedule an open meeting in January in London to work closely with groups and individuals interested in organising an international boycott campaign against Bolsonaro's government.

No one will stop our fight for equal rights for all.  
We will not be silenced.  
Não Passarão!  
EleNão! ■

***BWAF UK (Brazilian Women against Fascism UK) is a non-partisan group of Brazilian women living in the UK, organised in reaction to the rising fascist threat to the democratic ideals of freedom, equality and social justice in Brazil and in the world. We are always open to the arrival of new comrades. Stay in touch: bwaf@riseup.net***

# THE ANTI-WORKERS' PARTY RAGE IN BRAZIL: Progressive or Reactionary? *by Márcia Alves*

With the radically polarised process of Brazil's presidential elections and the victory of an openly neo-fascist candidate, an important concept emerges that needs to be better understood within the Brazilian and international activist community: The Anti-Workers' Party (PT) rage.

## The formation of the PT and the New Republic

To better understand this subject, it is important to return to the first half of the 1980s, when Brazil was reaching the end of the military dictatorship period and going through the process of re-democratization. This period is known as the "New Republic" period. The end of the dictatorship in Brazil occurred in a scenario of economic crisis and at the same time of the collapse of various dictatorships in Latin America. In Brazil, this decline was accelerated by a great rise in social movements despite their repression in the dictatorship. One of the most prominent social groups was composed by the metallurgic workers known as "the metallurgical belt of the ABC" (metropolitan region of São Paulo). Numerous strikes and protests led by the group spread through the most diverse social sectors of the country, overcoming the power of repression by the police and the barrier imposed by media censorship. Other groups followed: from landless peasants to students, as well as the progressive wing of the Catholic Church, intellectuals and artists, community movements and workers from the most diverse categories.

The political impact of this struggle was enormous, boosting a historical reorganization of social movements in Brazil. Workers from various factories and categories rejected the rotten union structures (usually linked to the dictatorship) and created new unions such as

the CUT (free translation: Central of Workers). From this shift of power and reorganisation of the unions, came the idea of creating a new political party. An independent party from the bourgeoisie, and that unified the diverse social and popular struggles that the country was going through. The Workers' Party (PT) was therefore created under the leadership of Lula da Silva, a metallurgist from the Northeast of the country, who was at the forefront of the social movements and became a political prisoner multiple times during the military dictatorship.

Throughout the 1980s, the PT was consolidating itself as the main leftist party of the New Republic. Its strategy was to get to power via the democratic electoral route. In the first elections in the country after the military dictatorship ended, in 1987, Lula reached the second round of the process, being defeated by Fernando Collor. Collor would undergo Impeachment two years later due to a corruption scandal. Lula later ran again and lost to Fernando Henrique Cardoso the 1994 and 1998 elections. With the impact of the economic crisis of the late 1990s and early 00s, Lula was finally elected president in October 2002.

## **The 13 years of PT governments**

During the 1990s, PT was already beginning to gain space in the political scenario winning various local and national elections. In many cases, the elected representatives put in practice the social welfare policies and the democratic participation of the population in decision making, such as the participatory budget currently used in several countries. They also launched changes in public healthcare such as the unified system of ambulances (SAMU), inspired by the model used in France, launching in Porto Alegre first and expanding nationwide after 2003.

However, months before the election that led Lula to the presidency, PT released a document entitled "Letter to Brazilians". In this document, PT committed itself not to alter the pillars of the economic agenda that had been applied by the previous conservative governments (for example, from the party

PSDB), calming down the fears that leading economic groups could still have regarding an eventual PT government.

Now in government, PT continued to broadly apply the social-democratic agenda but with some adjustments. During Lula's second administration, the world commodities market experienced an unusual boom. The Brazilian economy, strongly based on this type of product (oil, gas, minerals, etc.), had grown significantly. The PT government took advantage of the economic growth and increased investments in social policies. The measures did not change the country's economic structure but allowed the social inclusion of millions of families who were living below the poverty line. It gave access to consumption and goods that a large part of the population had never dreamed of. Sectors of the middle class consequently began to develop an Anti-Workers' Party rage based on the traditionally retrograde mentality shared by this social class. They struggled to tolerate "poor people in airports and universities", both seen as privileges reserved to the few. But this new economic scenario of the country went from strength to strength, which left the middle class feeling politically marginalized. Yet the "Cansei" (I'm fed up) marches, a movement of the upper-middle class of São Paulo, typically dressed in green and yellow and protesting against Lula's presidency, did not reach 100 attendees.

## **The economic crisis and June 2013**

However, the economic growth reached an end. The great global economic crisis of 2007 changed the landscape in Brazil. The commodities market, especially oil, gradually returned to pre-growth levels. Dilma Rousseff, Lula's successor, was then in charge of the government. Lula had already served two consecutive terms - the maximum allowed by Brazilian law.

The population was beginning to feel the decline in living standards and to realise that the government was failing to maintain the same economic growth from previous years. There was a feeling that the bill was being paid by the population. »

The mega-events planned for the country (World Cup and Olympic Games), turned from a source of pride to an example of waste of public funds. All that while the basic needs of the population were not being met. In June of 2013, a student mass protest against the increase of the bus fares in São Paulo was harshly repressed by the Military Police. However, it quickly gained momentum and spread throughout the country. It was the beginning of the so-called “Jornadas de Junho” (Journeys of June), the greatest social mobilization in Brazil's history: tens of millions of people took the streets demanding further social changes. The protests were very diverse and composed by people from all parts of the political spectrum. In general, the protests of June had in common a progressive agenda. However, the far-right took advantage of the political moment and infiltrated in the process instigating the Anti-Workers' Party rage, blaming the left for all the social discontent and lack of perspective for a better future.

## **The 2014 Elections and the Impeachment of Dilma Rousseff**

In the 2014 electoral process, Dilma reached the second round against the PSDB candidate in a fiercely contested election. Large part of the upper middle class had adhered to the Anti-Workers' Party rage. In the second round, PT adopted an anti-austerity speech, more to the left, and reversed the rejection to its policies. At the end of the elections, Dilma adopted a very different agenda from what had been defended in her campaign up to that point, disappointing many of her supporters.

The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, wanted an even stronger pace of fiscal adjustment. It encouraged and radicalised the Anti-Workers' Party rage, giving support to Dilma Rousseff's impeachment.

## **Nowadays**

In the current elections, with the failure of the traditional conservative parties (such as PSDB), the space was occupied by a neo-fascist alternative: Jair Bolsonaro. To enable his rise, the campaign supported by the international fake News industry (with the participation of

Stephen Bannon, former Trump aide) and hate speech. Quickly the campaign took surreal proportions. The far-right took advantage of the desperation and lack of perspective of large sectors of the population to inflame hatred against their “enemy within”: the black, the poor, the women and the LGBTQ. And the left activists fighting the rise of extremism were all labelled as “PT supporters.” The far-right encourages an unhealthy Anti-Workers' Party rage to facilitate its policy of brutal repression to the social movements, finally making it possible to consolidate their political project.

In this delicate political moment, we understand that the role of the left is to fight the reactionary and neo-fascist president. It does not mean embracing PT with its past mistakes and current limitations. It does not even mean supporting a possible new government from this party. The PT's alliances, manifesto and recent practices show that the party has not yet realised the need to reinvent itself from within - as for example the UK Labour Party has. It is necessary to overcome the limitations of PT in the future, but today the priority is to fight the neo-fascism.

## **The post-election period**

The far-right in Brazil used the Anti-Workers' Party rage as an ideological basis for its strength. Brazil has elected a neo-fascist government. Parallel to that, social movements gain strength and resist, the left reorganizes itself.

A movement of more than 4 million people and led by women stood up to this political threat without defending PT and its alliances. The #EleNao campaign fought the rise of fascism.

No matter what the Bolsonaro government will be, the work of building a new political scenario that goes beyond the polarisation focused on very few parties continues and the task of defending basic democratic rights will be the order of the day. The #EleNao campaign has already shown the way. We have a long road ahead of us, and we have confidence and willingness to keep fighting. ■





**Pinochet should have  
killed more people.**

**I'm in favor of torture.  
You know that.**

**I will not fight against it  
nor discriminate, but if I  
see two men kissing on  
the street,  
I'll beat them up.**

**I would never rape you,  
because you don't  
deserve it.**

**A policeman who doesn't  
kill isn't a policeman.**

**BOLSONARO**

# GETTING

A SHORT PRIMER



# GOING A CREW TOGETHER ON HOW TO RABBLE ROUSE AND REVOLT

**For the sake** of this article I'm going to guess you're like most Anarchists in the UK... disconnected from any ongoing community of resistance and struck griping about the every declining state of affairs, unable to enact any change on your Billy Todd. You might live in a small town or major city, but the reality is that most of us engaged in the politics of revolutionary compassion are isolated from persistent networks and let's face it the ones we are in can be a major emotional investment at times. So you find yourself waiting for the revolutionary momentum to kick in, set to idle.

There are a few reasons for this state of affairs really, for a start half of us are busy trying to survive capitalism and can only occasionally

pop our heads up for the odd action or book fair. The revolution seems like such a distant concept that many people just try and live the best life however they can, fair play like. Heck you'd have to be half mad to try and get something going, it's a lot of work, usually for little result. There isn't any point lying about it or trying to build some romantic vision for you. It's graft.

Whether it's a cheery A-B march or ongoing campaigns against parasitic skum, it's incredibly draining, especially if you have work to be getting on with. It can however be the most rewarding thing you ever do and for every headache, you got to think about the positive changes you've worked towards, especially if your crew is results driven. »



The first thing you've got to remind yourself is that you don't need to wait for some larger group to come into town recruiting, not the IWW, AFed or anyone else, especially not liberal outfits looking to increase their donor base selling rebellious vibes at the price of a newspaper. The revolution can only come about through the people empowering themselves, working from the grass root, it's you and yours that will make your home town less shitty.

Obviously every word of this advice needs crafting to your aims and intentions. Starting an alternative father and baby group isn't going to be the same as mounting resistance against a coming fascist parade, the immediacy of a response to a police murder demands a different tact to founding an Anarchist reading group, so bare in mind these are generalisations. The first of which is:

**\* Get Out There And Talk To People.**

You probably have some pretty strong ideas of what needs to happen around your ends which is grand, but talking to people about setting up something, planting seeds and taking on ideas should always be your first step. You are not an island and you should aim for a new group to be the spiritual property of the collective, founded on your shared ideas from the word go. So get prodding, get talking, get asking folk what they reckon your ends need. Whether you do this on social media or down the pub, hearing people out about what they think about starting up a crew is almost always going to light a fire under peoples asses. They've been waiting for something to kick off too.

**\* If You Build It, They Will Come.** It's a cheesy adage sure, it's also true. Pick a day, pick a place and let folk know you're holding a meeting. If this is with your mates have it at your gaff, otherwise somewhere accessible and relatively quiet. The back room of a friendly pub or cafe are the usual spots. These spaces will keep it informal and be easy for people to step in. Obviously context is king but I'd advise against diving into bureaucracy and formality, keep it light hearted and convivial. If you get three people come along. You have a collective. It's starts there.

**\* So What Are You After?** It's the big question and your first task as a collective, what are your aims here? Long term and short.

You have to be honest with yourselves. Do what Mary Kondo would do and ask what sparks joy. This is true of any collective, whether you are looking to found a social network, focus a group on a specific issue or create a more general rebel alliance give yourselves some guiding aims. These will be your North Star in the coming struggles, your points of unity and solidarity. Your short term aims will be the corner stone of your... Call to Arms. Let's stop the hunt! Let's start a food not bombs! let's run a charity gig! The ideas will pour out, a bit of debate and temperature checking later and –for the sake of the argument – you've decided to squat the ol'cop shop and make a free shop. Noice. Now you have a call to arms, your new collective should share out some responsibilities and tasks appropriate to everyone's capacity and inclination. There is no shame in not being able or willing to take on a role of course but the wider you can diffuse this the less pressure there will be on individuals and the greater the sense of communal ownership!

**\* The Work Begins.** This is where most projects stumble. That's ok, it happens, just start from the top like. Presuming your crew is full of drive tho you'll want to build a regular schedule of events. Individuals/working groups should try to get in the habit of reporting back to the group, even if that's just a note to the shared thread saying "Got the drill/ we'veprinted the Section 6's." Keep each other in the loop and perhaps more importantly consolidate these growing friendships. Too many activists treat organising like a job, some noble duty they have taken on... lighten up, share jokes, go to gigs, have a laugh. The best comrades are friends, always.

**\* Educate, Agitate and Communicate!** Learn all you can about the action you're taking. In this case Squatting law, how to enter buildings, defending them and such, not just you but everyone. Share leadership and responsibility. This is vital not only as a philosophical position in Anarchism but also on a tactical level, having a single person be the go to for issues that arise is always going to cause hassle. Now is also the time to step up your presence, make it public, start putting up info sharing related material, provide a point for people to contact you and get involved. Start contacting other groups local and otherwise. Maybe the local SolFed have a few squatters who'd love to be involved maybe Class War want to donate some gear. Your collective

is not an island and you are part of a vast ever changing network of mutual aid and solidarity, this is true whether you are “fluffy” or “spiky”, just know your audience. SQUASH the Squatters campaign group are going to love to hear from us, Local Sabs are probably just going to show love and wish our free shop well. Align yourselves with established comrades, accept their support and advice, work hard to develop bonds and trust.

**\* DO IT.** Whether it's cracking a squat or marching on the town hall, taking action is an amazing feeling. Work with your team and support each other, help out new faces or people who have turned up just for the action. You'll want to have some media to share to help get the word out but you never need as many leaflets as you thought you did. Honestly a nice big placard and someone brave on a megaphone will be more effective at a demonstration than 300 handouts.

**\* We did it, Hurray. Now What.** once you've got something under your belt it becomes real, folk should start to take it more seriously, they're excited and keen. Keep that energy up! Have an “after action” gathering to discuss and celebrate what happened, share information with the world, thank you comrades and start to look to your next goals. Keeping a regular set of events is critical at this point as is being constantly open to development.

**\* Make it formal, make it look good.**

Start meeting up regular, discussing things and taking actions, remember to report back and share it on social media etc. It's about here that you'll want to make sure that you have a set of collective aims and principles - by whatever name - If you haven't got them already. It truly helps to have a written down mutually agreed upon sense of direction. Generating this is almost always a chore but stick it through and make it happen. There will be questions to resolve, from cleaning duties to whether or not you are a dry space. Almost universally here is best to have deference to traditionally oppressed minorities, that's pretty important to progressive organisation. Develop and agree upon processes of internal democracy and problem solving. Remember you are comrades and always act in good faith but it's good to plan for hiccups. The most vital thing from here on is to keep active and be a presence in your community.

If you are looking to establish a group or campaign contact the Anarchist Federation and let us see what we can do to support you.

We'll also be expanding this short primer on the website with in-depth examinations and guides to different models of organising. If you have specific questions or would like us to cover something in particular send us an email. ■





If you are taking action, you need to secure your comms. It's that simple. There are a few options for this depending on your personal or organisational requirements, tech skills and how much time you have to secure your Viddyjam thread, meme shares and to the point importantly your action planning.

For most folk the app that balances out security and user-bility, is Signal. The reasons for this are, well as the developers over at Open Whisper Systems stated in response to the Australian state's 'Assistance and Access' bill:

***By design, Signal does not have a record of your contacts, social graph, conversation list, location, user avatar, user profile name, group memberships, group titles, or group avatars. The end-to-end encrypted contents of every message and voice/video call are protected by keys that are entirely inaccessible to us.***

The bill is an Australian variant on the UK's 'Snooper's Charter', intended to give the state more power over our communications. It demands that organisations like Open Whisper Systems hand over all the data they hold on an individual at the state's request. Think of all the

data Fedback Facebook or Google could hand over. Think of your email provider. Think of your Internet Service Provider.

Unfortunately for the state, if you're using Signal, your messages are safe, Open Whisper Systems have no data to hand over. If you're not already using it, Let's explain how to get started.

First off, It's available from the Apple Store, the Play Store, and direct from their website. Install and run. The first thing to happen on boot up is that it'll ask for your phone number. This is the only data they will ever hold on you. Your friends can message you on this number once they've installed Signal too.

It's that simple. You're good to go.

# SECURE YOU

## Are you using a secure app?

## No? So...

Although Signal uses telephone numbers as contacts, encrypted calls and messages actually use your data connection; therefore you will need internet access (either over wifi, 4G or the brain melting 5G) on your mobile to use it.

If you have used WhatsApp, iMessenger or Facebook Messenger before, or even old school SMS texts, then Signal will feel very familiar to you. Your friends who have already installed the app will appear in Signal's contact list. You can write messages to them, send them pictures, ring them, make a group with them... everything you are used to doing now, but without compromising your privacy and security.

A great feature of Signal we recommend using is 'disappearing messages'. This is something Whatsapp etc don't have. You can use this feature to set all messages to self-destruct after a day, a week, a month etc, so if you or your friend's phone ever falls into the wrong person's hands they won't have your entire conversation history - just messages from the last week or so.

If you're still not convinced, Wired explains all the tech behind Signal here: ([www.wired.com/story/ditch-all-those-other-messaging-apps-heres-why-you-should-use-signal-again](http://www.wired.com/story/ditch-all-those-other-messaging-apps-heres-why-you-should-use-signal-again))

For a more detailed, step by step guide to installing and using Signal read the Electronic Freedom Frontier's how-tos here: ([www.ssd.eff.org/en/module/how-use-signal-ios](http://www.ssd.eff.org/en/module/how-use-signal-ios))

Now remember, if you might be of interest to state actor, assume they can read your shit. Nothing digital is secure forever. Even if GCHQ or Skum Corp. can't access your data today, encryptions are not "future proof" and just like every other app do not assume it is a magic bullet and using it will protect you in a court of

then they only need to compromise one device or person to implicate your ass. It's not like they have to do this by hand either -- they'll use AI.

**WHAT:** Don't place too much faith in end-to-end encryption (E2EE) apps to hide your shit from prying eyes if you are of interest to a state actor. Take instant messages for example; sure they are encrypted in transit, but how do they get into transit? You type them with your sinful fingers first. So what attack vectors may exist?

- Maybe they can get malware onto your device and install a keylogger or screen recorder.

- Maybe you use a third party keyboard on your smartphone like SwiftKey, developed by TouchType Ltd. a subsidiary of Microsoft. Maybe it collects data they can get their hands on. Maybe it has a backdoor already. Microsoft don't give a shit about your privacy.

- Of course, all smartphone keyboards have predictive text now and a lot of them sync that data to the cloud. Maybe there's something there they can warrant for. E.g. if you're planning an action to stick a banana in a car exhaust »

# UR COMMS

## ecure messenger?

## rt it out!

law against anything that may be incriminating if you are of interest to a state actor. Aspects of incriminating communications are mainly:

- WHO has been communicating
- WHAT has been communicated

**WHO:** If it's enough to prove you have been communicating with another party to implicate you does a state prosecutor need to know what your messages said? No. They may use traffic timing analysis and/or meta data analysis to prove people have been talking. For example, let's say a government agency decides to put everyone who has googled 'Kropotkin' on a watch list and monitor their internet connections.

Now lets say a bunch of those people are in a Signal group chat and somebody sends a message to the group at 2am. At 2am a blip of data is going to travel down all of to all their home internet connections from Signal's servers, they can record this blip and other blips like it to work out who is talking to each other,



your predictive text data might show that the words 'banana' and 'exhaust' appear in close proximity to each-other with unusually high frequency.

Also, if you don't have deleting messages and they can get your device password/unlock code you're fucked. Maybe you're logged into Signal on your PC and you don't have full disk encryption - forensics could probably crack your password with a biscuit in one hand. Maybe a spook shoulder-surfs you on public transport and gets your smartphone unlock code. Maybe you get nicked while eating a pasty and left a nice smudge on the screen of your phone where your unlock code was swiped. You get the idea.

Saying all that, it's impossible to deny to utility of secure messengers, 90% of the time the stuff your getting up to wont warrant investing into accessing your device, so make use of Signal for working groups, planing Squats and tactical comms out and about.

We should mention that there are indeed a few other options available, each with their positives and negatives. Telegram for instance is prettier and more accessible, it's most people's gateway into secure comms and hell if it's good enough for ISIS and the IRA, you're XR group are probably ok, on the other end of the Scale would

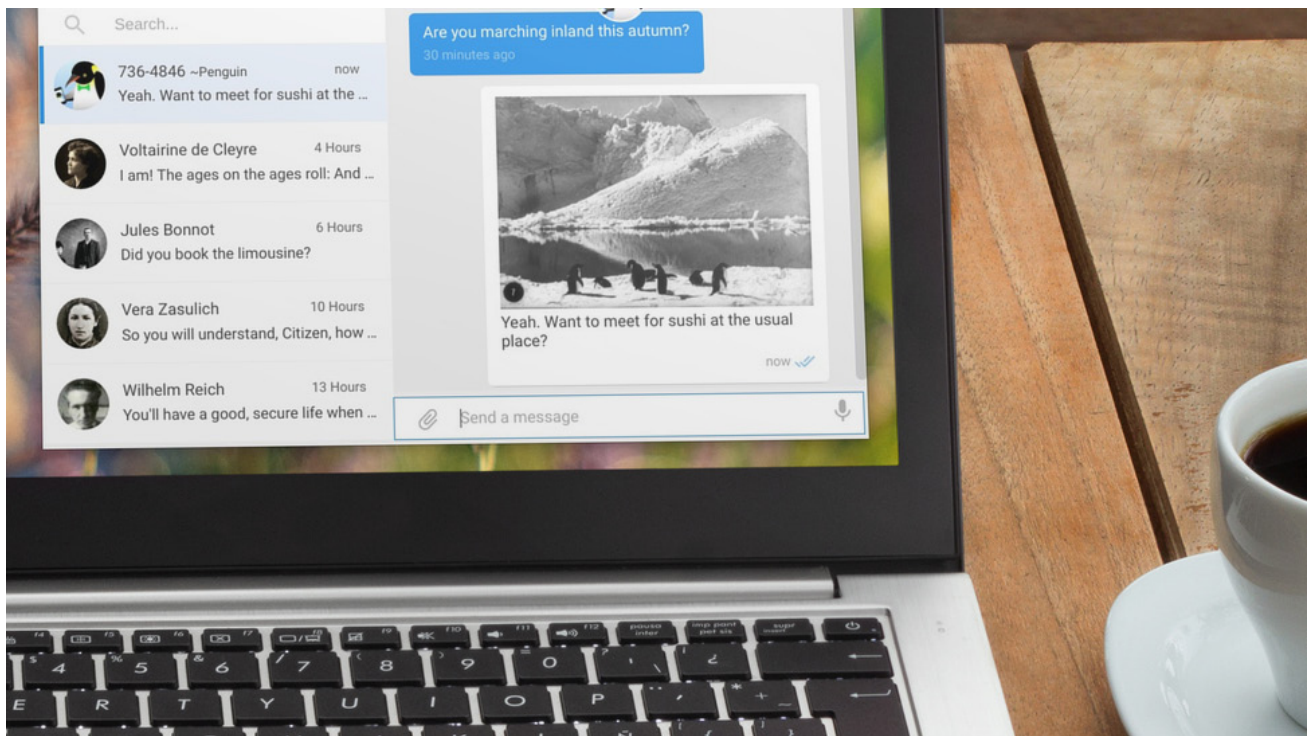
be RIOT, which the Anarchist Federation are experimenting with for short form workshoping and group chats, it's a little harder to break into but functions better for the purpose.

For a great comparison chart use: [www.securemessagingapps.com](http://www.securemessagingapps.com)

Whichever app you choose update it when asked, this can't be repeated enough, **keep your software updated** and don't forget to check up on what's happening with the creators every now and again. More than a few fantastic apps have become "rogueware" after their creators turned dodge or sold out to one of the big corps.

This all might seem like a heck of a lot of faff, but these days instant messaging is a vital component of revolutionary action, from The Arab Spring to the London Riots dissidents, revolutionaries and active minds frokm across the political spectrum are utilising instant messengers to make shit happen. If you stick to Facebook and WhatsApp you are literally handing them the incriminating evidence against you or even simply allowing spycops to monitor your movements and organisation.

We're never going to have more tech than them, but we can stymie their every attempt to track us and monitor revolutionary chit chat. ■





# GETTING SOCIAL

## A MAPPING PROJECT

**There is something** deeply magical about social centres, for that matter any space utilised primarily for the community without any underhand purpose. In this capitalist society we are so used to our social space being a soulless void that only cares while you can pay.

Social Centres change all that. They are the hubs of their communities and the gathering points for rebels and revolutionaries. These bastions of liberty provide an inestimable service to the people who use them. They should be supported at every turn, utilised and enjoyed,

Some these venues are also resources centres, art houses, cafes and even cinemas, with their volunteers and staff using their labour to build and maintain vital centers of culture for their communities. others act as critical points of protest and mutual aid, truly existing at coalface in the ongoing conflict with the capitalist state.

Many of these centres liase through the Social Centres Network (SCN) who aim to provide a portal to the world of social networks and aligned spaces as they inevitable ebb and

flow. The SCN helps to keep the members and organisers linked in and communicating, in turn helping to keep these spaces alive and thriving.

Together with The Anarchist Party and Punx UK we are developing a global Anarchist Initiatives Database to help foster new links and build a stronger international culture of resistance. The first stage or this is developing the technology using British datasets, namely building a map of Social Centres.

For the purpose of testing we have kept a verystRICT definition of what a "Social Centre" is tho we have included the SCN database and venues with a specific Social Center remi. If we've missed one out, please add it via the website below.

Very shortly we shall be adding community cafes, solidarity centres, protest sites, co-ops etc until we have a full and robust map of our revolutionary community. ■

**To see the WIP map for social spaces check out [organisemagazine.org.uk/social-centres](http://organisemagazine.org.uk/social-centres)**



# LUCY PARSONS

## THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM



**Comrades and Friends:** I think I cannot open my address more appropriately than by stating my experience in my long connection with the reform movement.

It was during the great railroad strike of 1877 that I first became interested in what is known as the "Labor Question." I then thought as many thousands of earnest, sincere people think, that the aggregate power operating in human society, known as government, could be made an instrument in the hands of the oppressed to alleviate their sufferings. But a closer study of the origin, history and tendency of governments convinced me that this was a mistake.

I came to understand how organized governments used their concentrated power to retard progress by their ever-ready means of silencing the voice of discontent if raised in vigorous protest against the machinations of the scheming few, who always did, always will and always must rule in the councils of nations where majority rule is recognized as the only means of adjusting the affairs of the people.

I came to understand that such concentrated power can be always wielded in the interest of the few and at the expense of the many. Government in its last analysis is this power reduced to a science. Governments never lead; they follow progress. When the prison, stake or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then.

I will state this contention in another way: I learned by close study that it made no

difference what fair promises a political party, out of power, might make to the people in order to secure their confidence, when once securely established in control of the affairs of society that they were after all but human with all the human attributes of the politician. Among these are: First, to remain in power at all hazards; if not individually, then those holding essentially the same views as the administration must be kept in control. Second, in order to keep in power, it is necessary to build up a powerful machine; one strong enough to crush all opposition and silence all vigorous murmurs of discontent, or the party machine might be smashed and the party thereby lose control.

When I came to realize the faults, failings, shortcomings, aspirations and ambitions of fallible man, I concluded that it would not be the safest nor best policy for society, as a whole, to entrust the management of all its affairs, with all their manifold deviations and ramifications in the hands of finite man, to be managed by the party which happened to come into power, and therefore was the majority party, nor did it then, nor does it now make one particle of difference to me what a party, out of power may promise; it does not tend to allay my fears of a party, when entrenched and securely seated in power might do to crush opposition, and silence the voice of the minority, and thus retard the onward step of progress.

My mind is appalled at the thought of a political party having control of all the details that go to make up the sum total of our lives. Think of it for an instant, that the party in power shall have all authority to dictate the kind of books that shall be used in our schools and universities,

government officials editing, printing, and circulating our literature, histories, magazines and press, to say nothing of the thousand and one activities of life that a people engage in, in a civilized society.

To my mind, the struggle for liberty is too great and the few steps we have gained have been won at too great a sacrifice, for the great mass of the people of this 20th century to consent to turn over to any political party the management of our social and industrial affairs. For all who are at all familiar with history know that men will abuse power when they possess it. For these and other reasons, I, after careful study, and not through sentiment, turned from a sincere, earnest, political Socialist to the non-political phase of Socialism—Anarchism—because in its philosophy I believe I can find the proper conditions for the fullest development of the individual units in society, which can never be the case under government restrictions.

The philosophy of anarchism is included in the word “Liberty,” yet it is comprehensive enough to include all things else that are conducive to progress. No barriers whatever to human progression, to thought, or investigation are placed by anarchism; nothing is considered so true or so certain, that future discoveries may not prove it false; therefore, it has but one infallible, unchangeable motto, “Freedom”: Freedom to discover any truth, freedom to develop, to live naturally and fully. Other schools of thought are composed of crystallized ideas—principles that are caught and impaled between the planks of long platforms, and considered too sacred to be disturbed by a close investigation. In all other “issues” there is always a limit; some imaginary boundary line beyond which the searching mind dare not penetrate, lest some pet idea melt into a myth. But anarchism is the usher of science—the master of ceremonies to all forms of truth. It would remove all barriers between the human being and natural development. From the natural resources of the Earth, all artificial restrictions, that the body might be nurtured, and from universal truth, all bars of prejudice and superstition, that the mind may develop symmetrically.

Anarchists know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe

in vote-begging, nor political campaigns, but rather in the development of self-thinking individuals.

We look away from government for relief, because we know that force (legalized) invades the personal liberty of man, seizes upon the natural elements and intervenes between man and natural laws; from this exercise of force through governments flows nearly all the misery, poverty, crime and confusion existing in society.

So, we perceive, there are actual, material barriers blockading the way. These must be removed. If we could hope they would melt away, or be voted or prayed into nothingness, we would be content to wait and vote and pray. But they are like great frowning rocks towering between us and a land of freedom, while the dark chasms of a hard-fought past yawn behind us. Crumbling they may be with their own weight and the decay of time, but to quietly stand until they fall is to be buried in the crash. There is something to be done in a case like this—the rocks must be removed. Passivity while slavery is stealing over us is a crime. For the moment we must forget that we are anarchists—when the work is accomplished we may forget that we were revolutionists—hence most anarchists believe the coming change can only come through a revolution, because the possessing class will not allow a peaceful change to take place; still we are willing to work for peace at any price, except at the price of liberty.

And what of the glowing beyond that is so bright that those who grind the faces of the poor say it is a dream? It is no dream, it is the real, stripped of brain-distortions materialized into thrones and scaffolds, miters and guns. It is nature acting on her own interior laws as in all her other associations. It is a return to first principles; for were not the land, the water, the light, all free before governments took shape and form? In this free state we will again forget to think of these things as “property.” It is real, for we, as a race, are growing up to it. The idea of less restriction and more liberty, and a confiding trust that nature is equal to her work, is permeating all modern thought.

From the dark years—not so long gone by—when it was generally believed that »

man's soul was totally depraved and every human impulse bad; when every action, every thought and every emotion was controlled and restricted; when the human frame, diseased, was bled, dosed, suffocated and kept as far from nature's remedies as possible; when the mind was seized upon and distorted before it had time to evolve a natural thought—from those days to these years the progress of this idea has been swift and steady. It is becoming more and more apparent that in every way we are "governed best where we are governed least."

Still unsatisfied perhaps, the inquirer seeks for details, for ways and means, and whys and wherefores. How will we go on like human beings—eating and sleeping, working and loving, exchanging and dealing—without government? So used have we become to "organized authority" in every department of life that ordinarily we cannot conceive of the most common-place avocations being carried on without their interference and "protection." But anarchism is not compelled to outline a complete organization of a free society. To do so with any assumption of authority would be to place another barrier in the way of coming generations. The best thought of today may become the useless vagary of tomorrow, and to crystallize it into a creed is to make it unwieldy.

We judge from experience that man is a gregarious animal, and instinctively affiliates with his kind—co-operates, unites in groups, works to better advantage combined with his fellow men than when alone. This would point to the formation of co-operative communities, of which our present trades-unions are embryonic patterns. Each branch of industry will no doubt have its own organization, regulations, leaders, etc.; it will institute methods of direct communication with every member of that industrial branch in the world, and establish equitable relations with all other branches. There would probably be conventions of industry which delegates would attend, and where they would transact such business as was necessary, adjourn and from that moment be delegates no longer, but simply members of a group. To remain permanent members of a continuous congress would be to establish a power that is certain sooner or later to be abused.

No great, central power, like a congress

consisting of men who know nothing of their constituents' trades, interests, rights or duties, would be over the various organizations or groups; nor would they employ sheriffs, policemen, courts or jailers to enforce the conclusions arrived at while in session. The members of groups might profit by the knowledge gained through mutual interchange of thought afforded by conventions if they choose, but they will not be compelled to do so by any outside force.

Vested rights, privileges, charters, title deeds, upheld by all the paraphernalia of government—the visible symbol of power—such as prison, scaffold and armies, will have no existence. There can be no privileges bought or sold, and the transaction kept sacred at the point of the bayonet. Every man will stand on an equal footing with his brother in the race of life, and neither chains of economic thralldom nor menial drags of superstition shall handicap the one to the advantage of the other.

Property will lose a certain attribute which sanctifies it now. The absolute ownership of it—"the right to use or abuse"—will be abolished, and possession, use, will be the only title. It will be seen how impossible it would be for one person to "own" a million acres of land, without a title deed, backed by a government ready to protect the title at all hazards, even to the loss of thousands of lives. He could not use the million acres himself, nor could he wrest from its depths the possible resources it contains.

People have become so used to seeing the evidences of authority on every hand that most of them honestly believe that they would go utterly to the bad if it were not for the policeman's club or the soldier's bayonet. But the anarchist says, "Remove these evidences of brute force, and let man feel the revivifying influences of self-responsibility and self-control, and see how we will respond to these better influences."

The belief in a literal place of torment has nearly melted away; and instead of the direful results predicted, we have a higher and truer standard of manhood and womanhood. People do not care to go to the bad when they find they can as well as not. Individuals are unconscious of their own motives in doing good. While acting out their natures according

to their surroundings and conditions, they still believe they are being kept in the right path by some outside power, some restraint thrown around them by church or state. So the objector believes that with the right to rebel and secede, sacred to him, he would forever be rebelling and seceding, thereby creating constant confusion and turmoil.

Is it probable that he would, merely for the reason that he could do so? Men are to a great extent creatures of habit, and grow to love associations; under reasonably good conditions, he would remain where he commences, if he wished to, and, if he did not, who has any natural right to force him into relations distasteful to him? Under the present order of affairs, persons do unite with societies and remain good, disinterested members for life, where the right to retire is always conceded.

What we anarchists contend for is a larger opportunity to develop the units in society, that mankind may possess the right as a sound being to develop that which is broadest, noblest, highest and best, unhandicapped by any centralized authority, where he shall have to wait for his permits to be signed, sealed, approved and handed down to him before he can engage in the active pursuits of life with his fellow being. We know that after all, as we grow more enlightened under this larger liberty, we will grow to care less and less for that exact distribution of material wealth, which, in our greed-nurtured senses, seems now so impossible to think upon carelessly. The man and woman of loftier intellects, in the present, think not so much of the riches to be gained by their efforts as of the good they can do for their fellow creatures.

There is an innate spring of healthy action in every human being who has not been crushed and pinched by poverty and drudgery from before his birth, that impels him onward and upward. He cannot be idle, if he would; it is as natural for him to develop, expand, and use the powers within him when not repressed, as it is for the rose to bloom in the sunlight and fling its fragrance on the passing breeze.

The grandest works of the past were never performed for the sake of money. Who can measure the worth of a Shakespeare, an Angelo

or Beethoven in dollars and cents? Agassiz said, "he had no time to make money," there were higher and better objects in life than that. And so will it be when humanity is once relieved from the pressing fear of starvation, want, and slavery, it will be concerned, less and less, about the ownership of vast accumulations of wealth. Such possessions would be but an annoyance and trouble. When two or three or four hours a day of easy, of healthful labor will produce all the comforts and luxuries one can use, and the opportunity to labor is never denied, people will become indifferent as to who owns the wealth they do not need.

Wealth will be below par, and it will be found that men and women will not accept it for pay, or be bribed by it to do what they would not willingly and naturally do without it. Some higher incentive must, and will, supersede the greed for gold. The involuntary aspiration born in man to make the most of one's self, to be loved and appreciated by one's fellow-beings, to "make the world better for having lived in it," will urge him on to nobler deeds than ever the sordid and selfish incentive of material gain has done.

If, in the present chaotic and shameful struggle for existence, when organized society offers a premium on greed, cruelty, and deceit, men can be found who stand aloof and almost alone in their determination to work for good rather than gold, who suffer want and persecution rather than desert principle, who can bravely walk to the scaffold for the good they can do humanity, what may we expect from men when freed from the grinding necessity of selling the better part of themselves for bread? The terrible conditions under which labor is performed, the awful alternative if one does not prostitute talent and morals in the service of mammon; and the power acquired with the wealth obtained by ever-so-unjust means, combine to make the conception of free and voluntary labor almost an impossible one.

And yet, there are examples of this principle even now. In a well-bred family each person has certain duties, which are performed cheerfully, and are not measured out and paid for according to some pre-determined standard; when the united members sit down to the well-filled table, the stronger do not scramble to »

get the most, while the weakest do without, or gather greedily around them more food than they can possibly consume. Each patiently and politely awaits his turn to be served, and leaves what he does not want; he is certain that when again hungry plenty of good food will be provided. This principle can be extended to include all society, when people are civilized enough to wish it.

Again, the utter impossibility of awarding to each an exact return for the amount of labor performed will render absolute communism a necessity sooner or later. The land and all it contains, without which labor cannot be exerted, belong to no one man, but to all alike. The inventions and discoveries of the past are the common inheritance of the coming generations; and when a man takes the tree that nature furnished free, and fashions it into a useful article, or a machine perfected and bequeathed to him by many past generations, who is to determine what proportion is his and his alone? Primitive man would have been a week fashioning a rude resemblance to the article with his clumsy tools, where the modern worker has occupied an hour. The finished article is of far more real value than the rude one made long ago, and yet the primitive man toiled the longest and hardest.

Who can determine with exact justice what is each one's due? There must come a time when we will cease trying. The Earth is so bountiful, so generous; man's brain is so active, his hands so restless, that wealth will spring like magic, ready for the use of the world's inhabitants. We will become as much ashamed to quarrel over its possession as we are now to squabble over the food spread before us on a loaded table.

"But all this," the objector urges, "is very beautiful in the far off future, when we become angels. It would not do now to abolish governments and legal restraints; people are not prepared for it."

This is a question. We have seen, in reading history, that wherever an old-time restriction has been removed the people have not abused their newer liberty. Once it was considered necessary to compel men to save their souls, with the aid of governmental scaffolds, church racks and stakes. Until the foundation of the

American republic it was considered absolutely essential that governments should second the efforts of the church in forcing people to attend the means of grace; and yet it is found that the standard of morals among the masses is raised since they are left free to pray as they see fit, or not at all, if they prefer it. It was believed the chattel slaves would not work if the overseer and whip were removed; they are so much more a source of profit now that ex-slave owners would not return to the old system if they could.

So many able writers have shown that the unjust institutions which work so much misery and suffering to the masses have their root in governments, and owe their whole existence to the power derived from government, we cannot help but believe that were every law, every title deed, every court, and every police officer or soldier abolished tomorrow with one sweep, we would be better off than now. The actual, material things that man needs would still exist; his strength and skill would remain and his instinctive social inclinations retain their force and the resources of life made free to all the people that they would need no force but that of society and the opinion of fellow beings to keep them moral and upright.

Freed from the systems that made him wretched before, he is not likely to make himself more wretched for lack of them. Much more is contained in the thought that conditions make man what he is, and not the laws and penalties made for his guidance, than is supposed by careless observation. We have laws, jails, courts, armies, guns and armories enough to make saints of us all, if they were the true preventives of crime; but we know they do not prevent crime; that wickedness and depravity exist in spite of them, nay, increase as the struggle between classes grows fiercer, wealth greater and more powerful and poverty more gaunt and desperate.

To the governing class the anarchists say: "Gentlemen, we ask no privilege, we propose no restriction; nor, on the other hand, will we permit it. We have no new shackles to propose, we seek emancipation from shackles. We ask no legislative sanction, for co-operation asks only for a free field and no favors; neither will we permit their interference."(?) It asserts that in freedom of the social unit lies the freedom of the social

state. It asserts that in freedom to possess and utilize soil lie social happiness and progress and the death of rent. It asserts that order can only exist where liberty prevails, and that progress leads and never follows order. It asserts, finally, that this emancipation will inaugurate liberty, equality, fraternity. That the existing industrial system has outgrown its usefulness, if it ever had any, is, I believe, admitted by all who have given serious thought to this phase of social conditions.

The manifestations of discontent now looming upon every side show that society is conducted on wrong principles and that something has got to be done soon or the wage class will sink into a slavery worse than was the feudal serf. I say to the wage class: Think clearly and act quickly, or you are lost. Strike not for a few cents more an hour, because the price of living will be raised faster still, but strike for all you earn, be content with nothing less.

\* \* \* \* \*

Following are definitions which will appear in all of the new standard dictionaries:

### **Anarchism**

The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law, the theory that all forms of government are based on violence—hence wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

### **Anarchy**

Absence of government; disbelief in and disregard of invasion and authority based on coercion and force; a condition of society regulated by voluntary agreement instead of government.

### **Anarchist**

1. A believer in Anarchism; one opposed to all forms of coercive government and invasive authority.
2. One who advocates Anarchy, or absence of government, as the ideal of political liberty and social harmony. ■

*We share this lecture from 1905-10 here to forward and develop the Anarchist discussion as part of a series of Vital Works, if you would like to read more check out our notes on FB.*



**Lucy Eldine Gonzalez Parsons** (1853 - 1942) was a founder of the Industrial Workers of the World whose powerful voice and ability to organise lead to the Chicago PD calling her “more dangerous than a thousand rioters”.

Through her tempestuous life Lucy was associated for a wide range of Anarchist and Communist organisations and wrote and edited for several papers such as *The Alarm* (which she helped found) and *The Liberator*.

Her early life was spent in Texas where she and her husband Albert Parsons worked to register black voters but was forced to move to Chicago due to the threat to their lives due to the miscegenation and segregation laws.

She worked hard to champion to downtrodden, defending women, the homeless and political prisoners alike, this coming to a head when Albert was arrested after the Haymarket Affair and later executed by hanging, the police arresting Lucy and leaving her naked in a cell with her children as they murdered him.

None the less she would spend the rest of her life campaigning for the rights of working class folk and for the downfall of a capitalist system and the diabolical state.

She died in a fire on the 7th March 1942. The police immediately stole her library. ■

# Chav Solidarity

## D.Hunter

Photography © Kelly O'Brien





**When people say** chav, they mean only one thing. They'll have different definitions, but they'll mean the same thing.

They'll mean scum, they'll mean those not educated in the right way, they'll mean "keep away from my family", they'll mean criminal, and they'll mean you are worthless and it's your own fucking fault. The first time I heard the word was when I was called a chavvy twat by a pig who'd arrested me for going equipped to rob. I didn't follow the press in those days so I didn't know how regularly the word was being used in the mid 90's, but eventually the idea trickled down and I understood what they meant. They meant you're not good enough, you have none of the qualities we're looking for in a human being, you're a disgrace, you're a violent thug, you're lazy and stupid.

Chav was a shorthand way of dehumanising a large group of people who responded with indifference towards those who had benefited from their dispossession. There are worse things to be called than a chav for sure. The thing about being called a chav is that it's shorthand. Before, people had a tendency just to call you violent, lazy, stupid and criminal, which, if said to you every day by teachers, social workers, pigs and other state administrators, has a far more violent effect on your psyche. Being called a chav, well that was alright, because you could reclaim it. If me and my friends were being called chavs then that shows we're together, we're a family, we have a fucking bond.

I'm 37 pushing 50 now, and it's been a long time since anyone called me a chav as a way of stripping me of my humanity. To those around me I imagine I'm more like a librarian who shops at JD, and that's fine, but I still identify with the chav name. I take it as my duty to have an eye for the latest generation of young people who are labelled in such away. It's a class thing – you get called a chav and you're being told you're not working class, you're beneath that, and you'll never escape it; you are the underclass for ever and for always. Many of the essays that I've included in this book try to highlight the humanity of the underclass/chav communities, the things that have to be done within them to survive and thrive, and how neither pity nor disgust are relevant responses

to those communities' experiences. Most of all I've tried to emphasise the values of solidarity, mutual aid and self-defence that exist within those communities. I'm gonna talk about a few more examples of this just to get ya in the right frame of mind for all of this.

***“Being called a chav, well that was alright, because you could reclaim it. If me and my friends were being called chavs then that shows we're together, we're a family, we have a fucking bond”***

I spent several years in various young offenders institutes before I was 17. These were cages where I experienced incredible loneliness and desperation, where so much of my anger that had built up during my life flared up on a daily basis, and I spent my days with dozens of other boys of a similar age who felt a similar way. During one 6 month sentence in a Y.O.I. in Derbyshire, I lived alongside twenty-something other boys. I was 14 and one of the youngest and smallest of the prisoners. I walked around like a lit fuse just waiting to kick off, but knew no one. My only visitor a social worker, who came to tell me how and why I was there, and what I had to do to avoid coming back. Inside there were small groups of other boys who, based on experiences outside, towns they were from or the colour of their skin, stuck to each other like glue. The groups constantly fought amongst each other, and battled for supremacy over each other. Whilst some of us were on shorter sentences, others knew that they were only biding time before they got starred up, and were willing to take more risks in order to either establish their dominance over the other inmates or to build their reputation inside and outside of the prison. One of the oldest boys, who knew he wasn't getting out until he was at least 21, was particularly determined to achieve these two goals. He had built some credibility because of his connections on the outside and his ability to bring in supplies, including trainers, gameboys and booze, which he sold onto other inmates. In order to get these inside he or someone on the outside was paying at least one of the guards a decent amount of money. This boy was universally reviled on the quiet, to his face the other boys showed him respect and some faked fear in order to curry favour with him. »

Towards the end of the summer (which had seemed particularly hot, and was always the worst season to be locked up for obvious reasons) I had begun to develop a tenser than usual relationship with one of the screws. He had demanded pleases and thank you's for unlocking my door in the morning and locking it at night, pleasantries which at best I spat out. This had gone on for a bit until I'd told him to fuck off and he'd given me a swift punch to the gut that had me doubled over and spitting blood. A day later I tripped him up near the stairwell, and he'd very nearly gone tumbling down the stairs. I'd been severely sanctioned for this, and been forced to clean the toilets with a toothbrush everyday for a week. Each day as I cleaned the toilets he would come in and piss into the bowl I was cleaning, spraying onto my hands and face. My planned retaliation meant I had to get my hands on some sharp metal, and having been banned from both the kitchen and woodwork room for various other offences, I felt that my only alternative was to ask the older boy with the connections on the outside.

Our only interactions had been the occasional game of pool, so I assumed approaching him and soliciting his help would be difficult. He would be aware that I would be unable to afford to pay for anything with money, and I was aware that even approaching him without money might lead to him and his friends kicking the shit out of me. But during lunch I saw him alone staring out the window and went over to ask him. He stared at me, laughed, and told me that I'd taken my fucking time. The next day, me, him, and three of his friends ambushed the screw, pinned him down and beat the crap out of him and whilst he screamed for help the other boys all body-checked, tripped and grappled with the other screws who tried to go to his aid. It took them about 20 minutes to restore their order, but by that point my knuckles were bloody from hitting the screw so hard, and his face was going purple. It turned out everybody had seen how the guard had been fucking with me, and some of the older boys had already talked about intervening, but the general consensus had been that I had to step up first; I had to reach out and ask for the back up I needed before anything else got done.

None of my mother's family had "jobs", most of them worked, but it was not in their mentality to go around factories, shops and bars asking if any jobs were going, it was not in their mentality, either, to go to the job centre. My grandfather's belief was that in no circumstances would he take handouts from the country that had done so much damage to his own. I bring this up not as an indictment of those who do take state benefits, but as an indication of the man's belief system and the culture he instilled in his family. We were told to work for ourselves – no bosses, no state. We would ensure that food was on our plates and roofs were over our head in our own way. This own way included hijacking lorries along the M62, killing and stealing livestock in the large industrial farms around Lancashire and Yorkshire, organising bareknuckle boxing and dog fights, and a host of other things.

***“... the culture of collectivisation he instilled was still real to the rest of us. If one of my cousins was given something, they would share it without a second thought. Nothing was saved for later; nothing was personal property”***

Those identified as males in the family were expected to help out, as were those who, like my dad, fucked their way into the family. As a seven year old I was shown how to be a lookout during a robbery, and not long after, my cousins taught me how to steal a car. All of the rewards for this were collectivised, except that my grandfather took as much as he wanted. Everyone else got according to their need, not their ability. One of my uncles was fiercely respected for the amount of money he brought into our family, but he lived in a one bedroom flat which was furnished with a mattress, TV and nothing else. I only have a thin recollection of the flat but I'm not convinced it had a bathroom. This was acknowledged, but never challenged, it was raised by others as an example of how we all should be. Just because you can make a lot of money doesn't mean you need a lot of money. I'm sure my uncle had enough to drink and feed himself, but in comparison to some of his siblings he lived a frugal life. The money went to uncles and aunts with children instead, so that those kids wouldn't go short. One of my grandmother's brothers was placed into what

everyone called a “top special place for spastics” because his physical and mental needs were such that the family could not cope, but they would not see him suffer inside anything cheap and nasty.

There were discrepancies to all of this. My grandfather took whatever he wanted from the collective pot, and I’m sure he would say, that as the responsibility for everyone else was with him, it was only right. He was also a violent and abusive man, who let outsiders abuse and violate his family if it suited him, but the culture of collectivisation he instilled was still real to the rest of us. If one of my cousins was given something, they would share it without a second thought. Nothing was saved for later; nothing was personal property. With my mother unable to take care of me and my sisters, we were viewed as temporary orphans who slept in the master’s house. My grandfather did not need to take direct responsibility for us; his culture meant that every other family member who was able took responsibility for our food, clothing and general well-being.

Living in Radford in the early 90’s wasn’t always the easiest. The state had been on a mission to destroy communities like ours, poverty was high and there were a lot of angry people but there were still many moments in

which neighbours stood together. We found ways to make it clear that, if we were gonna be fucked with, we would not provide the lubricant. One typical incident involves a couple of friends of mine, a brother and sister who were 12 and 13 years old. They lived with their aunt and her boyfriend who had severe drug and alcohol problems (I know because a few years later I would become their dealer). Their uncle and aunt were not in a position to pay much attention to my friends, and just as I don’t judge my own mother for being unable to do this, I don’t judge them. So the brother and sister spent most of their days doing what they wanted, going to school if they wanted an easy hot meal, or not going to school if they wanted to nick someone’s wallet and go get a Happy Meal. My life was pretty similar, but unlike myself, these two were placid and gentle. They didn’t get into fights and they didn’t scream at adults who looked at them funny. I doubt they ever smashed a window of a shop the day after they’d been caught stealing from it. The brother even went to church every Sunday on his own. He said it was the most peaceful place in the world. I’d see them most days, and at least once a week we’d spend large portions of the day together. They had other friends and I had other friends so we weren’t inseparable or anything like that. But we lived real close, and were bonded because of that. »



Photography © Kelly O'Brien

One day they both came running over to where I was at the corner of Bentinck and Peveril, drinking with a couple of sex workers on their lunch break and a big dude called Malcolm, who I was tight with, on and off, for several years. The brother was screaming, panic all across his face, and his sister was clutching his arm tight, telling him that they had to go back home. He explained that they'd got to the hallway outside of their flat and saw that outside their house were three men with baseball bats and crowbars. They'd bolted looking for help. Malcolm didn't think, just started running to the flats, with those on their lunch break and us three kids trailing behind him. I haven't a fucking clue what was going through my head, other than I'm gonna have a fight. We ran to the tower block, up the five flights of stairs, down the hallway and into the flat which now had the door hanging off it's hinges. I was a few paces behind Malcolm and the brother, but when I got in, the uncle had blood pouring from his head and the aunt was screaming in the corner, as one man with a baseball bat pinned her to the wall. Malcolm had another man pinned to the floor and the brother appeared to be shadow boxing as another man swung his baseball bat at him. There was a lot of screaming, but not a lot of sense being made. The two sex workers ran at the man pinning the aunt to the wall, the first got hit so hard around the mouth that a tooth flew out, but the second ran her head into his chest. I followed up leaping onto his head and pummelling him to the ground, at which point we both started kicking him in the head and balls. The uncle had at this point pulled himself up off the floor and joined his nephew in going at the third man. Malcolm had apparently got bored of sitting on his man and decided to pick him up and carry him outside, not via the door but via the window. He held him over the edge and shouted out for everyone to pay attention. Everyone kinda did. Malcolm let it be known that if the men didn't leave now he would drop their friend to the ground. The men did as they were told, and Malcolm dropped their friend anyway (he landed on a balcony just one floor below).

We spent the next few hours fixing up the door, sorting out the cuts and bruises picked up during the fight and drinking a hell of a lot of whiskey. Malcolm slept over on the floor of the flat, and we told the neighbours about what had happened and that some men might be coming back. Most of them said they'd keep a look out and lend a hand if they saw anything. It was what you did – you looked after each other, even if it was from men with baseball bats. The men had been loan sharks, people trying to make some pounds by preying on the poverty that had been inflicted upon whole communities up and down the country by a government and economic system which we often felt powerless to defend ourselves from. But it was in incidents like these that I learnt that self-defence from those with more might than you is possible and that those of us who have lived close to the bottom are the most able to do it.

\*

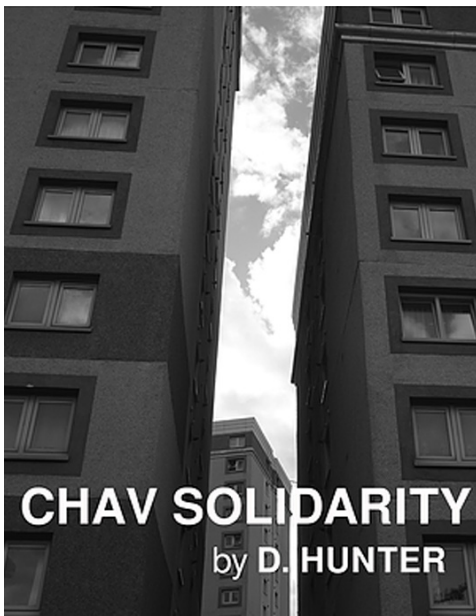
These moments of collective organising and resistance were carried out by people in this country who live on the margins. I have experienced hundreds of moments like them, and I can only speculate how many others have occurred across the country, just in my life time. The people involved are pathologised and demonised in mainstream culture, as broken people who need to be remade in the image of the good citizen of a capitalist society. I disagree. I think these people and the moments that they create need to be the building block upon which we make a better society. I don't know where many of the people I've talked about have ended up. I know they will have been fighting against the ongoing attacks of the transnational neo-liberal process and it's servants, and that this will have caused unbelievable damage to their hearts and minds. Because of this, many may no longer be able to think or act with the collectivised tendencies of mutual aid, self-defence and solidarity. Of course there will still be many who can, and who need more people in their corner as they seek to survive emotionally, psychologically and materially.■

***“It's a class thing – you get called a chav and you're being told you're not working class, you're beneath that, and you'll never escape it; you are the underclass for ever and for always”***

*Hunter is an ageing chav, whose first 25 years depended upon the informal economy including sex work, robbing, and dealing. For the last 12 years he has been an anti-capitalist motivated community organiser and spent too much time watching football. He is currently flogging a book about himself, poverty and anarchism, whilst finishing his first crime fiction novel. He pays his bills by working as a mental health support worker. He thinks everyone should stop recycling until they've collectivised and/or redistributed all their current and future economic resources.*

*To the political left Hunter's people are the ignorant and the ill informed, to the victorious right they are the unwashed and discarded waste product of the labouring class. Chav Solidarity is part autobiography, part meditation on trauma, class and identity, part one finger salute into the face of respectability politics, but mostly an articulation of the contradictory heart of Chavvy shit heads across the U.K. Chav Solidarity is a collection of essays which pick apart the lived experiences of its author. Hunter uses his experiences as child sex worker, teenage crack addict, violent thug and community activist to examine the ways in which our classed experiences shape the ways in which we think and do our politics.*

Look for the book at [chavsolidarity.com](http://chavsolidarity.com)  
Contact: [info@chavsolidarity.com](mailto:info@chavsolidarity.com)



## Social Depravity

Ritchie Smith

The overworked and underpaid,  
Have zero hours, treated like slaves,  
Money for the 1%, low wage causes  
resent,  
The workers' rights have been removed,  
No compassion very cruel,  
It is the Tory way,  
Social depravity.

No money for people to spend,  
So this country cannot mend,  
No hope for the unemployed,  
Ambition is destroyed,  
Neglect is there for all to see,  
Bringing the country to its knees,  
It is aimed at you and me,  
Social depravity

Because there is no work to do,  
Become a MOD recruit,  
Forced to go into a fight,  
Participate in greed and hate,  
We know the right wing love a war,  
You wonder who the terrorists are,  
Surely there's a better way than,  
Social depravity.

Between you and me they drive a wedge,  
The country's living on the edge,  
Social housing in decay,  
Essential funds taken away,  
Cost of living through the roof,  
Only goes to prove,  
A right wing philosophy is,  
Social depravity.

The NHS is on the floor,  
People die in corridors,  
Badly run soon privately own,  
Everything is upside down,  
More homeless people on our streets,  
In the doorways, at our feet,  
In a so called democracy,  
We've social depravity.

They won't just go and let us be,  
What we do has to be screened,  
To keep us all under control,  
Our movements are patrolled,  
Their paranoid of what we'll do,  
What repercussions might ensue?  
Is this the way that we should be!  
Social depravity

[www.facebook.com/uptownportrayerpoeetry/](http://www.facebook.com/uptownportrayerpoeetry/)

**The Decolonial Atlas** is a volunteer-run project building a growing collection of maps which, in some way, help us to challenge our relationships with the land, people, and state. It's based on the premise that cartography is not as objective as we're made to believe. The orientation of a map, its projection, the presence of political borders, which features are included or excluded, and the language used to label a map are all subject to the map-maker's bias – whether deliberate or not.

Jordan Engel, who kindly gave us this short interview is a mapmaker and researcher originally from Ga'sgöhsagöh in Onödowá'ga:' territory. He founded the Decolonial Atlas in 2014.

*Thank you so much for the time, why don't we get started with a little about how you got started with The Decolonial Atlas? What are the aims of the project?*

Cartography is a beautiful science and art form that can help us to better understand the world and our place in it. The problem is that most of the maps we use today reinforce an understanding of the world that is flawed. They do this in many ways, from the projections they use, to imposing to place names of the colonizers, to the inclusion of political borders. Borders do not really exist outside our imaginations, but they have been ingrained so deeply into our mental geographies that they seem real. A recent analysis revealed that most international borders are actually less than a century old. A world free from states becomes easier to envision when our maps don't include borders.

They say that 'history is written by the victors.' Well, maps are made by the colonizers. The Decolonial Atlas was started in response to that, to amplify indigenous geographic perspectives and challenge the monopoly that colonial maps have on our consciousness. The world has much to learn from these indigenous

perspectives, but even more importantly, indigenous cartography contributes to the overall perpetuation of indigenous cultures which have for so long been suppressed. Knowledge of the land, passed down through generations, is preserved in indigenous place names. Documenting those names now is of the utmost importance, so that when the elders pass, those names are not forgotten forever.

Indigenous toponyms are important reflections of the cultures and places they represent. Compared to colonial toponyms which are often named for important settlers or are transplanted names from their homelands, indigenous names are much more deeply rooted in the local history and geography of that particular place. Documenting these names serves to support ongoing language revitalization efforts, acknowledge unextinguished indigenous land tenure, and help native and non-native people alike to better understand indigenous history, the legacy of colonization, and our relationship with the land.

You mentioned that one of the key issues with the maps in common usage is the projections themselves? Could you tell us a little more about this, why it came about and why it is we are using maps which continue to be problematic? Is there a preferred map?

**“Cartography is a beautiful science and art form that can help us to better understand the world and our place in it. The problem is that most of the maps we use today reinforce an understanding of the world that is flawed.”**

## An Interview with...



The issue of projections in cartography comes down to equal representation. So many of the maps we use diminish the relative size of the Global South, while allowing for a greater level of detail in Europe and North America. The most egregious projection that we are all familiar with is the Mercator, a 450-year-old relic that famously makes Greenland appear larger than the entire continent of Africa. Obviously, because the Earth is spherical, there's no perfect way to represent it on a flat surface, but there are many great equal-area projections which are certainly preferable to the Mercator. »

Some of my favorites are the Eckert IV projection, and the similar Equal Earth projection, which was just invented in 2018.

**What is the scale of loss of these indigenous toponyms? How much would you say the native communities have lost?**

The scale of loss varies from tribe to tribe. Eastern nations, which were colonized the earliest, often suffered a huge loss of their cultural heritage. Many of the names on our maps are from the precolonial era, while others are not quite as old. In some cases where the indigenous name for a place has been forgotten or suppressed, contemporary indigenous communities have endeavored to reconstruct a place name based

on their cultural relationship with that location. Because indigenous cultures and languages are living and dynamic, none of these names are any less “authentic” than others. Still, I was once talking to DeLesslin George-Warren from the Catawba Indian Nation who brought up a great point when we were discussing indigenous toponymy - “The fact is that we’ve lost so much in terms of our language and place names. It might be more honest to recognize that loss in the map instead of giving the false notion that the place name still exists for us.”

**How do you feel about the argument that English toponyms can be set alongside indigenous toponyms? Such as found here in the UK, is this enough?**

It’s a question for each indigenous community to answer what reconciliation means and looks like to them. Personally, I think there are so many instances in North America where the colonial place names blatantly dishonor indigenous communities, that I don’t think dual-naming would suffice. The significance of place names is mostly symbolic, and too often, the names that dot this landscape are symbolic memorials to the white supremacist perpetrators of genocide and slavery. There is no equivalent for that in Great Britain.»



**What is the main difference between modern state borders and those of indigenous communities?**

The Decolonial Atlas has become a platform for people to share ideas about decolonization. Someone commented recently that the concept of 'tribal territories' is widely misunderstood. Most American Indian nations did not have clearly defined borders as we think of today, and the concept of land ownership itself seemed absurd to many. I'd also direct people to a recent article which explores this topic titled **Settler Anarchists Should Tread Lightly Around Indigenous Nationalism**.

([tinyurl.com/SettlerAnarchists](http://tinyurl.com/SettlerAnarchists))

**Is there a particular focus to The Decolonial Atlas' work at the moment?**

Since 2014, we've been researching and consulting with indigenous elders and language keepers across North America to create a decolonized modern map of the continent. The main feature of this map are the indigenous toponyms (place names) for major landmarks such as cities, mountains, and historical sites. We've worked with more than 100 indigenous communities so far to accurately represent their languages and perspectives on the map.

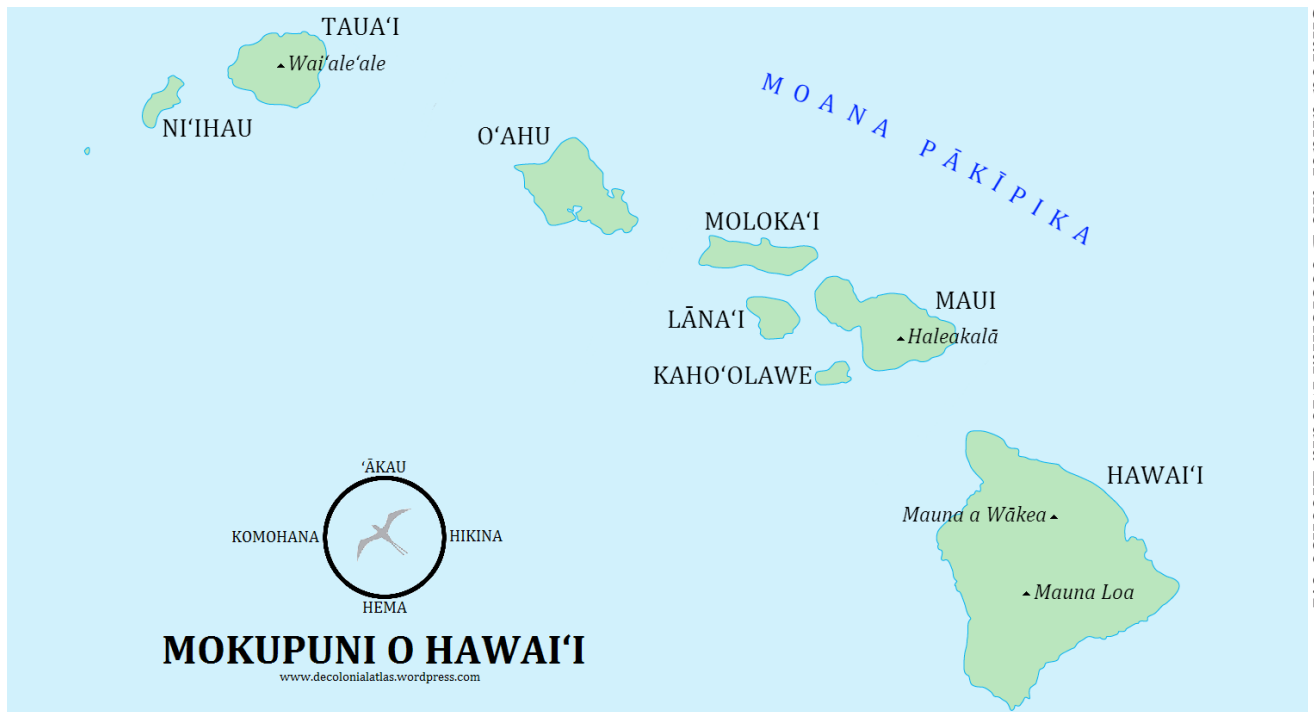
**How can Anarchist communities best practice respect for indigenous names?**

It's becoming more common for there to be a territory acknowledgement, recognizing that these events are taking place on the stolen land of a particular tribe. When possible, we recommend also acknowledging the indigenous name of where the event is taking place. Place names are the intellectual and cultural property of the native people, and as such, we advise seeking permission from those communities and language keepers beforehand.

**What are the long-term goals here, where are you guys heading with this project?**

We strive to accomplish many goals with the Atlas, including: documenting indigenous knowledge of the land, fostering a better understanding of indigenous history and the legacy of colonization supporting indigenous peoples' reclamation of culture, language, and connection with the land promoting indigenous pride in seeing accurate cultural representation combating systematic misinformation about indigenous toponymy and acknowledging unextinguished indigenous land tenure. ■

**To find out more:-**  
[decolonialatlas.wordpress.com](http://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com)  
[facebook.com/decolonialatlas](https://facebook.com/decolonialatlas)



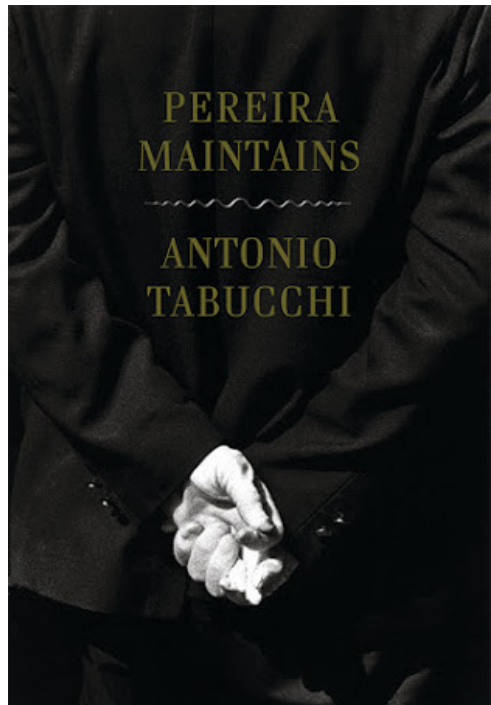
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# BURN AFTER READING

REVIEWING THE BOOKS AND TUNES THEY WOULD RATHER YOU FORGOT ABOUT



## PEREIRA MAINTAINS - Antonio Tabucchi (1994)

**Pereira maintains he** is non-political. He edits the culture page of the Lisboa - an evening paper, and therefore not in the same league as other newspapers of Lisbon, but he was sure it would sooner or later make its mark, even if the culture staff consisted solely of himself, one man sweating with heat and discomfort in a squalid cubby-hole under the eye of a caretaker who was probably a police informant. It was the twenty-fifth of July 1938 and Lisbon was glittering, literally glittering in the purity of an Atlantic breeze, and the city seemed entirely in the hands of the police that evening. The day before, in Alentejo, they had killed a carter who supplied the markets, because he was a Socialist. This explained why the Guarda Nacional were stationed outside the market gates. But the Lisboa hadn't had the courage to print the news, and who could be expected to have the courage to print news of that sort, that a Socialist carter had been shot down on his wagon in Alentejo, and had drenched all his melons with blood? 'World's Most Luxurious Yacht Sailed Today from New York' the Lisboa's headline read that day.

There are countless novels written about fascism across Europe. Patrick Creagh's translation of Pereira Maintains is the only one I know of in English about the Portuguese »

'Estado Novo', arguably the world's longest ruling fascist regime. I say arguably because it is difficult to say when fascism started in Portugal. There was no violent coup like in Germany, no march on the capital like in Italy, no civil war like in Spain - just the gradual consolidation of power by Salazar and his circle, and the slow creep of authoritarianism working its way into every corner of Portuguese life. Like being lay in a bath with the water temperature slowly rising, it's difficult to say at what point you're being boiled alive. Such was life in Portugal. By the time of the Carnation Revolution in 1974, after forty plus years of dictatorship under the banner 'Faith, Fatherland and Family', Portugal had the highest rate of infant mortality in Europe.

Tabucchi's novel is set as the heat rises on its hero, Pereira. The heat rises, the walls close in, the grip on his collar tightens, and the question is: how heroic is he? How heroic can anyone be expected to be under the tyranny of a police state? I'm only the obscure editor of a second rate evening paper, said Pereira, and every day the proofs are examined by the state censors. It isn't easy in a country like this for a person like me. But a wild idea had struck him, he maintains. There is no time to lose. ■

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## CHAV SOLIDARITY

- D.Hunter (2018)

*(Extract of which can found on page 51)*

Trigger warning. This review recounts abuse and violence, the book more so.

***"This book is built on the backs of those who walked alongside in the first 25 years of my life. The dead, disregarded and the disgraced. Forever in my heart, always on my arms."***

***"Whatever psychological scars I carry with me today would have been far worse were my skin a different colour. I honestly believe that had I been anything other than White I'd be dead."***

This self-published autobiography is, for the most part, about the earlier life of an anarchist comrade in Nottingham who most local activists will know. Some will even know snippets of his testimony now written down for the world to see.

It's a blunt story of survival along with generous acknowledgement of how a young working class person's life is moulded, good (in this case to being formed into anarchist) and bad (very), by family, friends, fellow travellers and circumstance. An abusive father who rejected the state whilst horribly tormenting those closest, community defence in the midst of terrible social distress, escapism via drugs and booze and suicide - attempted and achieved. A political book given at the right time, a moment of care after prison abuse, revenge meted out at the time of abuse or years later, sex workers looking out for each other and an account of serious racism with tacit recognition of the existence of a white supremacist patriarchal capitalist system. The writer doesn't shy away from their own role or make excuses - we read how he used white supremacy to get advantage in boxing ring using racist slurs, did better (relatively) than Black or Brown men in youth offenders institutions and prison, got stopped and searched less.

The working class solidarity in the title of this amazing book shines through. But there is a big challenge to the anarchist movement which is framed in terms of the vast majority of us now, especially after widened educational opportunity (but also then), having so many more choices and so much more 'cultural capital' than in the chav world the author identifies with but has managed, in part, to leave behind. In an increasingly unequal society, with a continued viscous attack on welfare, and the total disregard of the humanity of poor and working class people of colour such as with the Grenfell fire and an increasing racialised discourse during Brexit, many more people could soon be facing reduced choices, abandoned by the state. There is also the challenge to activists to really understand the 2011 riots, and to respond properly and practically to the critique of the former Black Panthers Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin and JoNina Abron-Ervin) who visited the UK a few years later having been invited to the London Anarchist Bookfair in 2014 - whose meetings at the Sumac Centre (Nottingham's anarchist social centre) and an afro-Caribbean community centre were hosted locally by the author and members of Nottingham AF, amongst others. Anarchists, the AF included, have yet to help make a real difference, in spite the much higher awareness of intersectional oppression. ■



## A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things

- Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore (2018)

Welcome to the Capitalocene. Humans, at least some of them, are killing everything, from megafauna to microbiota, at speeds one hundred times faster than the background rate. The scale of destruction can't be simply extrapolated from the excesses of our knuckle-dragging forebears. What has really changed since the 1400s is capitalism - and this is what the book is about: showing how the modern world has been made through seven cheap things - nature, money, work, care, food, energy, and lives.

Take the humble chicken, *Gallus gallus domesticus*, product of post WW2 freely-sourced genetic manipulation to produce the most profitable fowl. It reaches maturity in six weeks, can barely walk, has an oversized breast, and is slaughtered en masse, at the rate of sixty billion a year. Cheap Nature. In the United

States two cents for every dollar spent on fast-food chicken goes to the poultry workers. Cheap Work. Eighty-six percent of workers are in pain because of repetitive hacking and twisting on the production line. Denial of injury claims is common. The result is a fifteen percent decline in income for ten years after injury, so recovering workers depend on family for support - outside the production circuit but central to maintaining the workforce. Cheap Care. So chickens don't fart methane like cows, but they are bred in huge barns that need fuel to keep them warm. Cheap Energy. Franchising and public subsidies for private profit mitigate the financial risks of commercial sales, right through to the land on which soy is grown to feed the chickens, in China, Brazil and the United States. Cheap Money. Last, persistent acts of chauvinism against animal and human lives - women, the colonized, the poor, people of colour and immigrants, make these six cheap things possible.

**“In the United States two cents for every dollar spent on fast-food chicken goes to the poultry workers. Cheap Work”**

Of course there's resistance, from indigenous peoples whose flocks provide the genetic material for breeding to care workers demanding recognition. 'The social struggles over nature, money, work, care, food, energy and lives that attend the Capitalocene's poultry bones amount to a case for why the most iconic symbol of the modern era isn't the automobile or the smartphone but the Chicken McNugget.'

The Medieval Warm Period ran from around 950 to 1250 across the North Atlantic. Populations swelled, towns multiplied. Europeans nearly tripled in number to 70 million. Agricultural surpluses soared. Relative prosperity fuelled expansionism. Beginning in 1095, the Crusades were commercialised military operations targeting the wealth of the eastern Mediterranean. Conquest was made to pay by imposing tribute; the forerunner of »

colonial capitalism. The greatest conqueror of all, however, was cultivation; by the fourteenth century, agriculture took up a third of all European land use, a sixfold increase in 500 years, much of it at the expense of forests.

Then famine returned with colder, wetter weather. Massive rains struck Europe in May 1315 and did not ease up until August, ending with a cold snap. Europe's population shrank by twenty percent in five years and the so-called Great Famine continued until 1322. This was the Little Ice Age that lasted until the 19th century. Feudalism crashed, not least because feudal lords wanted cash or grain, and they consumed any surpluses rather than reinvesting in agriculture. Left to their own devices, peasants would probably have shifted to crop mixes, including garden produce. Peasant autonomy would have allowed medieval Europe to feed up to three times as many people. But the transition never happened. In 1347 the Black Death struck an already weakened population. Almost overnight, peasant revolts became large-scale threats to the feudal order.

Repressive legislation to keep labour cheap, through wage controls or outright re-enservement, was the response, for example England's Ordinance and Statute of Labourers. 'The equivalent today would be to respond to an Ebola epidemic by making unionisation harder', the authors write.

Capitalism was born out of this mayhem. Ruling classes didn't just seek to restore the surplus but to expand it, and it was the Iberian aristocracy that stumbled on a solution, especially in Portugal and Castile. To make war with the Moslem powers on the peninsula - the Reconquista - they depended on financiers. War and debt remade society and spurred the earliest invasions of the Canary Islands and Madeira. 'The solution to war debt was more war, with the payoff being colonial profit on new, great frontiers.'

Madeira was a case in point. In the 1460s a new way for producing food took shape. One traveller reported in 1455 there was not a foot of ground on the island not covered in great trees. By the 1550s it was hard to find any wood at all. The reason: sugar production. It had arrived in Iberia by the 14th century and by 1420 it was being grown commercially,

funded by German banks and cultivated near Valencia by a mix of slaves and free workers. In the 1460s and 1470s farmers on Madeira gave up wheat and grew sugar exclusively. The sugar frontier spread to other islands in the Atlantic, then on a massive scale to the New World. And like palm and soy monocultures today, it rapidly exhausted soils, cleared forests and encouraged pests. As for the workers, they were indigenous people from the Canary Islands in the case of Madeira, North African slaves and in some cases paid plantation labourers from Europe.

***“The solution to war debt was more war, with the payoff being colonial profit on new, great frontiers”***

When Madeira's trees were all consumed, sugar production crashed. Capitalism reinvented itself. After sugar came wine, the casks being imported from the 'cheap' forests of the New World. Commodities flowed the other way: Madeira was a conduit for the African slave trade, and in a more recent reinvention, today that grim history is exploited and marketed in the form of tourism.

Here then, is the central theme of this highly readable, heavily-sourced book: 'Capitalism not only has frontiers; it exists only through frontiers, expanding from one place to the next, transforming socioecological relations, producing more and more kinds of goods and services...For capitalism, what matters is that the figures entered into ledgers - to pay workers, to supply adequate food for workers, to purchase energy and raw materials - are as low as possible. Capitalism only values what it can count and it can count only dollars...this means that the whole system thrives when powerful states and capitalists can reorganise global nature, invest as little as they can, and receive as much food, work, energy and raw materials with as little disruption as possible.' ■



Fans will welcome the first full length release from Bristol's finest ska'd up anarchist punk export, Spanner, since 2011's *Crisis*, but there is plenty here for new comers as well. Into their existing sound they have woven elements of folk, dub, spoken word, French hip hop, and on one track Bad Religion style 'oozing ahs' accompanying a melodic hardcore intro. The musical changes are accompanied with a shake up of vocal duties, with every member of the band and numerous guest vocalists taking a turn on the mic, and joining together for choruses. It all combines to form a sound that feels like it was created as part of a real community, much like the best of Chumbawamba's records.

Its certainly a sound that is well earned, as Spanner have always followed up their words with deeds. Track 10, 'All Over the Place', is all about their experiences throwing themselves into the DIY music scene, long stretches of touring and a thriving 'resistance culture'. You're also likely to find the band members anywhere there is a demonstration to be had, solidarity funds to be raised, or trouble to be caused. It's this direct involvement that lends weight to the lyrical content, and allowed them to successfully sue South Wales police to raise funds for making the album!

'Property Wrongs' features perhaps the most instantly infectious lyrics, after all who could resist joining in with a shout of 'SCUM LANDLORDS'? There is certainly a lot of anger at the state of the world throughout many of

the tracks, something which any of us paying attention will share. Other targets of the band's wrath include the alienation of having our social interactions mediated by online companies in the more 'traditional Spanner' ska-punk opening track 'Immobilised'. 'Always Antifascist' aims its anger at not just the fascists but the self appointed leaders of the left who would rather we politely protested away from the fash. The spoken word and folk laden 'Apotheosis' takes aim at organised religion, and Jeremy Kyle gets his comeuppance in the eclectic 'The Peoples Trial of Jeremy Kyle'.

Beyond all the insight, and well directed rage is something much rare, and far more important. Optimism. It's not often any of us can manage to be earnestly positive, instead we use self deprecation, cynicism and sarcasm as the tried and tested coping mechanisms (very British of us!). Loudly exclaiming that we can, and will, win is something we need more of, and is a running theme here, most notable in the energetic harmonies of 'Impossible'.

We Won't be Stopped is a great edition to any rebel's record collection, and I highly recommend banging it on before you head out on your next direct action. Don't just take my word for it, you can listen to the album in full on Spanner's bandcamp, and order a copy on Vinyl or CD. Despite their many valid critiques of social media, you can also like them on facebook, and find out when they are coming to a town near you. ■

[www.spanner.bandcamp.com](http://www.spanner.bandcamp.com)  
[www.spannerintheworks.net](http://www.spannerintheworks.net)



# RED AND BLACK GAMERS

*Tabletop and video game news and reviews for Anarchists.*



**SPACE CATS FIGHT FASCISM**  
The TESA Collective (2018)

It's ok... read that name a few more times... go on buy a copy before I've even talked about it. Ok, you ready?... Is it as good a game as it is a name? Fuck yeah. The TESA collective have pedigree for making top quality tabletop games with a strong social message, from Copoly to Civio, the games wear their politics front and centre and do a great job at making social change a fun (and educational) game for all.

So the premise is this, there is a rising wave of fascism sweeping across the galaxy, threatening to throw the Interspecies Galactic Alliance under autocratic rule. The regime known as *The Rat Pack* has convinced the powers that be

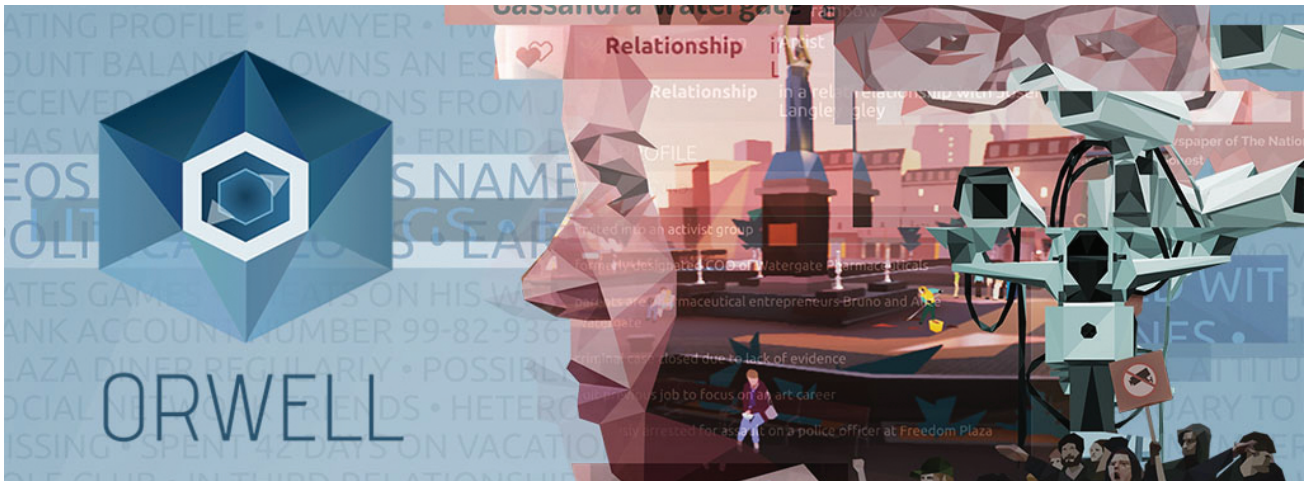
that all cats must be tightly controlled... or forced into feline exile. But everyone knows, cats don't like to be collared, and they don't like to be caged.

So the fash are rats and the players are cats, taking them on in a co-op, all win or all lose fashion. Your team of 2-4 players hop from planet to planet raising your forces and hopefully liberating atleast four before the fascists take over the Galactic Alliance, which means you've got to get on with the job! Meanwhile the Fash rats use propoganda and (haha) laser pointers to wrestle back control so you have to use your three actions per turn wisely, utilising cards from a resistance deck.

At the end of your turn you roll a few dice to see what damage the Fascists are doing and the games strategy comes from knowing when to let this happen and when to counter it. It sort of works like a dice rolling version of Pandemic so team work and planning are the name of the day.

It's a night starter game, something reasonably light to play before heading on to a heavy or maybe even to have a few rounds off down the pub after a meeting, accessible and fun and really worth a play.

They've recently released an expansion called "Secret Moewssions" which tho I'm yet to play will be on my list for sure. It's a bit on the steep side with shipping but worth it if you have the resources or can get your FLGS to stock a copy. ■



## ORWELL

Osmotic Studios (2016)

**Orwell** is a PC game that sees you take on the role of an investigator tasked with implementing the nation's 'safety bill', by tracking down dangerous extremists. The first part 'keeping an eye on you' was released in 2016, with the second 'Ignorance is Strength' being released this year.

The game is designed to feel as little like a game as possible, allowing you feel fully immersed as you dig through evidence looking for those responsible for a terrorist bombing. You'll receive instructions from your handler, scroll through social media, look up newspaper stories, and listen to tapped phone conversations. All allowing you to begin to piece together what happened in a detective like fashion. You'll soon be starting to highlight people of interest for surveillance or even arrest, and begin uncovering information about not just your suspects but The Nation itself.

Orwell's interface cleverly allows you to highlight information taken out of context. You can deliberately use this as a short cut to highlight a suspect, or accidentally end up chasing the wrong person. Either way it shows you the limits of the phrase 'if you aren't guilty you have nothing to fear'. As you delve further into the game you're realise that there is never a single 'smoking gun' left by a suspect. That doesn't mean however, that you can't piece together a lot about them. By cross referencing hacked emails with public forum posts and media quotes, you can soon build up an eerily complete picture of someone's life, and reveal the complex plot threads woven by the writers. It might make you think more

about the way you use internet more so than any real world article about online privacy.

The name itself, and the other scattered references to 1984, make the views of the game developers, Osmotic Studios, pretty clear. During development they read both fiction and real world accounts of surveillance, trying not just to alert people to it's existence – but actually make them care about it. However, whilst you are playing, the game doesn't preach at you like you might expect. Instead, as you play your role, you will uncover uncomfortable truths about the way surveillance works in a way that feels natural. Plenty of decisions will occupy a morally grey zone, forcing you make difficult decisions that will have far reaching consequences. It may even be possible to play through and think total surveillance in 'the right hands' is completely fine, though I suspect this would be rather difficult. Like Papers Please before it, this game excels in utilising gaming's unique ability to make you feel responsible for fictional actions in a way that films and books struggle to manage.

A sequel was released in 2018, it introduced some interesting new features. Such as the ability to push stories favourable to the nation, or unfavourable to its detractors, via mainstream news sources and linked social media accounts. Unfortunately the game ends quite abruptly not long after this feature is introduced, and a whole feels a bit more straight forward than its predecessor. ■

**Orwell: Keeping an Eye on You**  
5/5 everyone should play this game  
**Orwell: Ignorance is Strength**  
3/5 if you really want more!



## 57 hours of Donkey Kong! (or Why the left should care more about gaming)

by Maddison Stoff

*First appearing in Overland Magazine  
([overland.org.au](http://overland.org.au))*

Last month, bisexual gamer and leftist YouTuber Hbombguy finished a gruelling 57-hour streaming session of the notoriously frustrating videogame Donkey Kong 64, raising over \$340,000 for UK trans charity Mermaids. The mammoth effort was in response to anti-trans activist Graham Lineham and his briefly successful social media campaign to jeopardise Mermaids' funding from the UK government.

With support at first in the gay and trans communities, the stream eventually went viral over left-wing social media and spread into the wider geek and videogame subcultures, with nerd celebrities like the designer of the Doom and Quake games John Romero, Donkey Kong 64 composer Grant Kirkhope and absurdist queer sci-fi erotica writer Chuck Tingle appearing publicly throughout the stream alongside a variety of left and left-leaning figures such as whistleblower and outspoken socialist Chelsea Manning, internet philosopher ContraPoints and even US democratic congress member Alexandria Ocasio Cortez.

The stream served as a powerful counterpoint to the culture of toxicity and right-wing politics that often dominate the gaming world, showing passionate support for an oppressed community while connecting up our

struggle with the wider left. It also shined a light on the existence of the leftist nerd: a common type of nerd (especially in trans communities) whose presence is continually overshadowed by the louder voices of reactionary gamers and pseudo-rationalist centrists claiming to be apolitical, even as they enthusiastically support the status quo. When even basic nods towards progressive politics in games are often controversial – such as when the 2016 Baldur's Gate expansion Siege of Dragonspear included a transgender character and the developers were review-bombed and harassed for it – reactionary politics are often employed as a marketing mechanic, pandering to the delusion that the 'social justice warriors' are out to get gamers.

This phenomenon is not unique to gaming but it does appear to be more common among fans than in other mediums. The idea of gamers as an embattled minority, beset by what they perceive as the lying, hating left on one side, and the censorship of the religious right on the other, has actually become a meme in certain circles. Never mind the aforementioned right-wing biases in gaming or the sometimes fascinating history of Christian games.

Gatekeeping in reaction to a previously maligned hobby becoming popular and hence accessible to everyone – even those who lack the skill of more adept gamers – plays a part in this as well. There is for instance a trend to lament the rise in context- and content-driven (as opposed to purely gameplay-driven) reviews, especially when journalists are seen to 'suck' at games. Hbombguy's stream gave the lie to all of these assumptions. Firstly, by absolutely dominating at the game and, secondly, by showing just how



many leftists genuinely love the medium. It isn't just that almost everybody finds gaming enjoyable. It's also that many games are built on highly detailed alternative worlds. I have discussed before how this can help to educate players by making them compare the game's world with the one in which they live. What must also be observed is that this process is intrinsic to gaming, and that the wider left can take advantage of it.

As a democratic, modern entertainment medium, games are openly created so that players can have fun. Simple games like Candy Crush will usually do nothing else. But with more elaborate games like, say, Yakuza 0, the gameplay and the narrative necessitate drawing connections to the outside world. These connections create a dialogue between the game and player, asking questions that the player is obliged to answer. By drawing their attention to them, leftists can help gamers see the nature of the world we really live in and help them feel empowered to change it.

This is an example of what Paulo Freire calls dialogic education. As he writes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968):

*Because dialogue is an encounter among women and men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some name on behalf of others. It is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another. The domination implicit in dialogue is that of the world by the dialoguers; it is conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind.*

Yakuza 0 is an anime-inspired action game about a pair of Japanese criminals who get drawn into a complicated war between the Yakuza and a real estate company over an absurdly valuable plot of empty land. The game is often sexist and the role the martial arts play in it is very silly, but the action builds upon a simulation of a pre-financial bust Japan that offers a robust commentary on capitalist greed and the way that gentrification destroys communities. It even has a side-quest featuring a conversation about tax law with a city politician that starts with you having to fight off a group of businessmen exclaiming that taxation is theft, and then answer questions from the

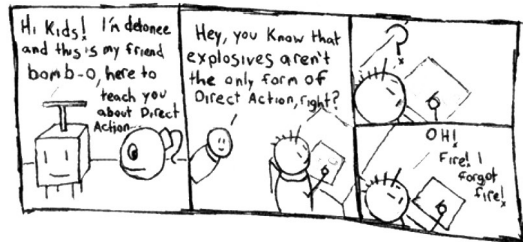
politician on the purpose of taxation and how a tax becomes both workable and fair. The tax that the player ends up creating is real – it was introduced by former Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita around the time when the game is set.

This sort of teaching is a core feature of the medium. You can see it in *Battletech*, a robot-themed strategy game that includes an innovative trans-inclusive character creator showing players just how diverse human gender really is. You can see it in *Spinnortality*, a game about 'soft power', and in *Wolfenstein 2's* Nazi-smashing dieselpunk alt-history, which uses satire to show how present-day America has come to be ruled over by avowed white supremacists. You can even see it in games that try to be 'just' simulations seemingly devoid of politics; socialist YouTuber donoteat01's videos on *Cities Skylines* show how the innovative use of building mods combined with a player's own experience can reveal the ways in which building cities are political acts.

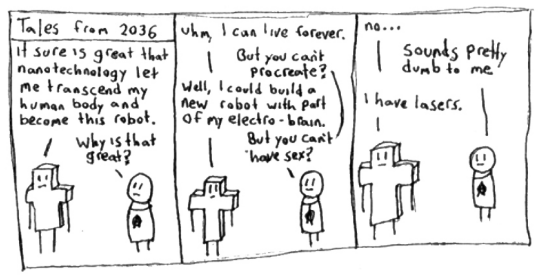
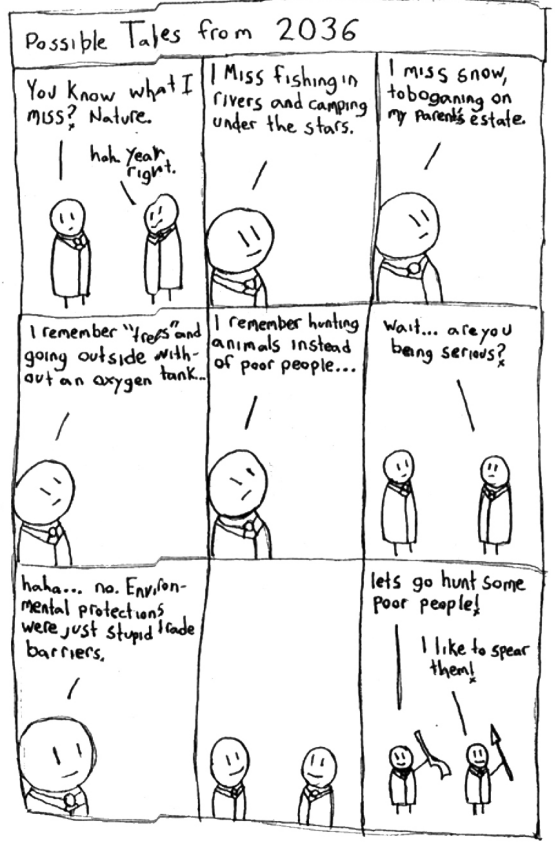
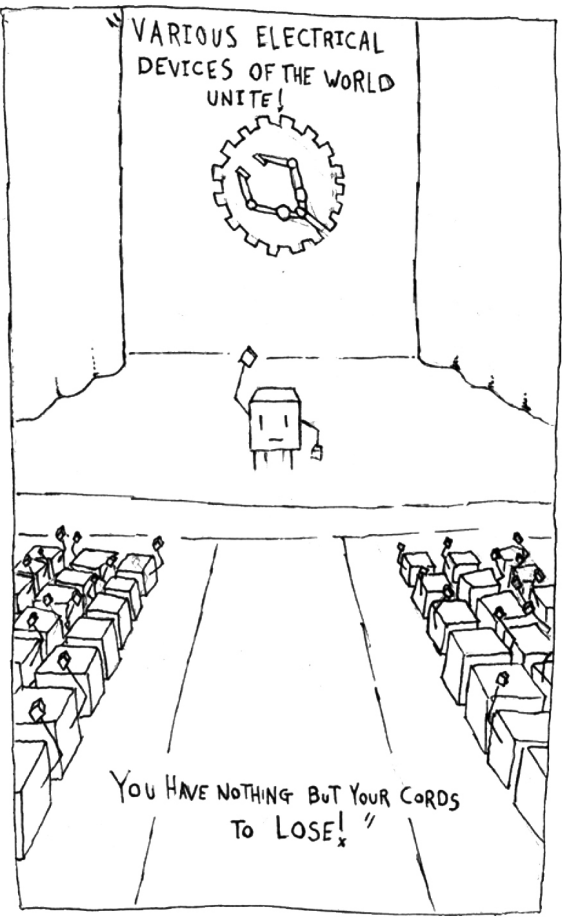
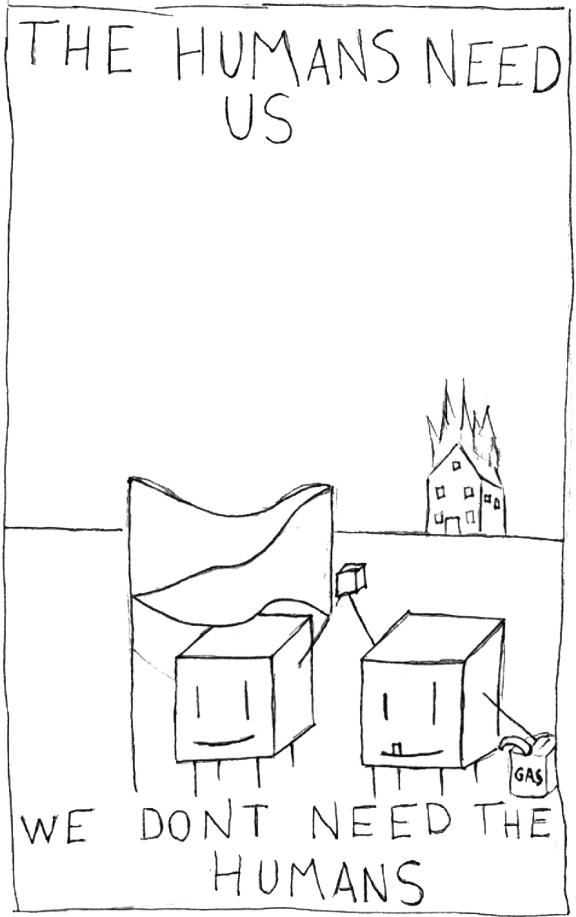
Games like *Civilization VI*, which present social and historical phenomena in more simplistic fashion, or those that make an effort to avoid the real-world politics of the places and scenarios that they're discussing – such as *Farcry 5* – tend to suffer for these omissions.

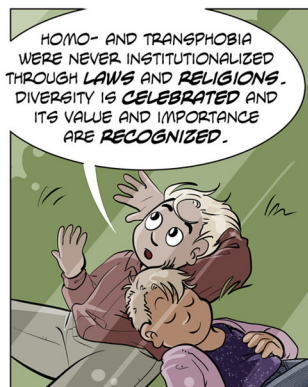
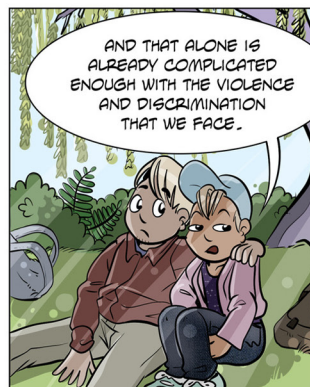
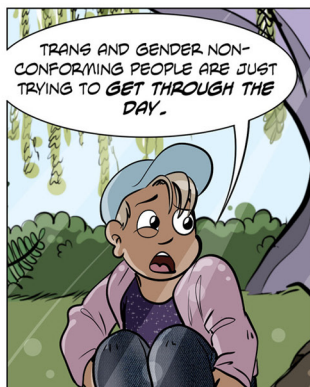
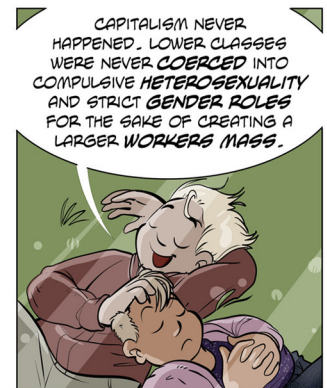
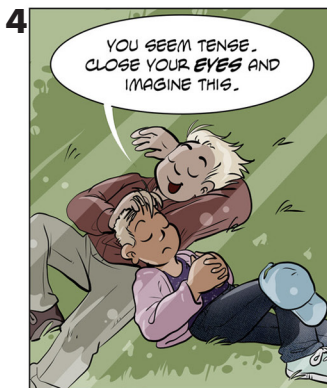
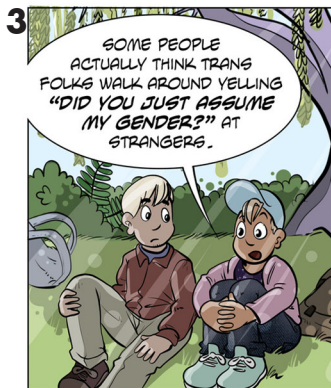
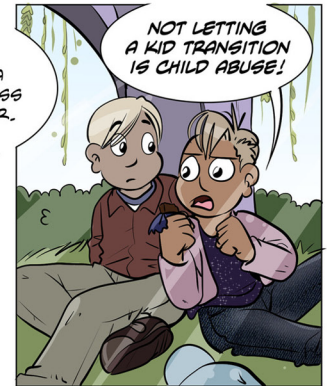
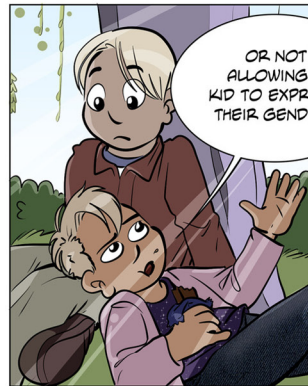
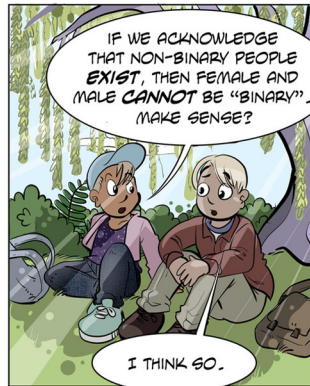
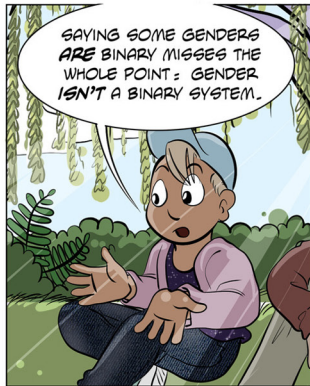
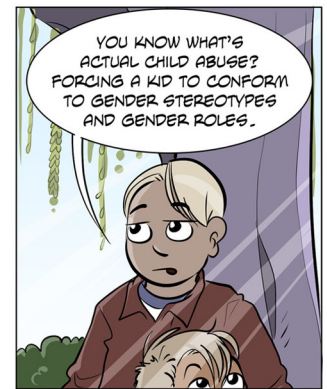
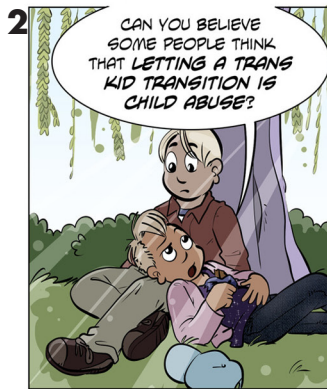
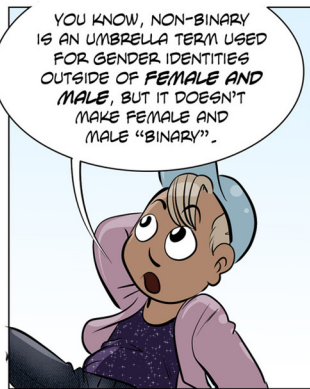
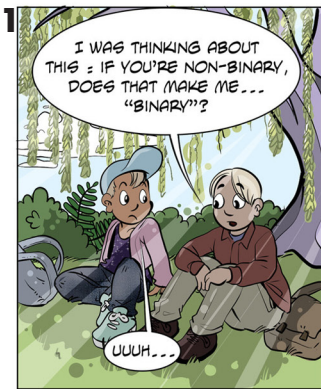
While the barriers for entry can be high, gaming has become a mainstream art form, and it's easier to get into than it's ever been before. There are a lot of options, too, with everything from modern versions of traditional platformers to full-blown space operas that can serve equally well as introductions to the medium.

The power of videogames to influence our society towards progressive (or reactionary) ends through dialogic education, team building, and simulations of the world makes familiarity not just with gaming culture but with the games themselves a vital tool to shape and understand reality. Through criticism, narration, or simple engagement with the games and their communities, leftists can raise both awareness and money for the causes we are passionate about, and fight against the wider political drift towards the right that we are experiencing throughout the world. ■



THE SUPER-HAPPY ANARCHOR\* FUN PAGES!





ASSIGNED MALE COMICS  
BY SOPHIE LABELLE

Sophie Labelle is the French-Canadian author of Assigned Male comics, which she has been drawing since 2014 and is also the author of several children's books and novels. Check out [www.serioustransvibes.com](http://www.serioustransvibes.com) for more!



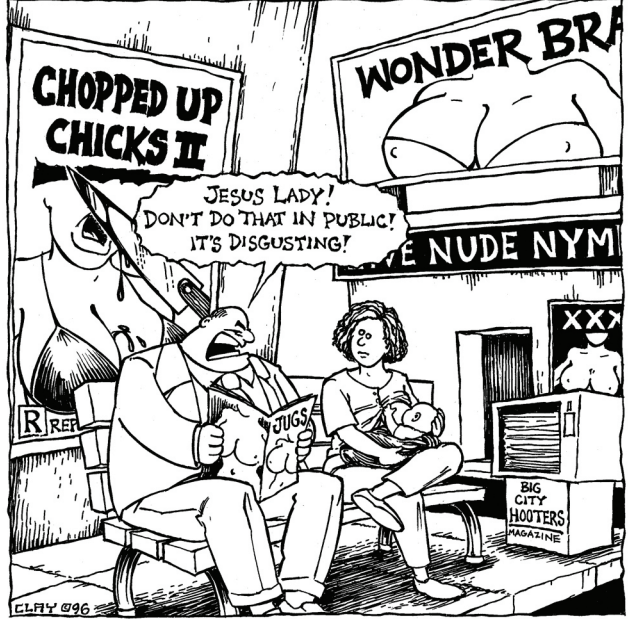
Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1997 Clay Butler



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1996 Clay Butler



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1996 Clay Butler



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1996 Clay Butler

Clay Butler's self-syndicated weekly Sidewalk Bubblegum which started in 1993 and retired in 2001, has been seen in hundreds of magazines, books, and zines. Eschewing the typical gag format and avoiding topical references Clay Butler focused on the issues behind the issues. Even though the first strips were penned nearly seventeen years ago, they often read as if they created today.

Freely jumping from the past to the present and into the future, Clay uses juxtaposition and irony to remind us that we are not as free from our most sordid past as we'd like to think. Clay Butler also chose to write this introduction in third person so he could toot his own horn without coming across as a complete douche. Hey, someone's got to do it.

Check out [www.sidewalkbubblegum.com](http://www.sidewalkbubblegum.com) to see more of Clay's comics.

If you have news to share let us know and we'll put it up on the webspace and where appropriate here in print.

**contact :- [organise@afed.org.uk](mailto:organise@afed.org.uk)**



North East Anarchist Group is an anti-capitalist, anti-fascist & intersectional synthesis group / collective based in north east England.

In the near future we are hoping to provide a platform for anarchists and libertarian socialists in the local area, so that we can build a larger sense of class consciousness in a region that has been decimated by needless and cruel Tory austerity and deprivation. We wish to foster a sense of community surrounding radical anti-authoritarian politics, as well as actually building the mutual aid networks that people need.

We are proud to work with comrades locally, nationwide and internationally in order to bring an end to exploitation, imperialism and unjust hierarchies, and to help each individual obtain the opportunity and freedom to maximise their own development on their own terms. We believe that through mutual aid, solidarity and cooperation we can begin to put the world's wealth and land back under common control for the benefit of all.

**North East Anarchist Group**

**[WWW.NORTHEASTANARCHISTGROUP.ORG](http://WWW.NORTHEASTANARCHISTGROUP.ORG)  
[WWW.TWITTER.COM/NEANARCHOGROUP](http://WWW.TWITTER.COM/NEANARCHOGROUP)  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NEANARCHOGROUP](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NEANARCHOGROUP)**

# WHY AN ANARCHIST PARTY?

I

The idea of an Anarchist Party came from concern about the lack of anarchist action in the UK in the face of growing social distress - as the result of economic and political policies, and climate change.

It seemed wrong that the movement should be so quiet here when there were so many people suffering and so many issues to address, while anarchists in other countries, in much more difficult circumstances, were fighting effectively to improve the lot of ordinary people and to promote revolutionary social change.

This is not to say that the UK experience is unique, voices from elsewhere make that clear, but the analysis here is local.

II

A big part of the explanation is the development since the 1980s of two extreme ideas of anarchist action; the predominantly working class, physical, direct action approach associated with Class War and a more intellectual, middle class, propagandist focus of many of the Anarchist Federation; leaving the middle ground of community activism almost completely empty.

There were good reasons for this:

**a.** The disintegration of poor communities, in the 1970s and 80s, as a result of the failure of the trades union movement to protect manual workers against 'free market' capitalist economic and political strategies, the subversion of the working class by offering them a stake in the capitalist project through home ownership and cheap debt, and the isolation of poor communities geographically by deindustrialisation and centralisation.

**b.** The success of the movement in the 80s and early 90s in establishing 'anarchist' communities - drawing people in, followed by the shrinking of the wider movement in the later 90's as the political cycle followed its course.

**c.** The media focus and the satisfactions of large scale direct actions.

**d.** The raising of ambitions by the popularisation of Anarchist theory and the recognition of the movement by the mainstream.

As a consequence, the movement, which had been so decentralised and socially integrated in the period of punk popularity, became increasingly divorced from its local community roots and centralised in distinct communities in major cities, dis-functional rural townships and on the road. The social connection was broken and the major focus became big-picture conflicts like the G20s and the ambition of educating the wider public.

Every shade and mix of the extremes exists, but what matters is that the centre ground is largely empty but for campaigns like anti-gentrification or occasional support for industrial action. Critical discussions and action across the movement, like defending the poor from Austerity, relating to XR/climate change and dealing with the changing tactics of the far right are just not out there. The space for community activism is occupied by Community Interest Companies, charities and the state, all of which are apolitical or, at best, cautiously reformist. We have a steadily declining status quo - government does whatever it wants. The movement is failing those who need it most and who are the fundamental source of its support, energy and legitimacy. »

III

Despite all this though, it is also clear that Anarchism really has become the default political philosophy for many young people and is entrenched in the mainstream conversation. The actions of the black bloc have demonstrated our integrity and kept us out there in the media and the public mind, and AFED have provided theoretical consistency and maintained a connection to broader political issues.

The obvious conclusion is that it is necessary to start from the ground up; that modern times need a modern approach. That what we have is a powerful legacy, not progress. The organisations of the past have »

brought us here but it is time to move on; to build a refreshed movement that can be owned by a new generation of activists, reflect their take on the world and address the issues of today, in communities, on the streets and on the global stage.

For Anarchists prescription is difficult, so what follows does not explicitly reference existing AP's, is intentionally empty of detail and as loose as possible; Anarchists will make of it what they will.

An Anarchist Party will have a broad program balanced across community activism, legal direct action, activist resources and propaganda. It can still support activists breaking the law, intentionally or otherwise, after the event.

It can benefit from being a legal political entity and demand a public presence with credibility and self esteem.

It would seek to attract members from across the community, accepting that many would be politically inexperienced and many of anarchist inclination only; and be prepared for the influence that would have on group formation, discussions and actions. This is not the 1980s, when many young activists already had years of experience and aggressive anarchism was the norm in a vibrant subculture. The communities we move in now are poorer, more oppressed, more under surveillance and way less at liberty to act. We have to organise in a more careful, developmental way; a process that builds confidence with group solidarity, experience and theoretical coherence. We can expect regular incursions by leftists in search of power and an ever present appetite for reform and the exploration of internal politics, but at the same time we will be building a deeper, broader movement, appropriate to our demanding time. ■

**Contact the Anarchist Party:-**  
**facebook.com/Anarchist-Party-Exeter**  
**a-party@protonmail.com**  
**07487814595**

# **BIRMINGHAM**

## **FTP: FEED THE POPULATION**

There is a small group organising a FnB style network with the intention of kicking up some food drives and material solidarity with those in need around the Birmingham and Wolverhampton area.

They need comrades who're willing to help with prepping food, distribution on the day and help with funding which will probably be established via one of the various online services.

The primary aims across the tail end of March and into April are:-

- **Establish a network**
- **Source bulk amounts of food.**
- **Get out into town and get the food to the people that need it.**

They are interested in people with catering gear or with previous FnB experience, you don't need to be an Anarchist just willing to show some love and help provide mutual aid. ■

**Check Facebook for info or email Organise/AFED for a direct contact.**



# CHASE THE ARMS DEALERS

## JOIN US ON MARCH 28TH

The DPRTE arms fair pulls together the UK military, weapon manufacturers, and arms dealers and exporters. Not only does it support our own military industrial complex, but it involves companies like BAE systems who supply some of the worlds most repressive regimes, such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

On March 28th, we'll be joining with a host of other people, from members of faith groups to trade unionists, to confront those who profit from death and abuse. If you want to take a stand, scroll down for the practical info, if you'd like to know more first, read on for our DPRTE FAQ!

Every bomb that is dropped, every bullet that is fired, has to be made somewhere. Wherever that is, it can be resisted.

### Why oppose it?

The UK arms trade exists for two reasons. To make a bunch of already rich people richer, and to allow our government to act tough in front of their international rivals. The cost of this is immense. Perpetual war, something any rational person would want to avoid, is quietly pushed for in order to drive up stock prices. The fires of conflict are kept burning with the supply of British made weapons, regardless of the human cost. Brutal regimes are kept in power by British missiles and aircraft. Business as usual for the

**STOP THE**  
**ARMS FAIR**

### What is DPRTE?

DPRTE, stands for Defence Procurement, Research, Technology & Exportability. I know, catchy right? It brings together multinational arms companies, smaller companies involved in research or production, and organisations that want to buy or help export weapons. It first took place in 2012, and has happened almost every year since. The organisers often like to claim 'it isn't technically an arms fair!' as contracts aren't signed at the event itself. No one really buys that though, even the police just call it an arms fair!

arms trade can be disrupted, if its profiteers are exposed and it's political supporters challenged.

### What about the economic benefits?

Whenever the UK's role in the international arms trade is brought up, there is talk about the 'job creation'. For most of us the human cost of these jobs is simply too high, even those whose lively hood depend on them have in the past fought against the arming of authoritarian regimes! Even if you only cared about income, once you factor in tax payer funded subsidies, the government research handed over, and the free assistance »

and promotion given by the civil service we pay more than £18,000 a year for every single one of those jobs. Any sector would be successful with that backing, and the support could be given to anything from education to environmental protection.



(The entrance to the DPRTE event at UWE)

## A History of Resistance to DPRTE – In Which They Run Away A Lot

In 2013 students at the University of the West of England (UWE) discovered an 'exhibition' being hosted on their Frenchay campus was in fact an arms fair. Anarchist Federation members studying at UWE were amongst those who disrupted the set up, marched through campus, blockaded the gates, and got inside the event itself. The day was a shambles, with most of the arms dealers stuck in traffic. At this point DPRTE ran away to Cardiff.

A further four DPRTE events took place at Cardiff's Motorpoint arena. From the start they encountered resistance, organised by Stop the Cardiff Arms Fair, South Wales Anarchists, The Anarchist Action Network, Campaign Against the Arms Trade and more! Cardiff's DPRTE events saw an occupied roof, red paint on their expensive suits, marches, communications blockades and increasing numbers of protesters surrounding the venue for the entire day. The police attempted to intimidate and arrest protesters at random, but this just led to dropped charges, payouts for wrongful arrest, and an even more determined resistance. By 2018 the protest had grown much larger, aided by groups such as the Kurdish Solidarity Network, and members of AFed from as far away as Cornwall.

The arms fair was even being condemned in the Welsh Assembly. At this point DPRTE ran away to Birmingham.

Putting some distance extra between DPRTE and the committed anti-arms activists of South Wales and Bristol probably seemed like a good idea to the organisers. However a coalition of people in Birmingham soon made it clear that there would be just as much trouble for the event near their city. By the start of 2019 pressure was mounting on the venue and local government, and packed out meetings representing unions, faith groups, anarchists and others were putting plans in place for a number of demonstrations. At this point DPRTE ran away to Farnborough.

Changing venue with little time to spare couldn't have been an easy (or cheap) decision for the DPRTE organisers. In Farnborough perhaps they think they have made themselves 'un protestable', with a secure venue owned by the industry itself, nestled in between an air field and the premises of arms companies. The creative, resourceful and committed movement against them begs to differ. Do they have anywhere left to run?

## What you need to know!

The loose coalition of groups that has formed to confront DPRTE, is planning a static protest near the entrances of the event. There will be a diverse mix of folks present, and at these events it is common for small groups to launch their own actions throughout proceedings. Keep an eye out if you want to support these, or of course plan your own.

The Arms Fair takes place for one day, **Thursday the 28th of March**. Most of the set up is completed the night before, so delegates begin to arrive before 9am. This makes early morning the key time for any protest that wants to make its presence known, and we'll be kicking things off from 8.30am.

The venue itself – **Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre** – has multiple entrances, and prior experience tells us that if there is a protest at one, organisers may attempt to hide this from attendees by instructing them to enter by a different entrance. As such the location of the main bulk of the protest may vary, so make sure to check

back here just before the day, or keep in touch with Campaign Against the Arms Trade or Birmingham Stop the Arms Fair. For now, aim to get to Queens Roundabout, Farnborough GU14 6AZ.

There are groups travelling to Farnborough from Bristol and Birmingham. If you would like to join them contact Bristol Anarchist Federation or Birmingham Stop the Arms Fair. There are several train stations near the venue, (Farnborough Main, Farnborough North, Aldershot) with regular services from London Waterloo, Guilford and Reading. If you are coming by car, you'll need the A325 which is off the M3 and A31. More travel details can be found on the venues website, or by studying your online map of choice!

Unfortunately we can't control what the police do. Whilst it is completely legal to take part in a static protest, the police will possibly see fit to give you trouble anyway. This is a risk at any and all public protest, and we highly recommend you read up on your legal rights, make sure you stick with a group of fellow protesters, and keep a look out for each other.

We'll finish off by letting you know what you should bring. Beyond the basics for any day outside (an extra layer of clothing, water, snacks), we want to be seen and heard. So bring placards, banners, megaphones, loud voices, or quiet plans!

**When:**

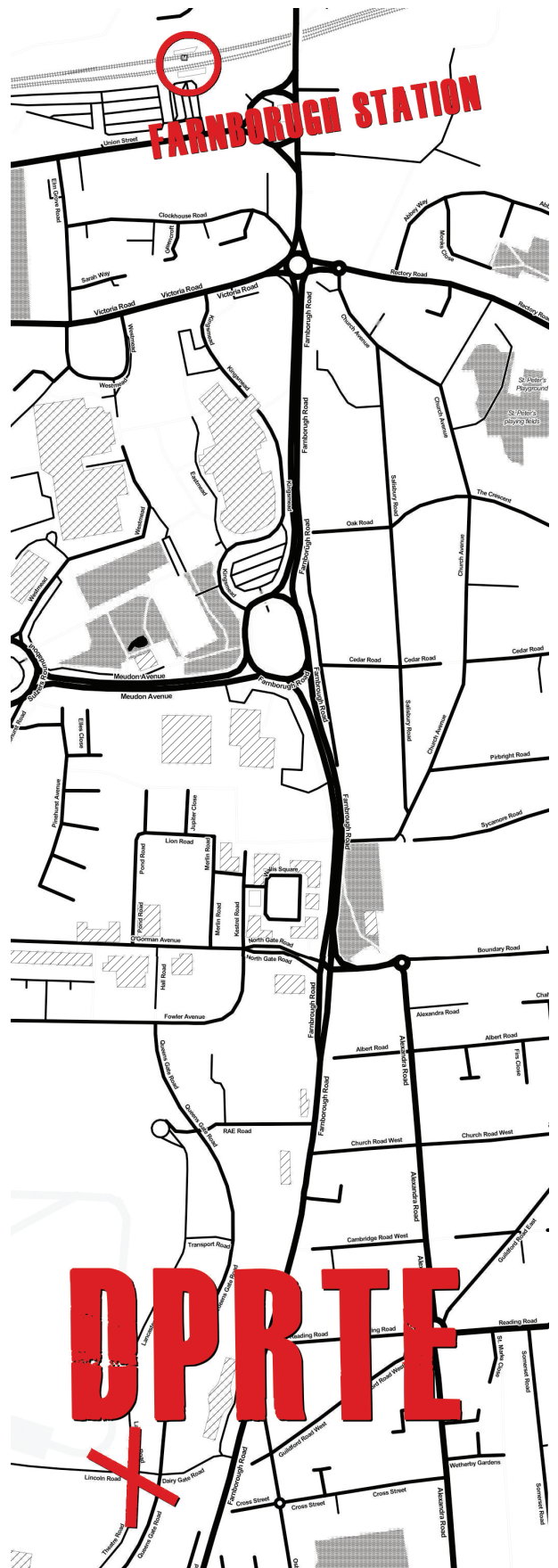
Thursday 28th March 8.30am onwards

**Where:**

Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre  
[www.farnboroughinternational.org](http://www.farnboroughinternational.org)

**For updates check:**

Campaign Against the Arms Trade  
Birmingham Stop the Arms Fair  
Stop the Cardiff Arms Fair  
Na i Ffair Arfau Caerdydd  
Anarchist federation



# A LETTER TO XR

As climate catastrophe draws near, we are impressed and encouraged by the movement that Extinction Rebellion is building. This mobilisation has reinvigorated environmental activism at a time when we most need it. XR has been bold in its aims when much of the established movement has been cynical, and has managed to tap into a broader sense of alarm over environmental degradation, and mobilised many people not previously involved. XR has grown at a speed that many people would have thought impossible before we saw it happen. XR has also been far more radical in this broad appeal than many people would have thought, pursuing a strategy built around both local direct action while maintaining an international orientation. We cannot overstate the overwhelmingly positive effect that XR is having on environmental politics.

Those of us already involved in various radical and green movements have been attending XR meetings and actions and found them deeply inspiring. However, at the same time we also have doubts about some of the tactics that XR has adopted in its pursuit of a green future, and we have discussed how we should bridge the differences between our views and those of XR. We do not want to undermine the important work that XR is doing, but we also feel that there is a conversation that needs to be had about some of XR's tactics.

While we hope that these tactics do work, we are dubious that they will be enough. We fear that the government will be less willing to negotiate in good faith and more willing to use violent repression against a truly disruptive campaign than is assumed. Capitalism systematically incentivises environmental destruction, and we worry that the costs of any government initiative to combat climate change will fall on the poor and powerless unless a clear anti-capitalist stance is articulated. We will never be free from the spectre of environmental crisis while the profit of the few is put above the lives of everyone else.

Against the existential threat of human extinction hanging over us all, cooperation is our greatest strength. We feel that a separate

organisation that works alongside XR while allowing for a greater diversity of tactics is the most honest way to do this. We want to support XR with a parallel mobilisation that has a greater focus on the capitalist roots of climate catastrophe.

We believe these actions can be mutually supportive and bring a zero emissions world closer to reality. See you on the streets.

***“We must develop our ideas of what a different future may look like outside the constraints of both capital and fossil fuels”***

## Manifesto

We are encouraged by the ability of Extinction Rebellion to call people onto the streets and push their demands for zero emissions. However, we believe that meeting these demands will not be possible without abolishing capitalism, a system reliant on the total exploitation of nature; whether that be sacrificing our clean water to frack for hydrocarbons or sacrificing our children to the production line. We must develop our ideas of what a different future may look like outside the constraints of both capital and fossil fuels. We must also critique the false solutions offered by ‘green capitalism’ and increased state control. It is our contention that the world in fifty years will look radically different from what we see now. The question is whether we are moving towards a sustainable future for humanity, or one of catastrophe. We are calling for a broad anti-capitalist environmental movement based around the following points of unity.

**1. An existential threat** - Human induced climate change and environmental destruction more broadly are a threat to global ecosystems. Action must be taken now to guarantee we not only survive, but flourish in the future.

**2. Capitalism is the crisis** - Capitalism is part of the problem. A global economic system built on competing capitalists cannot be trusted to combat climate change when doing so threatens their profits. We must make the link between capitalism and environmental degradation explicit in our politics and critique the role of the state in facilitating this.

**3. International class solidarity** – We must be internationalist in our scope and ensure victories for workers in MEDCs does not mean just pushing environmental problems onto workers in LEDCs who have done the least to contribute to climate change. We must push our trade unions to adopt an environmental as well as anti-capitalist stance which argues for a just but rapid transition for workers in extractive industries. We must take a hard stance against nationalism and aim instead for global unity.

**4. Building collective power** - We should ensure the actions we take, and the struggles we link up for, leave us and others who take part stronger not weaker. We must avoid any so-called victory that relies on the 'good will' of a politician or the 'expertise' of an NGO. Win or lose, each action and campaign should leave us more aware of the world around us, more confident of our collective power, and more experienced in our ability to self-organise.

**5. Diversity of tactics** - We must develop a diversity of tactics that is not dependent on the actions of politicians or corporations developing a conscience to achieve its goals. We plan to work alongside Extinction Rebellion while maintaining certain critiques of them.

**6. Horizontal, bottom-up structures**- We cannot recreate the structures we know do not work within our own movement. Our movement must be horizontal and autonomous so that it truly represents the interests of those our current rulers treat as expendable. We must also take an intersectional approach to our solidarity and care for each other at all times.

**7. We need a new system** - Ultimately, while the imminent threat of climate change may limit us to putting pressure on state and capital in the short term, in the longer term we need to replace these institutions to solve the systematic problems that have created this crisis.

We are entering uncharted territory, in terms of how the earth's ecosystems may respond to the ever-increasing pressures capitalism places upon them. Left unchecked, the current fossil fuel economy will continue to wreck the climate with the burden on impacts falling on the working class and LEDCs. We do not have

faith that capitalists – or their parliamentary representatives – will act in time to limit climate change in a meaningful way. The crisis they perpetuate can only lead to an increase in state control of the economy, of our lives, of the borders, as the ruling class seeks to contain social unrest and keep out climate refugees. We must take back control of our energy and production systems to create a new model of equality between peoples and harmony with nature.

Yours in Solidarity

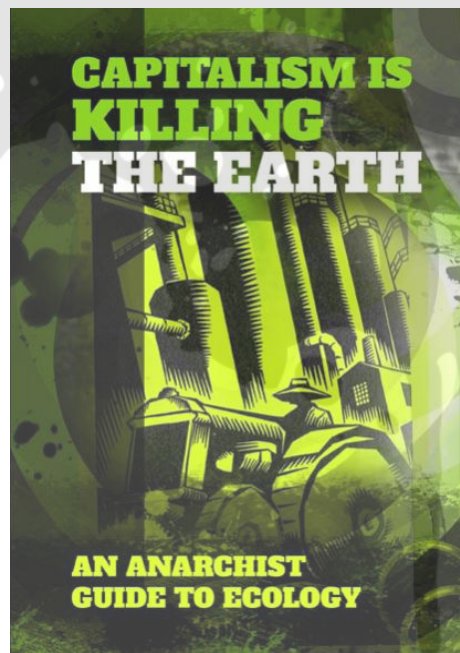
**GREEN ANTI-CAPITALIST FRONT ■**

For further info  
[greenanticapitalist.org](http://greenanticapitalist.org)  
Twitter/ FrontGreen  
FB/ GAfront

For more information on the Anarchist Federation's perspective download a .PDF of *CAPITALISM IS KILLING THE EARTH An Anarchist Guide to Ecology*.

Available to buy online from Dog Section Press or download a .pdf for free from our site.

[afed.org.uk/publications/pamphlets](http://afed.org.uk/publications/pamphlets)  
[dogsection.bigcartel.com](http://dogsection.bigcartel.com)





## Danielle Myriam Rest In Power

**At the start** of the year we lost a long time comrade and a dear friend of several members to her own hands. She was a lively soul who would often get lost in science fiction and loved to share the ideas for a better worlds she found in her reading, Worlds she worked towards by putting her considerable skills to work for several groups working hard to make the world a better place.

She was a true believer. Unfortunately the world is not always a better place and when it came to transitioning she was hit with an uphill struggle. In the words of her close friend Alice:

*"In a large part, it was transphobia that meant she could no longer face life. It was having her gender questioned and doubted and fetishised and mocked in popular culture, and most painfully of all, amongst those that pre TERF wars, she would have thought were on the same side as her, as an Anarchist.*

*She is not with us because the world is transphobic. When we argue with those who use language that insults, minimises, fetishises or stigmatises trans people its not just an abstract political theoretical debate. These things matter. Real people suffer. Their lives are made unliveable. And we lose dear people from the world, and from progressive political movements."*

As she might have quoted "The light that burns twice as bright, burns half as long." and she burned so very, very brightly.

### **She will not be forgotten. ■**

*If you are suffering from depression, trauma and/or suicidal thoughts, please contact a friend or family member before you do anything drastic. Let them know what you are going through, contact a helpline, talk to folk, surround yourself with people and weather through this storm with those who love you. You are not alone, you don't have to go through this on your own. You are not an island and your existence is important to those around you.*

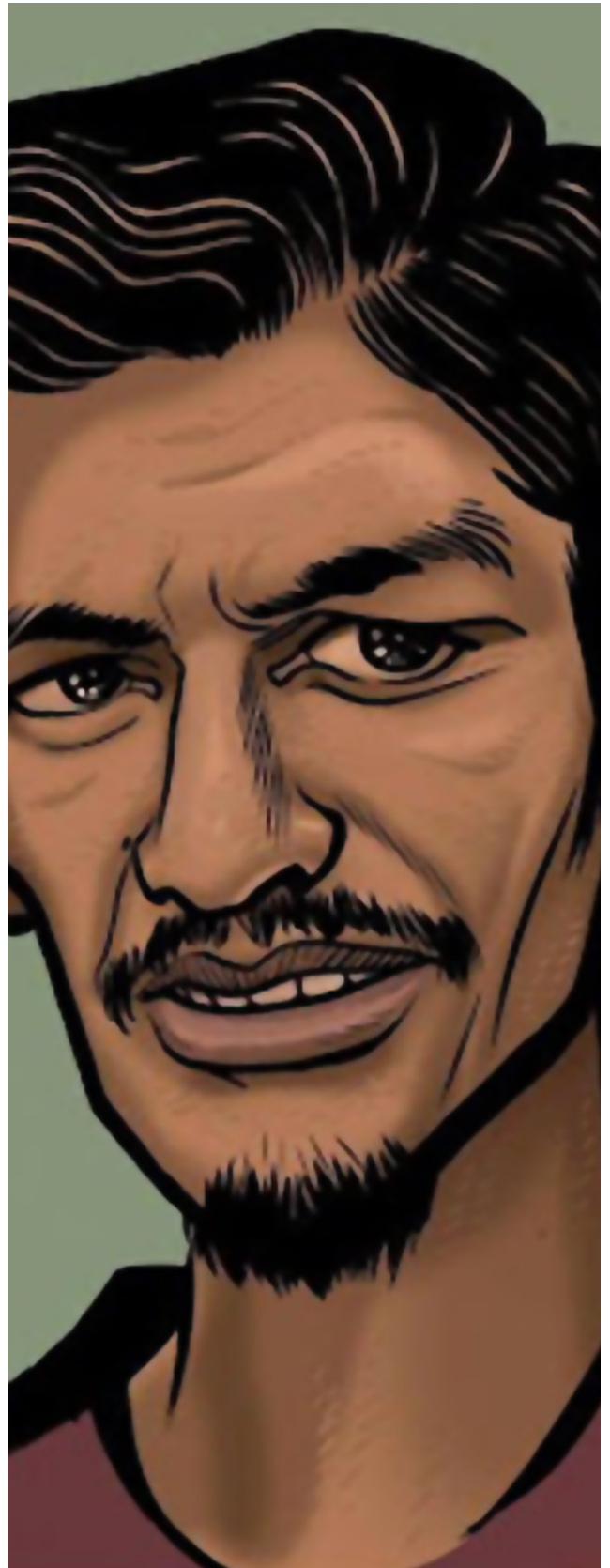
# “SAMIR DIDN'T DIE, THE GOVERNMENT KILLED HIM”

That's the call as thousands march on Mexico City following the murder of Samir Flores Soberanes environmental activist and journalist who was shot twice in the head in his home in Amilcingo, south of Mexico City, on Wednesday. A member of The Peoples in Defense of Land and Water Front, Samir was a chief opponent of the Proyecto Integral Morelos (PIM), a development project in the state of Morelos that includes two new thermoelectric plants and a 93 mile gas pipeline and had attended a meeting about the project days before his assassination and challenged government representatives who were pushing flesh ahead of a vote on the PIM project.

Samir had been attacked numerous times before and a letter was left with his body, which the police have refused to release the details off. It seems clear in these times of struggle, he was executed for defending his community, the environment and indigenous autonomy against the corrupt state, a state who have immediately began laying the blame for this murder on organised crime. Given that is 2017, according to Global Witness, 15 environmental activists were murdered in Mexico you can be sure that organised crime is the blame, those responsible sit in the Palacio Legislativo de San Lázaro and Palacio Nacional.

This part of an ongoing trend across South America and indeed the world with at least 207 land and environmental defenders killed last year. Thats 207 indigenous leaders, community activists and environmentalists murdered trying to protect their homes and communities from corrupt states, mining, agribusiness and other destructive industries. Rest in Power Samir and all who die defending this planet from parasitic capitalists bent on destroying it for their own ends. ■

**Demand justice for Samir Flores.**



# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

*A brief run down of revolutionary protest, resistance, and rebellion from around the world...*

In **multiple countries**, hundreds of Kurds and their supporters have joined Leyla Guven in a hunger strike. They are demanding an end to the Turkish government policy of isolating imprisoned political leader Abdullah Öcalan from his family and lawyers. Our solidarity goes out to all of them, especially our friend and comrade Imam Sis in Newport, who as we go to print is approaching day 80 of his hunger strike.

In **Italy**, 200,000 people marched against far right party 'the league', and the racist policies of the coalition government it is a part of.

In **Mexico**, a huge wave of strikes has swept across multiple industries from mining to retail, demanding wage increases. Strikers are weathering reprisals from business leaders, but have already begun to score concessions.

In **Haiti**, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets calling for the end of the neoliberal government, its policies of austerity, high food prices, and suspected corruption that has seen billions in aid 'disappear'. Police forces were initially overwhelmed, and have been backed up by UN 'peacekeepers, and the Haitian arm, who have killed at least a dozen people, and declared a nationwide 'lock down'.

In **Algeria**, the largest and most combative protests since the Arab Spring have taken place after the president announced his intention to stand for a FIFTH term. Anti-government protesters battled riot police outside the presidential palace, and over 200,000 have now taken to the streets.

In **France**, the yellow vest rebellion continues despite brutal repression from the police, and a swathe of concessions already handed over by the embattled president Macron. The CGT union confederation has backed the movement, and called for other unions to join in a general strike. Throughout the country

antifascists and anti racists have fought back against members of the far right seeking to drag the movement in a reactionary direction.

In **Catalonia**, separatists demonstrated against the trial of independence leaders by barricading motorways, stopping trains, and blockading roads.

In the **USA**, workers have been flexing their collective muscle. Teachers in several states took part in massive strikes, winning concessions on pay and improvements to education. Unofficial action by air transport employees ended a 'government shut down' neither republicans nor democrats were able to budge, securing much needed back pay for state employees.

In **Venezuela**, US backed capitalist oligarchs face down the corrupt and repressive Maduro government, with workers trapped in the middle. Tensions and violence continue to escalate, against a backdrop of widespread food shortages and both pro and anti Maduro protests.\*

\*A full report from our Latin American comrades will be hosted on our webspace soon.

In **China**, factory and construction workers are holding sit-ins and protests demanding unpaid wages as taxi drivers are blockading government offices to push for better treatment. In a sharp increase some 150 protestors have been arrested and detained since August last year. Xi Jinping's response was to set the people against the protestors by saying they threaten the "Chinese dream", a dog whistle for capitalism if we've ever heard one.

In **Sudan**, mass uprisings triggered by spiralling costs of food and fuel, are calling for the government to fall. A declaration of a state of emergency by the autocratic leader, and use of live ammunition by police has so far done nothing to quell the uprising.

The struggle continues in these places and so many others and we do not aim to neglect our comrades international. If you know of revolutionary action taking place, contact us and let us know. If you are able to write or source articles on these actions and others, please do not hesitate to contact us : [organise@afed.org.uk](mailto:organise@afed.org.uk).





The International of Anarchist Federations (IAF or IFA) was founded during an international anarchist conference in Carrara in 1968 by the three existing European federations of France, Italy and Spain as well as the Bulgarian federation in French exile. To counter the internationalisation of state and capitalist powers that are developing their influences ever rapidly on a global scale, the IFA has since aimed to build and improve strong and active international anarchist structures.

The federations associated with IFA believe that such an organisation is necessary to co-ordinate their international work and efficiently co-operate towards their mutual aims.

To further improve the quality of exchange and co-operation, IFA also keeps close contact with other anarchist organisations, such as the IWA (International Workers Association, an international association of anarcho-syndicalist organisations).

The principles of work within IFA are that of federalism, free arrangement and mutual aid. To improve co-ordination and communication within IFA, as well as to provide an open contact address for the public and other anarchist groups and organisations, an International Secretariat was set up. The Secretariat irregularly rotates among the IFA federations. Most of the federations produce regular publications. ■

For further information contact us:-

i-f-a.org  
 Twitter- IntFedAnarchist  
 FB - InternationalOfAnarchistFederations/

- **Federación Libertaria Argentina (FLA)**  
[federacionlibertaria.org](http://federacionlibertaria.org)

- **Iniciativa Federalista Anarquista (IFABrasil)**  
[anarkio.net](http://anarkio.net)

- **Anarchist Federation (AF)**  
[afed.org.uk](http://afed.org.uk)

- **Федерация на анархистите в България (ФАБ)**  
[anarchy.bg](http://anarchy.bg)

- **Federacion Anarquista Local de Valdivia (FALV)**  
[federacionlocalvaldivia.org](http://federacionlocalvaldivia.org)

- **Anarchistická federace (AF)**  
[afed.cz](http://afed.cz)

- **Fédération Anarchiste (FA)**  
[federation-anarchiste.org](http://federation-anarchiste.org)

- **Germany & Switzerland: Föderation deutschsprachiger Anarchist\*innen (FdA)**  
[fda-ifa.org](http://fda-ifa.org)

- **Federazione Anarchica Italiana (FAI)**  
[federazioneanarchica.org](http://federazioneanarchica.org)

- **Federación Anarquista de México (FAM)**  
[federacionanarquistademexico.org](http://federacionanarquistademexico.org)

- **Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI)**  
[federacionanarquistaiberica.wordpress.com](http://federacionanarquistaiberica.wordpress.com)

- **Federacija za anarhistično organiziranje (FAO)**  
[a-federacija.org/](http://a-federacija.org/)

# WHO ARE THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION?

**We're class struggle** Anarchists. We fight with revolutionary theory and praxis for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst all and people are free to reach their full potential within an classless society. We do not seek power or control for our organisation but to work as part of a united international revolutionary movement which is diverse in character and founded in the principles of mutual aid, compassion and solidarity.

Capitalism and the state are systems of oppression that exploit the working class and destroy the environment for the benefit of the ruling class. The dynamic between master and worker, the oppressor and oppressed, infects every aspect of our society. Genuine liberation will not come with a process of concessions or reforms it will come with the complete dissolution of the master, and the complete the building of a fair and just society for the working class.

We fight systems of oppression that divide the working class and feel that this is essential to class struggle. The revolutionary call has no place for bigotry of any form and solidarity needs to be complete and overt, not granted on it's convenience. Where the working class oppresses each other the ruling class benefit as they do from cross-class movements which appeal to factors of our identity to obfuscate real class differences and achieve little results for the downtrodden.

It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without first building a culture of resistance. An self empowered working class will achieve this better world through political unity and the development of a wide network of autonomous organisations working together in a federative manner, freely associating as individuals unified by our collective aims and principles.

We forward this social revolution as an organisation and as individuals, in the workplace, on the street, in the home and on-line through the creation of media, the organisation of book

fairs, facilitating the creation of autonomous collectives a equals and providing vital resources, skill sets and support to an array of groups and individuals both domestically and world-wide as part of the International Federation of Anarchists.

AFed has a number of vital roles to perform in order to reach these goals:

- Support resistance against capitalism, state, and other oppression where it exists, and attempt to spark it where it does not.
- Produce information and analysis against capitalist society and argue the case for anarchist communism.
- Be the memory of the working class by making the lessons of past gains and defeats widely known.
- Be a forum for debate and discussion between all elements of the revolutionary working class.
- Work to understand the developments in our society and deliver a coherent communist response to them.
- Seek to win the leadership of ideas within the working class.
- Intervene and co-ordinate our actions in the workplace and the community.
- Work to build a global anarchist movement as part of the International of Anarchist Federations.

We do not shirk the responsibilities of building a better world, we endeavour to take on the difficult conversations that face us and develop our ideas alongside the rich and diverse community of activists, organisers and revolutionaries always learning from the struggles of others to build together and ignite the flames of change.

**JOIN THE REVOLUTION.  
ANARCHIST FEDERATION  
AFED.ORG.UK**

## OUR AIM'S AND PRINCIPLES

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 have a materialist analysis of capitalist society. The working class can only change society through our own efforts. We reject arguments for either a unity between classes or for liberation that is based upon religious or spiritual beliefs or a supernatural or divine force. We work towards a world where religion holds no attraction.

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