

ORGANISE 95



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WORKERS COLLECTIVE

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THE BILL IS KILLING US

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**mourn
the dead**

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We have always lived in slums and holes in the wall. We will know how to accommodate ourselves for a while. For you must not forget that we can also build. It is we who built these palaces and cities, here in Spain and America and everywhere. We, the workers. We can build others to take their place. And better ones. We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth; there is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here, in our hearts. That world is growing in this minute.

Buenaventura Durruti (Van Paassen interview - 1936)

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.

We publish twice a 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 and play host to any article that furthers the objectives of anarchist communism. If you'd like to write something for us, feel free to contact us through any of the details below. 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.

The outside and inside covers are the work of Fagan Kuhnmuensch.

Fagan is a so-called Brooklyn/Mexico City based anarchist writer and artist. He's contributed articles to Rolling Stone, Playboy and other outlets. These prints will appear in his forthcoming debut illustrated novel "How to Blow Up Bushwick". For info on how to purchase prints/merch and support his mutual aid fundraisers follow @gnarlyheadache or go to GnarlyHeadache.com.

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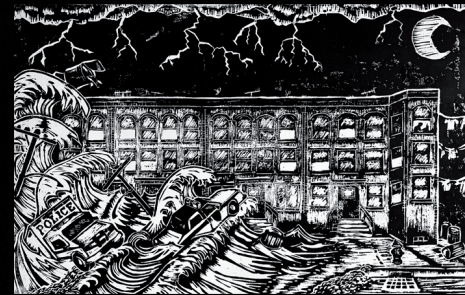
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I'm writing this on the 13th of November and I am thinking of **Timur Kacharava**.

Timur was an vegan anarchist who in his fourth year of studying Philosophy in St. Petersburg. An active anarchist activities in the city he gave up his time to help out with the Epitsentr infoshop and the local Food Not Bombs group . A hardcore punk he was a founding member of Sandinista! and had recently returned to St.Petersburg from a tour of Sweden with the band Distress, when after a Food Not Bombs action on this date in 2005, he and his friend and bandmate Max Zgibai were set upon by a gang of Neo-Nazis who stabbed them both multiple times. The Max lost a large amount of blood, he would survive, however Timur would be dead by the time the ambulance arrived.

We must remember the story of Timur, not just for his tragic and senseless death at the hands of those who had filled their hearts with reckless hate, but for the way he live his life as someone who gave his time and energies to help those around him. As anarchists we do this for the love our our communities and our class, mutual aid at the very heart of who we are and how we organise.

It's something we saw an explosion of since the start of the pandemic, when in the UK alone we saw some 400 groups come together and support people with much needed food and household needs. This was done in the most beautiful of manners. Thousands of people came together to help people without care of their politics or worth, they just saw those in need and set about doing what was needed. There is a Kropotkin we here at the Anarchist Federation love to repeat:

“It is in the direction of putting the wants of the individual above the valuation of the service he has rendered, or might render, to society; in considering society as a whole, so intimately connected together that a service rendered to any individual is a service rendered to the whole society. The librarian of the British Museum does not ask the reader what have been his previous services to society, he simply gives him the books he requires; and for a uniform fee, a scientific society leaves its gardens and museums at the free disposal of each member. The crew of a lifeboat do not ask whether the men of a distressed ship are entitled to be rescued at a risk of life; and the Prisoners' Aid Society does not inquire what a released prisoner is worth. Here are men in need of a service; they are fellow men, and no further rights are required.”

“Here are men in need of a service; they are fellow men, and no further rights are required.”

I hope as you browse these pages you keep in mind. We Anarchists are not defined by who we oppose, the capitalist bastards and the state, but by who we stand with, our communities, the wider working class and anyone in need of service. We are those who build up a new world, one founded in this principle of compassion and mutual aid. Remind yourself of this and be brave! The future is all of ours and one day, we will be free of those who seek to oppress, control and dominate.

To all those who give their time for others. You are the future.

Rest In Power Timur Kacharava!

Love and Rage
Peter Ó Máille
Editor of Organise

THE BILL IS KILLING US

The Police, Crime Sentencing, and Courts Bill is rapidly approaching and holds major implications for black and brown communities across the UK. As the Institute of Race Relations said way back in March of this year, “the race and class implications are massive and go beyond the right to protest.”

To get an understanding of what the future holds for our communities, we only need to look back at history. Just recently, I visited the outstanding War Inna Babylon, at the London ICA. As moving and powerful as the exhibition is, what it conveys is not only a community’s fight for truth and justice in the wake of police brutality and deaths in custody, but of the continual resistance to racist and autocratic policing over the decades.

Author and Professor of Sociology, Alex Vitale, once said that “the police are not here to protect you”, and as people of colour, we know this to be a truth. Over the past two-to-three years, there has been an increase in the disproportionate use of stop and search nationwide. Here in Avon and Somerset, we have seen a reintroduction of Section 60 powers, and during lockdown, black people became a frequent target for fines and increasingly disproportionate and racist policing.

As a police-monitoring organisation, we noted the 38% increase in the use of stop and search powers across Avon and Somerset (2019 to 2020 respectively), and the stark fact that black people became 6.4 times more likely to be stopped than their white counterparts in the county. We also expressed a great deal of concern that not only did the police not acknowledge this fact, but in fact outright denied its existence, whilst drawing on the reactionary “more whites are stopped than blacks” trope.

Of course, this was not only infuriating, but troubling for many of us. The lack of trust and public confidence in the police has become increasingly evident over the past eighteen months or so. Rather than bridge the rapidly emerging divide that exists between themselves and communities, they seem more inclined to contain than protect. We are currently witnessing an increasingly aggressive and militarized response to crime that has adopted the authoritarian ‘law and order iron fist’ approach of the conservative leadership of this country with relish.

We need look no further than the introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVRO) to understand the implications. In the Conservative party 2019 pre-election manifesto, it was stated that “police will be empowered by

a new court order to target known knife carriers, making it easier for officers to stop and search those convicted of knife crime.” However, the landscape was soon to change when re-elected home secretary Priti Patel issued a consultation document, proposing that anyone aged 18 or over, who is convicted of an offence involving a knife or other offensive weapon, could also be subjected to an SVRO stop.

We need only look at the legal definition of offensive weapon (‘any tool made, adapted or intended for the purpose of inflicting mental or physical injury upon another person’) to understand that the scope and target range of SVRO powers increases dramatically on this basis, as does the potential for disproportionate stop and search. The issue we face is that it has always been unlawful for a police officer to target someone based on previous criminal history. To do so allows no propensity for people to rehabilitate and change, and effectively allows the law to punish us forever.

Of course, what the law states the police should and shouldn’t do and what they actually do are very different things. As a ‘mixed race black male’ (my PNC record definition), I have been stopped and searched over 50 times in my life. Upholding the ‘once a criminal, always a criminal’ narrative does not bridge divides or heal wounds and regain trust in the police. It creates trauma. It creates cycles and dog whistles to the reactionary elements of society, as well as within the police themselves. By increasing the scope of powers that are frequently abused, we are moving rapidly away from “policing by consent”, and towards a model of policing from a bygone era.

As IRR stated in March, “policing in the Brexit state” is a trip back in time to the 1980s. Recently, the government said that discrimination against black people and travellers and the impact on us from the bill is “objectively justified”. They went further to state that “any indirect difference on treatment on the grounds of race is anticipated to be potentially positive and objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving our legitimate aim of reducing serious violence and preventing crime.” This statement has massive implications for our communities and what the future of policing in the United Kingdom means for us. It’s clear that, to some in the echelons of power, the ends justify the means. That racial profiling, stereotyping, and disproportionate targeting of anyone who is deemed to be a potential criminal, often seems to be based on race alone, is quite simply collateral damage.

At present, black people are nine times more likely to be stopped by the police in England and Wales than our

white counterparts. The police seem happy to open the doors to racist strategy without any consideration for those who are on the sharp end of such powers. Stop and search has failed spectacularly to act as an effective deterrent to knife crime, and an expansion of these powers will only continue to destroy public confidence in policing.

I share the same concerns as the Criminal Justice Alliance Group, that we are looking at the disruption of the lives of those who are rehabilitating in our communities and, from my point of view, no doubt ‘discretionary’ ongoing vendettas by malicious racists, who should never have been granted a position of authority. In late 2020, the ex-Met Police Superintendent Leroy Logan said, “Young people feel they are over-policed and under-protected. They see the police as predators.

Speak to anyone in St Pauls or Easton in Bristol, and you’ll notice the general mistrust and disillusionment with the police. Communities here, like those in London, have a long and volatile relationship with the police, and, with the upcoming PCSC bill, we can only expect things to become increasingly worse before they become better.

The focus on the bill, in particular, the goal of Kill the Bill protests, has primarily been to raise awareness about the attack on our civil liberties and the right to assembly. Of course, like many others, I completely agree that protest is a cornerstone of our democracy. The fight is, without a shadow of a doubt, an important one. However, it’s absolutely worth noting that other than a large amount of righteous noise being made about the impact the bill is going to have on travellers’ rights, it seems that along the way, the primarily-white Kill the Bill protest movement seems to have forgotten about us.

Don’t get me wrong, the brutality of Avon and Somerset police during the protests earlier this year has been unforgivable and has produced some of the most disgusting displays of state violence I have ever witnessed in my life. It’s worth remembering that when the uprising occurred at Bridewell that weekend in March, following the first Kill the Bill protest, a black man with a heart condition was tasered three times and violently assaulted by an armed response team in St Weyberg.

When you understand that the horrific levels of violence seen and used against peaceful protestors is used against black and brown communities far too frequently, you realise that the police commit hate crimes against us every day. At points, I’ve cringed seeing the, dare I say it, middle-class trendy student “send flowers to Brixton police station please!” XR protestors take centre stage, who think living

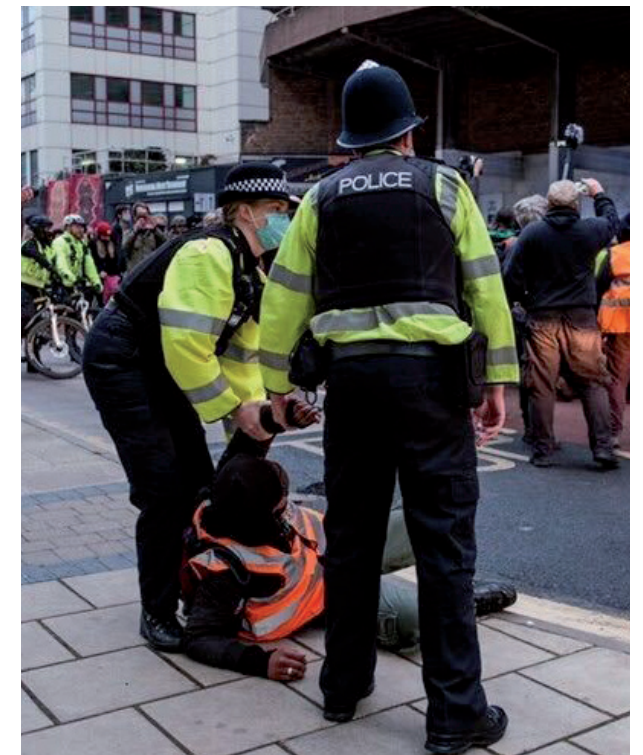
in St Pauls is “edgy” and drinking in Easton is getting back to their nan’s roots, but you know what? It’s their fight, too. Except when they walk past a stop and search that seems a little rough, because it’s not their problem.

The support work I have been involved with, as a case worker and a member of Bristol Copwatch over the past 12 to 18 months, has been emotional. When we’ve seen unjust convictions overturned for those we have been supporting, it’s been liberating. When I’ve been called an everyday hero, it’s touched my heart. It’s made me revisit my own trauma the police have created, from years of stop and search harassment and, most recently, low key surveillance, tails, and ongoing harassment, because of the work I do in the community.

From what I’ve seen whilst volunteering, and what I know about the police as a whole, it is clear that they are unlikely to change their approach towards marginalised communities. What they put us through reflects the corrupt system they enforce. It mirrors the attitudes of those in the highest echelons of power, and it’s something that we as people of colour should always stand together and resist. ■

John Pegram

John is a Bristol Copwatch founder and case worker. We’d like to thank him for the article and the work they do follow him and the rest of @BristolCopwatch.



An Interview with BRISTOL SEX WORKERS COLLECTIVE



The fight for sex workers' rights is a constant and difficult one. Traditional workers organisations, political parties, and conservative feminist groups have historically excluded them, denying their place within our collective struggles. In Bristol sex work has hit the news again. For the second time our City's Mayor, Marvin Rees, along with several other prominent Labour Party figures, are attempting to introduce a 'nil cap' on licenced Sexual Entertainment Venues. This would force Bristol's two current strip clubs to close, and prevent any similar establishments from opening in the future.

On Behalf of Organise! Magazine, I spoke with three members of Bristol Sex Workers Collective (BSWC) about the ban and the wider issues sex workers are facing.

Could you start by telling me a little about what Bristol Sex Workers Collective (BSWC) is, and why you got involved?

M: BSWC are a group of sex workers organising collectively for sex workers' rights in Bristol. We initially formed in opposition to the proposed strip club ban in Bristol around 2018. The very same nil cap policy we're actively resisting right now – which is currently out for public consultation.

Audrey: I got in touch with BSWC after I heard about the vote on the current consultation, to see if there was anything I could do to help oppose it. I'm a full service sex worker, but I think we're all bonded by our shared frustration at policy makers consistently ignoring sex workers' experiences & voices, in decisions that directly and negatively impact us.

Like, even though sex workers are not a homogenous group, one thing we do have in common is that we deserve the right to work safely. Sex workers are the experts in our own experiences, and we should be listened to on matters of our own safety, but we're often spoken over, or neglected to our expense. As the BSWC, we're organising collectively to include our voices and experiences in decisions that affect us.

M: Plus sex work can be isolating, especially if you're not out, so it's great to be able to make friends with other sex workers. We have a Discord where we swap safety information, or bitch about work, South West based sex workers should get in touch with our Twitter if they want to join.

Are there any other groups run by and for sex workers that you work with, or appreciate the work of?

Chloe: The union of course! Our Union is United Sex Workers, part of United Voices of the World (UVW). Also National SEV coalition, which we worked with a little, and the Northern Sex Workers collective.

Audrey: I'm also a member of the United Sex Workers, who are collectively organising to make moves for sex workers' rights. Sex Work Advocacy and Resistance Movement (SWARM) do incredible work, including setting up a hardship fund that sex workers could access over the pandemic. Decrim Now, who campaign for the decriminalisation of sex work also do great work. They released an open letter opposing the repeated attempts to criminalise sex work, which was signed by Amnesty, Freedom United, and the GMB union.¹

There are so many incredible groups of sex workers organising together for sex workers' rights globally, including Organización de Trabajadoras Sexuales (OTRAS), International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE), and All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW).

How has the pandemic and lockdowns affected sex workers?

Chloe: The strip clubs closed completely, it was a horrible time to be honest. Even when things started to slowly open again, I felt that the strip clubs were unfairly treated, with us not being allowed distanced pole shows (or anything apart from waitressing). Without SEISS (the government support for self employed workers during Covid), some of us were even more horribly affected.

Audrey: The pandemic has been pretty horrific in general, particularly for in-person forms of sex work. Sex workers who didn't have the luxury of large savings, were still forced to work throughout the pandemic, including both lockdowns. Forced to make the choice to work, and risk catching a potentially deadly virus and passing it onto loved ones, or being evicted from their homes, falling into debt, or pushed into poverty. If sex workers didn't qualify for the government grants, they were left without financial help. As many people know or found out, Universal Credit is not enough to live on. My UC payment didn't even cover my rent, so I still had to work, and I've still not yet recovered



financially – or mentally, from the constant stress of trying to find money to pay my bills or going overdrawn.

The number of clients seeking sexual services decreased massively, especially when lockdown measures effectively criminalised in-person sex work (inessential travel). Workers had to take on more additional risk; breaking the law to travel to jobs, or taking jobs from clients they'd usually avoid, now without the resources to be able to turn them down. Clients that still sought sex were happy risking criminalisation. I had to see a client that I previously refused to see, after he deliberately pushed boundaries and got aggressive, because I needed the money and there was no one else. Websites we use to advertise removed safety features, like feedback and advanced booking requests, because it was illegal to meet. It was truly a taste of what working under the Nordic Model would be like, and it was abjectly terrifying.

It's still not gotten back to where it was pre-pandemic. Sex worker orgs and collectives like SWARM organised hardship funds, sex workers could apply for grants, and National Ugly Mugs (NUM) offered food vouchers for struggling sex workers. Despite this, I know a lot of sex workers that have been devastated by the pandemic.

Has it also affected the work BSWC does?

Chloe: I leaned into the collective more, as I needed a sense of community that I was no longer getting from the club. I also had more time for campaigning at the beginning.

Audrey: A lot of it moved online, some of us were organising together and had never met in person, before we all got together to protest. But yeah, I think having a community of sex workers was really important for us all. Especially when sex workers are pushed from so many spaces, it's important to have somewhere safe for us to chat openly with people who understand.

One of the issues you have been campaigning on is the opposition to the move to introduce a 'nil cap on sexual entertainment venues (SEVs)' in Bristol.

If this were to happen, what impact would it have on you and other sex workers?

Chloe: It would cut off a lot of people's life lines. Nothing offers the flexibility of this work, especially with the amount of money you can get with limited free time, so a lot of people would still do the same thing, but in much less safe circumstances. Some clubs in nil cap cities still run, but in much more dangerous ways, and with virtually no security to protect the women working there. »

Audrey: Over 100 workers would be losing their jobs if the clubs are shut down. Dancers would lose their employment opportunities and safe workplaces in Bristol, having to choose between relocating (if they can afford to), or working private parties in unsafe spaces.

The moral debate over the existence of strip clubs continues to ignore the realities of sex workers. Closing down safe workplaces, where sex workers can organise to improve their working conditions, will put sex workers at a greater risk of violence and exploitation.

If Bristol City Council chooses to implement the nil cap, it will be the largest city so far to ignore the voices and safety concerns of sex workers and their trade unions. This will set a dangerous precedent for the further eroding of sex workers' rights at a national level. How can any sex worker feel safe in a city where the council has implemented a policy denying us of our rights and safety?

M: The rights of sex workers are interwoven with the rights of migrants, of the LGBTQIA+ community, racialised people of colour, the Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GRT) community, disabled/neurodivergent people, and the working class. Many sex workers are sex workers because they've been excluded from the job market due to systemic biases against their identities; needed flexible working hours to juggle childcare, caring, or other jobs; or simply do not have the physical/mental capacity to work long hours, yet still need to pay rent/bills/etc.

Instead of policies that ignore the impact on our communities, that criminalise the way we survive, and increase our exposure to a police force that commits violence against us – we need to focus on reducing harm. That means listening to our experiences, and giving us more rights, not reducing them.

There seems to be a number of people and organisations pushing hard for the the nil cap. These include Mayor Marvin Rees, Bristol West MP Thangam Debbonair, and Bristol Women's Commission (BWC) – especially the Bristol Women's Voice (BWV) group. Have you had the opportunity to meet with any or all of them, and put across your position?

Audrey: I haven't personally met any of them, although I know a few other members have participated in Zoom calls with them. I think all of our interactions with these people are ultimately demoralising. To push for the types of policy they advocate, like the Nordic Model and the nil cap, they have to discount the voices of sex workers. It's difficult to face people who prefer to debate the

hypothetical morality of our jobs, instead of focusing on the very practical and concrete ways we're asking for help. Especially when criminalising or legislating sex work out of sight, only causes sex workers more risk. In Nordic Model countries, sex workers report more violence from clients and the police, and feel less safe to report violence to authorities. In Northern Ireland, 56.7% of sex workers surveyed felt that the law had made sex work more dangerous, and 92% reported an increase in violent crime.²

We're spoken about as if we're pieces of meat, our bodies bought by clients, not whole human beings with the agency to enforce consent – or we're treated as necessary collateral damage. Our safety concerns don't seem to register, and are not engaged with, so it often feels like we're talking to people who see us as something less than human. It's pretty taxing honestly. (society)

How would you describe the actions they've taken following discussions with BSWC members?



I'd like to give you the opportunity to respond to the arguments being made by those who support the nil cap. One of the key arguments, is the alleged impact on the safety of women and girls. Bristol Women's Commission have stated that SEVs increase a 'culture of entitlement to women's bodies', which leads to higher incidences of harassment and sexual assault. What is your response to this?

Chloe: There's no empirical evidence to prove this. As much as BWV/BWC might like that to be true, the main culprits for Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) are actually 'normal' nightclubs.

Audrey: Why are sex workers excluded from this presumed safety of women and girls? Whereas there is zero evidence of any correlation between strip clubs and violence against women, sex workers are telling you that closing down our workplaces WILL make us more unsafe. Why does a claim, without evidence, driven by moral preferences, have equal credence to the workers in the clubs?

There is zero evidence that strip clubs impact the safety of women and girls. Making women responsible for the actions of men, and punishing sex workers for a culture of entitlement, sexism and violence that we all experience from birth, solves nothing. Sex workers don't want to experience violence, so the idea that we somehow encourage it/cause it, only promotes dangerous ideas that perpetuate harm against sex workers. That we are somehow the buffers for, or deserving of, violence.

Even once widely touted reports, like the 2003 Lilith R&D/Eaves on the impact of lap-dancing clubs on sexual assault in Camden, which falsely concluded that rapes in Camden increased as a result of lap dancing clubs, have since been debunked.³

Do you think SEVs increase the risk to other women in the area?

Chloe: No, especially not with the increased security presence in the area. Again, the Cumulative Impact Assessment shows SEVs aren't a cause for concern. Not to mention nil caps in other cities have done nothing to affect assaults.

Audrey: That's the thing, strip clubs in and of themselves are not inherently negative or dangerous. Clubs like the ones in Bristol adhere to their strict licensing regulations, and workers are campaigning for the clubs to stay, because the enforcement of those regulations keep sthem safe. The majority of the workers in the strip clubs are women, and if they feel safe working there, then by extension, I'd feel safe going in.

I've walked past both clubs many times late at night, often the door security for the strip clubs are the only security presence on the street in quite a busy area, so I actually feel safer knowing they're there. Especially as women's safety is their priority. It frustrates me that, as a woman, it feels like my safety at night is being weaponized to remove the rights of the club workers, when it's not strip clubs that make me feel unsafe walking alone, or afraid of even approaching the police.

Do you think SEVs have an impact on a broader culture of misogyny, that empowers men who want to harass, abuse, or assault women?

Chloe: In SEVs dancers and customers make consensual arrangements in safe venues. Consenting adults are not the same as those who would assault women.

Audrey: I don't think SEVs add to a broader culture of misogyny. Misogyny is well-entrenched in our society, regardless of the existence of strip clubs, and it isn't fair to act as if sex workers perpetuate the violence of a patriarchal society.

This particular stance also seems to imply that sex workers not only accept violence, but that we use it as a tool for our own benefit. It flirts dangerously with the stigma that sex workers expect violence from clients, or that we act

as violence buffers for non-sex working women; that we are somehow separated from, or at odds with, non-sex working women in our experiences as women. But sex workers actively resist violence; we set up networks to check in, forge communities to share safety information, and fight for workspaces we can work safely inside of. How can we empower a behaviour that we reject?

M: If SEVs have such an impact on men harassing women, then why do councils with a nil cap still report violence against women within their bounds? Why, when the clubs were closed over lockdown, was there an increase in domestic violence? And if closing SEVs has no impact on reducing violence against women, then why is it worth exposing sex workers to more violence to do so?

Audrey: Yeah, we're not fighting against criminalisation, or for the strip clubs to stay open, because we're choosing our best interest over the safety of other women. It's because sex workers and women are safer when we have the power to report violence, without the fear of being prosecuted under criminalisation; or knowing that if we make a report, we will be believed and supported, without being devalued because of the stigma of being a sex worker, or the audacity of being a drunk woman in a public space.

BWV published a response to criticism they received from you and others (who they conspiratorially refer to as the 'sex entertainment lobby'). Do you have any further responses to what they say?⁴

Chloe: Our only interest is in the safety of sex workers in Bristol. We don't represent the SEV industry. It just so happens that strippers in Bristol would prefer to work in a safe venue, so we listen to them and their lived experiences.

Audrey: It's really disheartening to see them attempting to devalue our attempts to fight for our rights as workers, by calling us the 'sex entertainment lobby'. And I think it just goes to show that they're wilfully ignoring what we're saying. They continuously refuse to listen to us, despite the fact we are the people working as strippers and sex workers, and the people who would be affected most by what they're trying to implement. At the end of the day, we're a group of sex workers, of queer people, the majority of us are women, voicing concerns for our safety, and we're getting actively ignored by council-funded groups supposedly championing the rights and safety of women. »

Finally, the one bit of 'evidence' BWV link to is a three-page briefing, only one page of which seems to actually discuss SEVs.⁵ Have you seen any of the other studies or evidence they claim exists?

Chloe: It's only ever vague lines drawn between objectification and harassment, with no perspective about consent.

Audrey: From their claims, I expected to see evidence of a direct correlation, or even causation, between strip clubs and increased instances of violence against women, yet that does not appear to exist. We've looked through the evidence submitted, and even though they mention documents such as the Equality Charter which do mention violence against women, none of these documents specifically reference SEVs. The lack of clear evidence suggests that the hypothesis that strip clubs cause higher rates of violence against women, was not derived from fact, but from moral preference – which should not have any place in council or licensing decisions.

On the other hand, we can point to the results of centuries of criminalising sex work within the U.K., under various laws, that have all lead to sex workers being put at an increased risk of violence and exploitation. The Contagious Diseases Act, or the Brothel-Keeping laws, which did nothing to stop the sex industry, but did push sex workers to work alone and in isolated areas like parks. Even feminists in the early 20th Century, who disagreed morally with prostitution, campaigned for decriminalisation because it is the only way to reduce harm to sex workers.

What other groups have you faced hostility from, and what form has this taken?

Chloe: Not Buying It. Fuck them, they are actually the worst.

Audrey: Groups like Object and Not Buying It have historically subjected strippers to violating campaigns like secretly filming them at work and disseminating the videos, outing strippers to their communities, in order to shame strip club workers and attempt to get the clubs' licenses removed.

In your experience, what drives hostility towards sex workers?

Chloe: Misconceptions and internalised misogyny.

Audrey: It's been made easy to not think of sex workers as people deserving of rights and respect. When you look at the early criminalisation of sex work, policy makers first and foremost frame sex work as a problem to be eradicated from society – instead of a response to an inequitable society

where people need to earn money, but are barred from accessing traditional methods of doing so. Sex workers seemed to be seen as a moral blight, a community to be kept away from nice areas, legislated out of view, lest we tempt good men and good women into crime.

This stigma has stuck to sex work. Discretion is the name of the game, and unless we want to face judgement from our peers, discrimination from job opportunities, frozen bank accounts, or stigma when receiving healthcare, sex workers have to hide ourselves and our work. Especially in countries like Northern Ireland and France, where sex workers and their families face prosecution under Nordic Model laws. Which means when we do want to speak for ourselves, share the wisdom of our experiences and advocate for our safety, we have to do it anonymously. It's easy to discredit our experiences as outliers, when stigma/criminalisation makes it difficult for us to display that we are part of society.

Even within sex workers, there is so much inbuilt stigma around what we do, that it's hard for us to organise collectively. Some sex workers who are able to only work online, or work independently, will try to differentiate themselves from street sex workers for instance, as better than, in order to not feel so ostracised from society themselves.

I think if sex workers were allowed to express their experiences and what they need, without the constant obfuscation of a moral debate over the work itself, people might be more empathetic.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether sex work is moral or not because it still exists, and will continue to exist as long as people have to work to live, and to focus on the merits of its morality is to ignore the very actionable things people and policy makers can do to improve the current rights, working conditions and lives of sex workers. It's why we organise behind the term "sex work is work." It identifies that sex workers, like all workers, need access to rights that allow us to organise for better working conditions, » for our voices to hold weight in policies that effect our industry, safety and security at work.

M: Fear, too. I think, like any minority community that is 'othered', or represents something different to the status quo, there is a certain fear of the unknown. Like, what if we do give sex workers rights, what will happen then? But giving sex workers rights isn't saying that sex work is good, or progressive, or should be a chosen career path, it just acknowledges that people who work in sex work, need adequate rights for their own safety.

Which groups that have supported you and your campaigns?

Chloe: Lots! Equity, UVW of course, Bristol Fem Soc (Bristol University's Intersectional Feminist Society) etc.

Audrey: Thankfully we have received a lot of support from individuals and groups, which has been really refreshing. Unions like Equity and UVW have been big supporters of our campaign, local groups like BARBI (Bristol Association of Restaurants, Bars and Independents), and political groups like Bristol Labour Against Transphobia, alongside sex worker advocacy groups like NUM and Decrim Now who have shown us support. We appreciate everyone who has responded to the consultation to save the clubs already, and hopefully we'll reach even more people soon. We'd love it if even more groups took public stances supporting sex workers rights on issues like decriminalisation and fighting the nil cap. Anti-sex work groups are a very vocal minority, so we need to create even more noise to drown them out.

Other than your opposition to the plans to close licenced SEVs, what work and campaigning have you done, or plan to do, in the near future?

Chloe: It would be nice for the license hearings to be more infrequent, there are a few things that I would like to change about the clubs too.

Audrey: We would love to be able to work together with Bristol Council to implement a new licensing policy that enshrines workers' rights, including giving workers a larger role in the strategising of a licensing policy that affects them.

We'll continue to campaign for sex workers' rights across the U.K., and oppose any legislation that is made about us, without us. We'd like to build better relationships with other groups and organisations in Bristol, to improve the lives of sex workers in the city, and work towards making Bristol a more inclusive place for sex workers and other marginalised communities.

One thing we'd like to do is reach out to other sex workers in Bristol, maybe host sex worker breakfasts where we can come together as a community.

What are the next steps for your group and your campaigns?

Audrey: The end of the public consultation is in December, so we're going to be continuing to push for responses to that. We're planning on approaching spaces to see if we can collect responses in person, and we're heavily encouraging people to message their local councillor in support of the SEVs. »



What can individuals who want to support you do?

Chloe: Follow us on all our socials to keep up! And fill in the public consultation.

Audrey: Fill in the public consultation, email your local councillor showing that you're against the nil cap, and email your local MP regarding the Nordic Model amendments. Start seeking out sex workers' voices! Revolting Prostitutes is a great book to start with around sex workers' rights or, if you prefer fiction, *The Service* – an amazing book written by a sex worker. Read articles written by sex workers like Lydia Carradonna, or research published by SWARM. Sex workers are doing incredible work to organise for our communities and platform our voices, including the organisations we've mentioned previously. If you can, donate to individual sex worker Go Fund Me's, specifically those of trans and racialised POC workers. And actively challenge stigma against sex workers in your personal lives. Sex workers are not the butt of a joke, we're not 'less than' because of what we do to earn money, we're not objects to be bought, and we don't exist in a vacuum.

What can groups that want to support you do?

Chloe: Vocally support us. It's a shame that a lot of groups chose not to.

Audrey: Be vocal and active in your support for our campaign and sex workers' rights at large. Challenge how, as groups and organisations, you can be more inclusive towards sex workers. Get in contact to sign our open letter, or contact Decrim Now to show support for sex worker voices.

How would you like to see things in Bristol and beyond change for sex workers in the long term?

Audrey: We want sex workers to have a valued input on policies that effect us, both within Bristol and at an international level. Sex work should be decriminalised. Laws that prevent us from working together in safety, are weaponised against migrant sex workers, against street sex workers, and lead to violent and traumatic interactions with the police (such as brothel raids) need to be removed. We can see how laws regarding sex work, even when they target clients, can be used to criminalise the workers they claim to protect. In Sweden (a Nordic Model country) for instance, the husband of a sex worker was charged with pimping, simply because he was in a relationship with a sex worker. By decriminalising sex work, we can allow sex workers to share resources, access support and organise for better working conditions, without being persecuted for it. Improving the conditions sex workers work in, as well as

our access to working rights, will help to reduce violence and exploitation – because we can stand together against it. Sex workers' rights goes hand in hand with decriminalising drugs, trans rights, and fighting for better access to healthcare services for trans people, and the rights of migrants and disabled workers. Ideally, no one should have to choose sex work (or any other work) because there are no better options available to make money, which means that by fighting for the rights of sex workers, we're fighting for the inclusion of other marginalised communities.

What are your steps to reaching this?

Audrey: As a collective, we can fight for change within Bristol at a local level. We can make sure sex worker voices are heard by policy makers, draw attention to issues facing sex workers, and encourage people to fight for our rights as workers. We can organise with our unions and other sex worker groups to tackle issues facing sex workers. We can learn from and collaborate with sex workers' rights movements and organisations, not just in the U.K., but globally. By ourselves, the BSWC isn't a big group with a lot of resources. Most of the work we've done has been in the space between jobs and our spare time, and will continue to be so. But in the context of a larger movement organising for sex workers rights, we hope that we're helping to push things forward – even if it's incrementally. ■

Thanks to Bristol Sex Workers Collective for participating in the interview. You can follow them on Instagram and Twitter, and get in touch or view their guide to the current consultation on their website www.bristolswc.com

[1] decrimnow.org.uk/2021/04/11/notonordicmodel-open-letter-launches-with-over-150-signatories

[2] warmcollective.org/blog/2019/9/20/nordic-model-in-northern-ireland-a-total-failure-no-decrease-in-sex-work-but-increases-in-violence-and-stigma

[3] scribd.com/document/47185652/Green-Paper-Camden-Lilith-rape-stats

[4] bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/when-women-are-pitted-against-women-in-the-fight-for-gender-equality-there-can-only-be-one-winner-men

[5] <https://www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BWC-Briefing-SEV-link-to-male-violence-against-women.pdf>

COP26OUT

An opinion from a tired anarchist, hundreds of miles away

When you read this, COP26 will have finished. The 500 or so fossil fuel industry lobbyists (the biggest delegation by far) will have concluded their business. The 400 or so private jets which were flown into Glasgow to discuss matters of climate, will have flown back home carrying the future of green capitalism and eco-colonialism.

The performative dance to keep the population trapped in sophistry, idle and placated, will be done. They billed COP26 as our last best hope for environmental stability. It failed.

One of the larger themes was Carbon Offsetting, let's all get behind it they say. Well, You can't offset hypocrisy, never mind that there is not enough space on the Earth to offset the carbon we are putting out. It would take more than five times the size of India to do so. Planting a "Green Belt", whether it's across Africa or the Pennines, doesn't negate the Carbon being pumped out elsewhere. It's simply not how it works. Even if all this planting happens in the green belts and across former farm fields the world over, this is new growth we're talking about, it's not old growth, it's not a forest. It is in fact little more than cash crop, agroforestry and timber. The bio-diversity of these spaces is nothing by comparison. They say they want to end deforestation by 2030, well nearly 70% of wildlife has been lost since 1970, how much more are we going to lose in the next 8 years (and more) as the bastards drain every last bit of profit out of ancient woodlands and jungle that they can? Funny thing is, we have more trees now than we did forty years ago, a 2016 study illustrated this, but it has done little to alter the impact of expanding industries and growth capitalism, they mask their destruction behind being green, well fuck, you can't plant rows of trees which you'll chop down in a few years and say you're replacing ancient woodland. These caprious governments are one moment telling us that our forested areas are vital to the survival of the planet and the next signing agreements for further exploitation. Don't worry tho, we're all in it together.

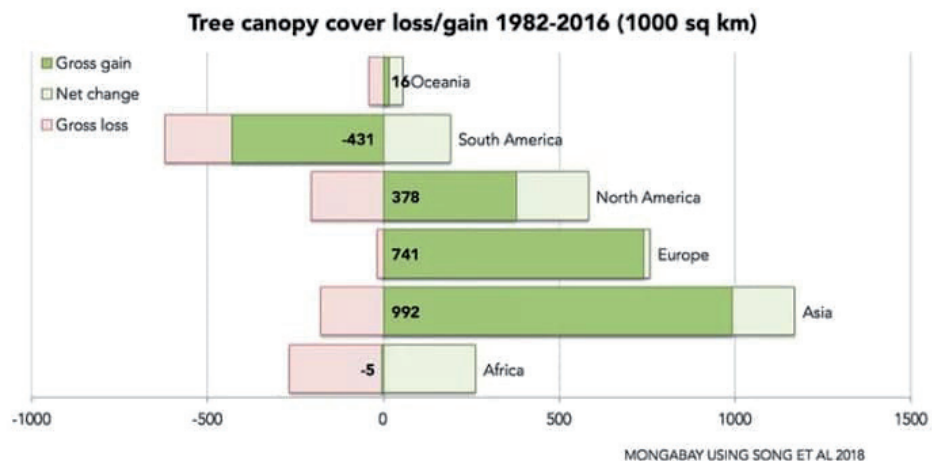
I can't get over the fact they had the sheer audacity to podium Jeff Bezos. This despite the 465 million pounds of plastic packaging waste churned out by Amazon each year, you know the mega corporation with the carbon footprint larger than most countries. This privileged platform which could have been given to any of a number of climate scientists was instead given to Jeff despite just a few weeks earlier he was blasting off for a outrageously polluting 10 minute jaunt in

space. Jeff spoke about being aware of our impact, despite taking a helicopter 120 miles followed by a private jet for 2000 miles to arrive at COP26 to give a speech. Jeff wants you to recycle, turn the temperature down, and consider limiting your carbon footprint like a good eco-minded prole. He's Pledged \$2 billion to a land restoration project in Africa. Amazon's revenue in 2020 grew 38% to \$386 billion. Philanthropy from our great capitalist saviours as they throttle the life out of us. We are drowning ourselves for convenience, subjugating ourselves to economic tyranny out of a desperate fear that we might not be able to have packages arrive within 24 hours if the hippies win.

Oh and let's not forget the fucking Malthusians from Population Matters and similar. They're fixated on the idea that there are just too many dark skinned people on the planet. They want to use the injection of progressive values to gently encourage women to have smaller families and get educated to ensure they don't doom us all with over population. Which I suppose sounds great until you think for two seconds and realise it's a thin veneer over eco-fascism and 14 words. Their choice of language never quite getting to "population control" and "this is fucking eugenics with an environmental face lift". No it doesn't matter that the planet already over produces food to the tune of some 50% more than required. It doesn't matter that serious famine is a collective choice, one which we make consistently due to political apathy and economic greed.

The planet is not overpopulated. The profiteers are misusing it's resources.

The global north, despite having a much smaller population account for the vast majority of carbon and pollution in general. The average carbon footprint of someone in Britain is 50x that of someone in Malawi and the average for someone in the USA is 3x ours. Even when you include the manufacturing industries of China or the garment industries in India... but like... who the hell you think they are producing that for? This is before we remember that in actuality the climate issue is also a class issue and even here in our delightful MEDCs, the truth of the matter is that the top 10% dwarf the rest of population for the tonnes of CO2 per capita, the top 1%, yeah you guessed it. All those luxurys jet really add up.»



This idea that it's you, the working class who can do something about it was a popular one this year, well it is a near omnipresent factor of life these past few years sure, but they've really been at it these past few weeks. It's not like the oligarchs are ignorant of this disparity, heck the Financial Times is quite comfortable chirping on about it and yet The One Show won't fucking shut up about whatever pat on the back project some school is doing or how you can take some tiny pointless step towards being less the horrible polluting bastard that you are. Look, they say, if everyone chipped in, we'd save the planet by X-Mas. It's a sweet delusion, but that's all it is.

There is only one solution to the cascade apocalypse before us and that is a renaissance of revolutionary ideas, for the working classes to step out of consumerist suicide, collectivise their work places, localise their productivity and say no more to these ivory towered barons and the cretins in parliament still suckling on the rotten teat of an empire long since fallen.

Green Capitalism will not save you. Only you can do that. Let go of your fear and take action.

COP26 tho, the pact is failure after failure. Heck they utterly failed to scrap the military exemption from carbon targets. Armed forces are not even required to count their carbon emissions and they are not included in countries' emission reduction targets. This makes the targets nonsensical. The absolute limit of the climate change projections is an increase of 1.5 degrees. This is the absolute, we've already got too far, millions are going to die but if it get's higher than this, we are going to see a grand collapse, limit that must be met.. The best they could promise was a 1.8 degree increase and let's face it we all know that is twaddle, as consistantly the agreements laid before to equal applause have failed time and time again.

As I went through the agreement, picking out what I could from the obfuscated language my screen pinged with a notification from a friend, It's a a promotional piece from an oil giant made for COP26 where they wax lyrical about how they are investing in green, however they need the profits from their ongoing and newly staked out fossil fuel operations in order to do this. It simply doesn't make economic sense to save the planet from the murderous grasp of the fossil fuel industry, and let's not forget, much of the early data that really consolidated our fears about the imminent threat came from research these companies did themselves. Decades ago. Capitalism by it's very nature will continue to throttle the planet for ever ounce of profit until the death toll starts to harm the bottom line. This is what the nice man who appeared all reasonable and personable on the screen said. There is simply no other way to interpret it. They say it very clearly, it's not a conspiracy or requiring years of peer review. We are fucked, millions will die, but come on, what about the share holders? COP26 stands before us and lays itself open and overt. They arn't even bothering to deny it anymore. The parody of environmentalism which is green capitalism will be the saccharine mantra as we suffocate and behind the scenes green colonialism, the tendrils of western states, continue to slither in and infiltrate distant lands. We have to win the trade war with China right?

Don't worry tho, they managed to put together a mealy mouthed agreement to "phase out" the use of coal and a promise to stop deforestation...in eight years. It's ok. Promise. Coal will be phased out because it's less profitable and new capitalist ventures are being put in to replace it. Bojo is acting like it's a victory, that its the "beginning of the end of climate change". He then flew home. I think it's vital that we remember those who don't get to go home and forget about it until next year.

The indigenous comrades who came from around the world to find solidarity on the streets and in the kindness of Glasgow's people. They're deeply frustrated with the facade of interest, the speech making and apathetic ears. The hope that just one of these powerful leaders would show genuine interest in saving their homes from the industrial binge, all but snubbed out. They are on the front line, have been for decades, dying in distant parts of the world, unheard. Well that's changed now. From West Papuans to the Waorani people, from Wallmapu to the Wet'suwet'en territories, the building might of indigenous communities are finding solidarity in each other. They will not be placated. For them this is not academic, or some future they don't need to worry about yet.

The waters are here, the forests are gone. There is no more time, it is already too late.

Ofcourse civil society stands with them and XR rebels shed tears for their pain, as both attempt to change the course of the avalanche with passive protests and political whispers, both hoping that a petition to the bastards killing the planet might some how be accepted. Alongside this tho there is this tremendous wave of solidarity and rage coming from the young rebels who flooded the streets. Across the country they are furious with righteous indignation and anger at the elders that have been failing them. Several

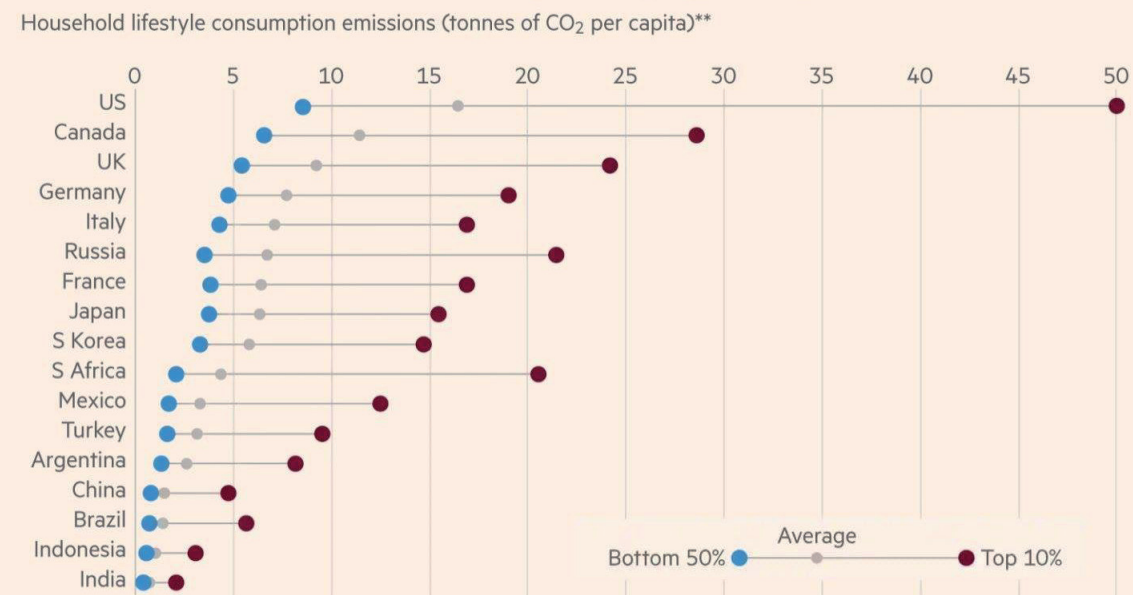
comrades make a point of telling me how fantastically bad ass they were up in Glasgow, as one said "We were angry about student loans, they are angry about the death of the planet. They understand what it means and serious in a way we never were". They don't care to wax lyrical, they have a dark shadow looming and they are appalled that we have let this beast rise before them. More love to them. I hope they let COP26 radicalise them. I hope they take the rage they already have burning and let that grow exponentially. No more A-B marches, no more committees and endless discourse. No more rambling opinion pieces in Anarchist rags or griping into social media oubliettes. COP28 is in the fucking UAE. Green capital isn't going to save you.

We keep us safe. We need a revolutionary renaissance and it seems that we'll be getting one, so listen to the youth. They want us all to take to this task together, whatever your politics, whatever your age, where ever you may live. Let the rage of the youth take hold of you oncemore.

**The waters are here, the forests are gone.
There is no more time, it is already too late.
We have to save the planet, by any means necessary. ■**

Peter Ó Máille

Differences in emissions of rich and poor highlight inequalities



** In G20 countries for which data is available
Visual journalism: Steven Bernard/@sdbernard and Chelsea Bruce-Lockhart/@C_BruceLockhart
Source: Oxfam
© FT

PANDORA'S BOX OPENS

The Latest Leak in Global Capital

We, the common populace, are all too aware that corruption and exploitation happen behind the scenes of our society. Unfortunately, the vast majority of it is so obscure, hidden, and lacking in the detail we so want for, that it is difficult to ascertain just how much the machines of domination utilise their rotten means for a far darker self-empowerment. In a cruel irony, it is we—the masses of individuals of, at best, modest means—who have our lives scrutinised to the point of coercing us into observing etiquettes that those who apply that same scrutiny do not at all follow. One rule for us; another for that small minority—as it always has been since the dawn of ‘civilisation.’

Every once in a very rare while, however, the figurative curtain is drawn aside for us, and we see some of the show for what it is—plain as day—no longer a concealed act so far removed from its audience. Groundbreaking revelations have come along as such, two examples of which were known as the Panama Papers, and then subsequently, the Paradise Papers. Now enters the newest addition to the roster, the Pandora Papers. The identities of whomever instigated this most recent leak are a mystery. Going by past treatments of whistleblowers, they will hopefully forever remain anonymous to the world. The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), a global independent non-profit journalist network, received the leak after a coordinated effort to amass information over the course of almost a year. The ICIJ then in turn gave access to the data to various major media outlets around the world. Said data comprises 11.9 million files, forming a collective of 2.94 terabytes that dates all the way back to the 1970s. This means it is larger than both the Panama and Paradise Papers combined, and the largest leak of offshore information in history.

In the course of its efforts, the ICIJ had to go to great lengths to ensure its investigations—and their findings—remained secure and secret. One aspect of this endeavour was some of those involved having to meet personally with sources to receive physical copies of the data passed over through storage devices, rather than relying on electronic means to send the information from one place to another. One cannot help but be impressed by the ICIJ's ability to complete its task of properly presenting its findings: almost 12 million documents—often in hard-to-analyse states and file types—along with many of them being seemingly unrelated to any of the other documents. This was an ocean of data that

would be difficult to sift through to find the meat of the evidence. To face up to this task, the ICIJ created its own software that would allow it an easier time to go through the files, as other widely-used programs, such as Excel, would not serve its needs in this manner. In a true indication that their investigation was creating anxiety for the guilty, there were at least two attempts to break into the servers that they used to store their gathered information. These hacks started as soon as the ICIJ had begun to approach politicians and businesspeople who were indicted by the findings for comment. It is further proof that neither law nor moral obligation will stop the global so-called ‘elites’ from their continued attempts at social control.

Within the leak, there is a mother lode of content detailing the actions of many companies around the world that were hired by their affluent clientele to establish financial trusts in tax havens—some of them already long much-in-use—such as Panama, Dubai, Monaco, Switzerland, and the Cayman Islands. Amongst the cacophony of names revealed are 35 world leaders, both current and former, and over 300 more other public officials. Unsurprisingly, more than 100 billionaires also feature, together with more cultural figures, such as celebrities and musicians. In these tax havens, which see very little to nothing in the way of tax collection and regulation, private assets are held by shell companies, in order to hide them from the oversight of the government of the country the owner actually chooses to reside in. Naturally, with the rich having an abundance of money to splash as they fancy, the assets take the form of a wide variety of things, including property, yachts, aircraft, investments, and even art (in this instance, ranging from Picasso to Banksy). The companies that set up these illusions for their clients are not adverse to collaboration: the more they work together, the more expensive it is for the client. However, the assets then become evermore concealed, in a web that stretches across the world.

Perhaps one of the more satisfying, yet by no means positive, aspects of a leak such as this is not just the exposition of the immoral dealings of the people named within it, but also of their absolute hypocrisy in their being involved with these acts. There have been a number of political leaders who have, in the past, declared their utter distaste towards—and presumed devotion to eradicating—the shadowy practices of capital. Now, through these revelatory outbreaks of data, they have been shown to engage in those very same



shadowy practices themselves. These include Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who made tackling the country's corrupt oligarch-dominated economy central to the campaign that got him elected in 2019. Zelenskyy has been shown to be benefitting from said corruption in the files. The president of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, also took on the persona of one opposed to economic corruption, and has—again—been revealed to partake in that which he vowed to fight against. While not being shown to be involved this time—because, let's be honest, it is far from beyond the realms of possibility—Joe Biden has previously declared it a mission of his administration to bring transparency to global finances. The irony here is that the Pandora Papers revealed that, over the past decade, the US has become a major tax haven itself, with over a dozen states moulding themselves into leading shelters for the excess of some very questionable sectors of capital—particularly South Dakota, Florida, Delaware, Texas and Nevada. All this has happened whilst legislation from around the world has focused on the more well-known havens: the usual suspects. One of these, the British Virgin Islands, has been indicated as the most

popular location for these overseas hidden stores of wealth, with over two-thirds of the companies in the world set up in the territory, long-established as a haven. Typically, the Conservative Party of the UK has also been shown to be receiving funds from donors that are implicated in the data. It is almost as if these donors believe them to be the ones who will uphold such a status quo that allows these goings-on to happen. When Conservative MPs were questioned about the more-than-questionable donations being received, their reaction—or, lack thereof—would appear to confirm the faith these donors have in them hiding such practices.

To look at just these numbers is almost an exasperating act as, although there has been quite the ample group revealed, we know it is a mere drop in the seething ocean of capital that is completely beyond our sight and grasp. As there is an almost non-existence of large left-wing media, the few publications and outlets with a great following that will report on this leak are those that are politically right wing—the closest to our perspective only being, at the very least, liberal. The rich engaged in the practices »

indicated in these leaks will be made out to be only part of a minority. A minority in what is, in the eyes of said outlets, still a fair system that merely needs some reform. The reality is that what has been shown is just the microcosm in the macrocosm. They will not decry what is clearly the problem—capitalism as a whole—and instead either remain silent on this point, or put forward the typical view that it is only so-called ‘unbridled’ capitalism that allows this.

In our times of ever-growing authoritarianism and the hoarding of wealth by those already unfathomably wealthy, the Pandora Papers serve as a powerful reminder to the people of this world that this tiny minority of individuals—sad that we must count these most inhumane amongst our own species—were never on our side. They think of no one but themselves as the ones they would choose to dedicate their lives to aiding. The shroud that we are subjected to as everyday civilians remains intact, with events like these only temporarily breaking it. Indeed, one can be glad for and relish the revelations we have witnessed now and in the past, but they sadly fall upon almost powerless eyes and ears. That is, powerlessness in this system of supposed ‘liberal democracy’—and the very little and, ultimately, ineffective ways in which it allows us to address our problems as individuals and as a society, within its imposed laws. We have seen in the past how these instances only tell us what we basically already knew—and further cement, in most of our minds, the idea that it is almost beyond us to do anything about it. These leaks show that these havens do not—as most envision it—only exist on some islands, tucked away in corners of the world that very few of us visit or really even think about.

This corruption is, instead, rife across the globe, in large part hosted by the largest affluent ‘democracies’—ones which many of us call home. If things go the same way they did after the previous leaks, then we will only see a little reform, without results. Government officials will be removed from positions, business people will face legal action, and new laws will be put in place to convince the people that the State actually cares about corruption. But, the rich will only adapt to these laws, and find new ways around them, as has been shown by this new leak, years after the previous ones. The action taken will only be a fraction, a pittance, of what should truly be done.

With these revelations, there should be no clearer indication to the people that there is a strong marriage between the State, capital, and both their running dogs: our politicians. It is a union that only seeks to dominate, to give rules to us that they will not ascribe to. However, we must never allow this to dishearten us and steer us away from our cause.

While these people will bend and break the law to retain and add to their wealth, we in turn will continue our efforts to bend, and eventually break, their grip on wealth and return it to those that created it in the first place. If the working class cries out to those in power for help, that help will not come. We should abandon the politics of politicians, and let their neglect stoke the fires of our desire to take power back from them, and change things ourselves. ■

Jordan Lunness

*Originally shared on The Commoner:
thecommoner.org.uk/pandoras-box-opens-the-latest-leak-in-global-capital*

The Commoner is an independent, anarchist publication written by commoners and for commoners. It is a springboard for common voices, ideas, and hopes. Our editors, writers and supporters want to see the dawn of a common world, where every individual, anywhere, may enjoy autonomy, peace and security.

The Commoner seeks to tap into the deep rooted, communalistic traditions that have defined various human societies for centuries, so that we might find an end to the atomisation of society and reclaim the world that belongs to us. It wishes to fight and alter the mainstream acceptance of capitalist competition, exploitation and misery, and its oppression through class, race, gender and disability. It desires to shelter those who believe in the communal spirit of humanity. Quite simply, it wants to explore what it means to be a commoner.

At the centre of everything we do, write or say are three core ideals:

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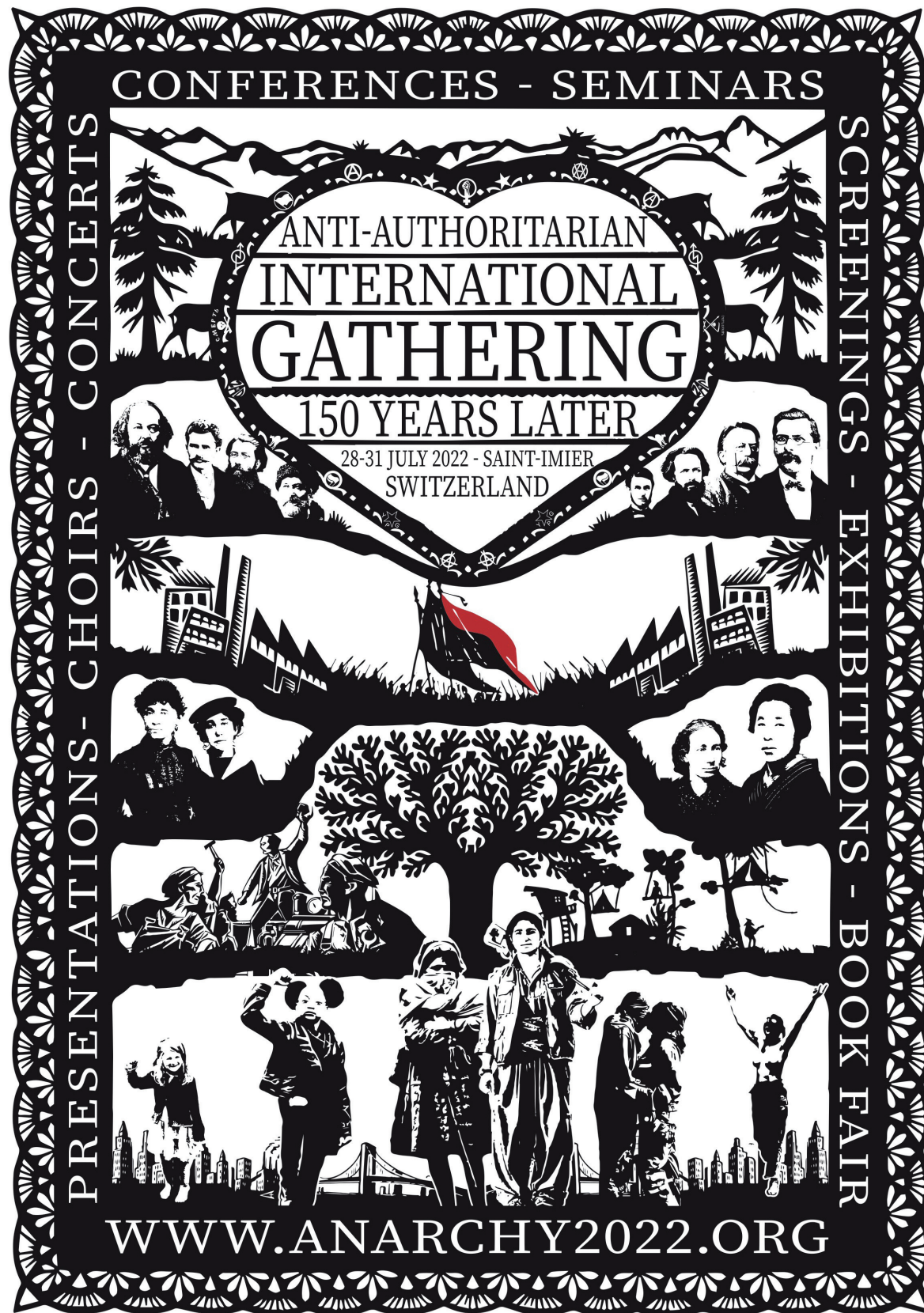
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Boss made a dollar
Grandad made a dime
But that was a poem
From a simpler time

Boss made a thousand
Gave my pa a cent
But that penny bought a mortgage
Or at least it paid the rent

Now boss makes a million
And gives us jack
Smugly blames his workers
For the labor that he lacks

- Lana Gaudio



THE LEGACY OF SAINT-IMIER

The Latest Leak in Global Capital

Over July 28–21 in St. Imier (Jura, Switzerland) there will be an International Anti-Authoritarian Gathering to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Congress of St-Imier which, in 1872, saw the foundation of the Anti-Authoritarian International, an event marking the birth of the organized anarchist movement.

We would like to welcome participants from all continents. All those interested are invited to contribute to the organization and the success of this meeting in whatever way they find most suitable (sharing information, contributing ideas, joining in art projects, providing material support, etc.). You can find out more and contact the organising body via anarchy2022.org

*To celebrate this coming gather we share the following article (from *Organise!* 79) which was contributed by Brian Morris is the text of a talk to the Anarchist Federation's London Group on May 19th 2012.*

The Legacy of Saint-Imier

In the opening pages of my book on Bakunin (1993) I offered a quote from the Ghanaian poet Ayi Kwei Armah. It reads “The present is where we get lost, if we forget our past and have no vision of the future.” This phrase comes to mind when we come to celebrate the iconic founding of the anarchist movement at Saint Imier in Switzerland in September 1872.

Engaging with the past does not involve some kind of ancestor worship, any more than envisaging a better future for humankind entails us becoming lost in utopian dreams. Anarchists should certainly not feel embarrassed in celebrating the achievements of an earlier generation of libertarian socialists – not as historical curiosities but as a source of inspiration and ideas. Here I wish simply to offer some reflections on the kind of anarchism, or revolutionary socialism, that emerged from the political struggles of members of the First International, around 1870.

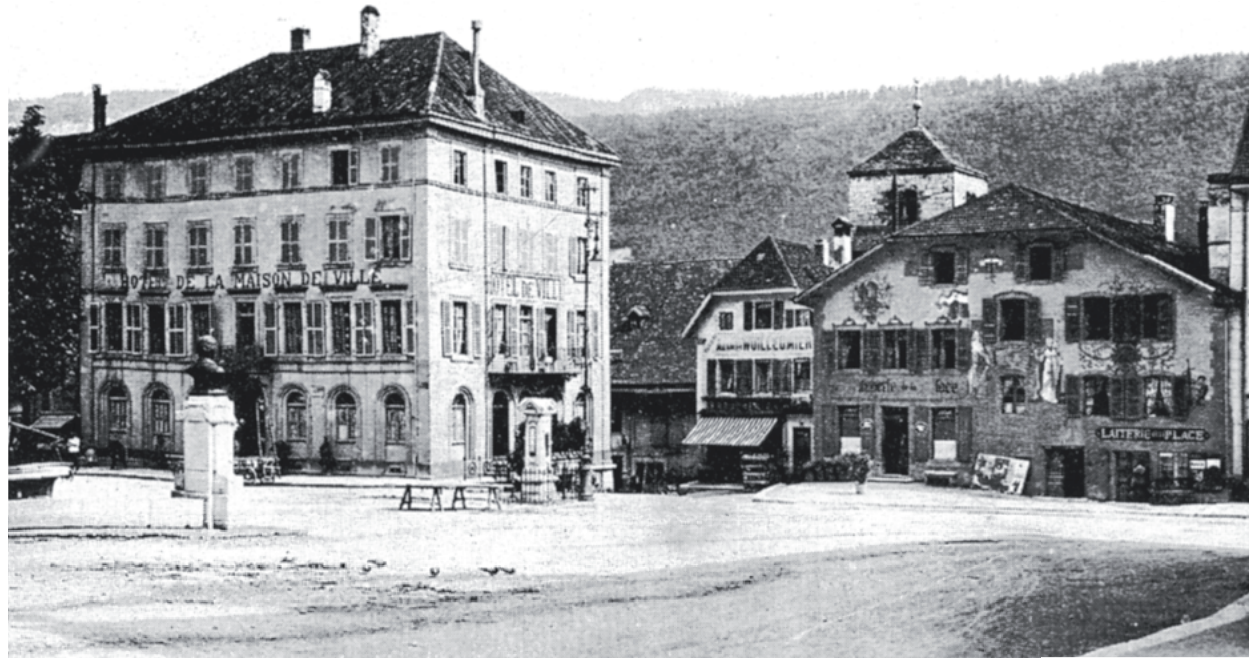
As a political philosophy, anarchism has had perhaps the worst press. It has been ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood and misinterpreted by writers from all sides of the political spectrum: Marxists, democrats, conservatives and liberals. Theodore Roosevelt, the American president, famously described anarchism as a “crime against the whole human race” and in common parlance anarchism is invariably linked with disorder, violence and nihilism. A

clear understanding of anarchism is further inhibited by the fact that the term “anarchist” has been applied to a wide variety of philosophies and individuals. Thus Gandhi, Spencer, Tolstoy, Berdyaev, Stirner, Ayn Rand, Nietzsche, along with more familiar figures such as Proudhon, Bakunin and Goldman, have

all been described as anarchists. This has led Marxist critics, such as John Molyneux, to dismiss “anarchism” as a completely incoherent political philosophy, both in its theories and in the strategy for social change.

But it isn't? for what has to be recognized is that anarchism is fundamentally a historical movement and political tradition that emerged around 1870, mainly among working class members of the International Working Mens Association, widely known as the First International. It involved a split, or “great schism” (as James Toll called it) within the Association. It is usually described as if it focused around a personal dispute between Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin. But, as Cole and others have suggested, this schism was not simply a clash of personalities; it involved two factions within the socialist movement, and two quite different conceptions of socialism, of the processes of revolutionary change and the conditions of human liberation. The anarchist faction did not originally describe themselves as anarchists but rather as “federalists” or as “anti-authoritarian socialists”, but they came to adopt the label of their Marxist opponents, and describe themselves as “anarchist communists”. As a political movement and tradition anarchism thus emerged among workers of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland in the aftermath of the Paris Commune.

Among its more well-known proponents were Elisee Reclus, Francois Dumertheray, James Guillaume, Errico Malatesta, Carlo Cafiaro, Jean Grave and Peter Kropotkin. (Louise Michel was also closely associated with the movement, but she was deported to New Caledonia after the defeat of the Paris Commune, along with many thousand communards. She spent six years in exile). Between 1870 and 1930 anarchism or revolutionary/libertarian socialism, spread throughout the world, and was thus by no means restricted to Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century there was, of course, other strands of anarchism, but anarchist-communism was certainly the dominant tendency. It is important to note that class struggle anarchism was not the creation of academic scholars, but emerged within



working class activism, and expressed a revolt against the social and working conditions of industrial capitalism. Kropotkin's earliest writings were entitled "Words of a Rebel" (1885) adopted from the Swiss anarchist periodical "Le Revolt". Kropotkin, who joined the General Section of the First International in February 1872, described anarchism as a kind of synthesis between radical liberalism, with its emphasis on the liberty of the individual, and socialism or communism, which implied a repudiation of capitalism and an emphasis on communal life and voluntary associations. This synthesis is well illustrated in Bakunin's famous adage: "That liberty, without socialism is privilege and injustice, and that socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality". The tendency of Marxists academic philosophers and Stirnerite individualists (or egoists) to make a radical dichotomy between anarchism and socialism is therefore, in both conceptual and historical grounds, quite misleading and distorts our understanding of socialism.

Anarchism, or at least the kind of class struggle anarchism that was advocated by the social revolutionaries of the First International, can be defined in terms of four essential tenets or principles.

Firstly, a rejection of state power and all forms of hierarchy and oppression; a critique of all forms of power and authority that inhibit the liberty of the individual, viewed, of course, as a social being, not as a disembodied ego, or some abstract possessive individual, still less as a fixed benign essence. As a resolution of the St. Imier congress put it: the first duty of the proletariat is the "destruction of all political power".

Secondly, the complete repudiation of the capitalist market economy, along with its wage system, private property, its competitive ethos, and the ideology of possessive individualism. In fact, the early class struggle anarchists were fervently anti-capitalist, referring to the wage system as "wage slavery."

Thirdly, it expressed a vision of a society based solely on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation, a form of social organization that would provide the fullest expression of human liberty and all forms of social life that were independent of both the state and capitalism. Class struggle anarchists thus believed in voluntary organizations, not in chaos, ephemerality or "anything goes", and they viewed both tribal and kin-based societies and everyday social life in more complex societies as exhibiting some of the principles of anarchy. Both Elise Reclus and Kropotkin were deeply interested in the social life of tribal peoples, or "societies without government".

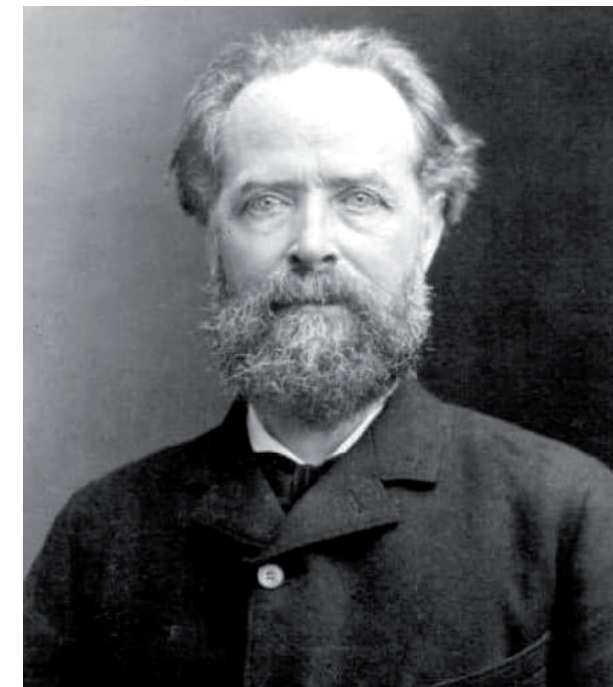
Fourthly, the early anarchists, like the Marxists, embraced the radical aspects of the Enlightenment - a stress on the importance of critical reason and empirical science; a rejection of all knowledge claims based on traditional authority, mystical institution and divine revelation; and an affirmation of such universal human values as liberty, solidarity and equality. Anarchism was thus a form of ethical socialism.

As revolutionary socialism or anarchism developed in the twenty years after the Paris Commune of 1871, it tended

to critique, and to define itself in relation to three other forms of radical politics. All are still around and have their contemporary advocates. These are mutualism, radical individualism or egoism, and Marxism. Although Kropotkin and the class struggle anarchists always acknowledged that Proudhon expressed libertarian sentiments, and was a pioneer and an inspiration in the development of anarchism, they were always critical of the radical tradition that became known as Mutualism. Embraced by many American individualist anarchists, such as Warren, Spooner and Tucker, this tradition affirmed the market economy, private property and petty-commodity production - all of which were rejected by the anarchist communists.

They were equally critical of the kind of radical individualism (egoism) expressed by Max Stirner, suggesting it was a metaphysical doctrine remote from real social life and bordered on nihilism. Kropotkin stressed that it was meaningless to emphasize the supremacy of the "unique one" in conditions of oppression and economic exploitation, and felt that Stirner's strident egoism ran counter to the feelings of mutual solidarity and equality that most people acknowledged.

Finally, of course, from its inception, the anarchists were highly critical of the kind of politics expressed by Marx and Engels, which later became known as social democracy, or simply Marxism. In their famous "Communist Manifesto" (1846) Marx and Engels emphasized that the communist party was to organize the working class, in order to achieve



Élisée Reclus

"the conquest of political power".

This would entail the establishment of a "workers state" or "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in which all forms of production (including agriculture), as well as transport, communication and banking, would be "owned" and administered through the Nation State. It would involve, as Marx and Engels put it, "the most decisive centralizations of power in the hands of the state authority" Bakunin and the anarchist communists of course, always stressed that the parliamentary road to socialism would lead to reformism, and the "seizure of state power" by the communist party on behalf of the working people, would lead to tyranny and state capitalism. And history seems to have proved them right on both counts.

In contrast to "political action" - involvement with state power - which anarchists always felt formed a symbiotic relationship with capitalism - the early anarchists advocated "direct action". This was expressed through insurrectionism, anarcho-syndicalism or community-based politics. In recent years class struggle anarchism, as advocated and practised by an earlier generation of communist anarchists, has been declared "obsolete", or "outmoded", or dismissed as "leftism" by contemporary anarchists, mostly by those ensconced in the academy. At the end of the twentieth century, we are informed, a "new" anarchism has emerged, a "post-left anarchy". It seems to consist of a rather esoteric pastiche of several political tendencies; namely, anarcho-primitivism, the anarcho-capitalism of Rothbard and Ayn Rand, the "poetic terrorism" that derives from Nietzsche and the avant-garde, embraced with fervour by Hakim Bey, the radical individualism (egoism) of the contemporary devotees of Max Stirner, and so-called "post anarchism" which derives from the writings of such academic mandarins as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault and Deleuze.

There is nothing new or original in these various currents of thought, and the idea that an earlier generation of anarchists supported modernity or modernism is quite perverse. For the "old" anarchists, the libertarian socialists, completely repudiated three of the key components of so-called "modernity" - the democratic state, the capitalist market economy, and the "abstract" individual of bourgeois philosophy.

We need therefore to continue to re-affirm the legacy of anarchist communism, as it was first formulated at the congress of St. Imier long ago, as well as making it relevant to contemporary social and political struggles. ■

Brian Morris



ARTIN, LITTLE MAN, I REMEMBER YOU.

Late last month a family of five died when their boat sank trying to cross the Channel. Bruno L had met them just weeks before, while passing out aid, and writes here about a family full of love, and a toddler full of joy, and a loss that should not have happened.

Artin, little man.

Only 15 months old. We met you two weeks ago. You were alone, poking in the fire in the middle of the forest, little crocs at your feet and a life jacket on. It cut right into our hearts. This is not what a toddler's life in 2020 should look like. You are too young for the fire, too small for a life jacket. We soon saw the rest of the family. We shared out some blankets and you were so proud of those boots you got, too big, but for you they were beautiful. We returned to the cars, to the showers we were trying out and a little later we saw you again ... Your vest was put away and you walked straight to us, strangers to you. Your family: brother, sister, mum and dad followed rather timidly.

We promised you shoes and a football for your brother. You kept on smiling and adventurously, fearlessly, climbed our empty shared van. I picked you up and put you back on the ground but you climbed back up, tirelessly naughty. Several times in a row. You walked away from me looking back to see if I followed. I play-chased you across the ground with small hard steps and you ran away beaming, occasionally looking back to your mama.

I asked her if I could take a picture of you and I could. "Wave, Artin," she said proudly, and you immediately waved back. Little did I know then that that photo would mean so much to me now.

I was still thinking about you when I got home. The love for you that came from your mum and dad. The security you received from them in these appalling, inhumane circumstances. It felt so strange. How they were looking for a better life for you in this chaos. How your brother Armin and sister Anita were clearly more marked by the situation than you, little Artin. You who walked through life so happily in your oversized boots. You who experienced everything that we found abnormal and poignant as quite normal, you knew nothing else.

Sleeping in a discarded Quechua tent, wandering around in the forest, washing yourself with the green water from the pond, waking up with ten armed officers around your tent

who take or destroy everything and then hope for a new blanket from a volunteer who comes by. Joining hundreds of men for food in a long line. I mean little man, I wondered how that ignorance of the "normal" made you hop through life more happily than your timid 12-year-old sister.

A few days later, at home, we read a short message on a French site that a group of refugees were being rescued from the high seas. "Coincidentally" they also found a dead man washed ashore on the beach, probably from another boat. A two-year-old child was taken to a hospital. I thought back to you. Imagined that that was you and how your parents would fare.

And then yesterday the message came that family with three children had died during a failed crossing. And for a moment we thought: oh no, hopefully not you.

You push it away and try to move on. But it won't go away. And the more reports we received, how painfully clear it became ... two parents, brother and sister have died and been found, a child of 15 months has been missing. In the meantime we received confirmation ...

Little Artin ... your life jacket failed to save you. Did you still have it? Was it taken from you in an evacuation or did you wear it proudly and was the cold water, the high waves fatal to you? Did "our" North Sea, the sea in which our children play and swim, become a seaman's grave for you little captain of the rickety boat? Were those last kilometers of your journey of more than 7,000 km really too much? Blankets, soup, tents will not help today. There's nothing we can do for you anymore. Except giving the anonymous little guy a face. So that more people know that none of this should be. So that my small, short friendship with you was not in vain and this little anonymous figure from the statistics gets a face. And a name:

ARTIN ■

*This article is an edited machine translation of a piece from **Allemaal Mensen**. The photo of Artin was taken on October 17th. It was originally published on [Freedom:freedomnews.org.uk/2020/11/01/artin-little-man-i-remember-you/](https://freedomnews.org.uk/2020/11/01/artin-little-man-i-remember-you/)*

You can find more information about this tragic loss here : www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54717137

“The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say this is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had someone pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: ‘Do not listen to this impostor. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!’”

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Migrants from poor countries are the first line of attack for retrenching governments and economies in a time of crisis. With limited rights and no visibility, migrants are often the first workers to lose their jobs when the recession bites; the first to be targeted by increased repression and new surveillance technologies; the first to be blamed and scapegoated for capitalism’s crises; and the first to be dispensed with when their labour is no longer needed.

In Chiapas the Mexican National Guard is currently harassing a migrant caravan of some 3000 on behalf of the USA who demands they are stopped before they are “forced” to deploy their border agents to beat up children again. In the Channel, we’ve had a summer of utterly contemptible actions from Border Force putting the lives of the vulnerable at great risk, In the Mediterranean, the rescue Ship “Sea Eye 4” recently saved some 800 people across a handful of operations over the past few days and on the Belarus-Poland border migrants are trapped between two militant and hostile border forces and they are dying.

“From the respectful Kurdish people to the European Union, the United Nations, the international community of the world, human rights organizations, religious organs, newspaper and media channels (all over the world)

Please help us, save us....

We the immigrants in Poland want to migrate to other European countries and we don’t want to come back to our country because, freedom and bread, all the primary things of our lives have been abused and oppressed in every way...

We request from you to support us and help us to reach our destination.

The respected ones.

We have babies six months old with us, children of all ages,

women and old men all hungry and thirsty. Please, we can’t handle all the pain and suffering on the border of Poland

Please please help us.

Despite the Polish troops, they got around 6000 police and soldiers to stop us from entering Germany through Poland’s territory. No matter how they fight us we are in a very bad situation

Please we are tired, we are tired..

Despite the fact that the Polish police and soldiers are pouring poisonous gas on us from the land and sky, we are all burnt because of it... They give us bad words, they give us false accusations and unrighteousness. Please come to our rescue..

Please please please save us

Immigrants on the border of Poland”

(Mildly edited for readability by Organise!)

This was the call shared on social medias the following day. Shortly after, news crews got hold of bits of footage, it shows Belarussian soldiers escorting the migrants down to the border, the migrants are then accosted by a militant border force from Poland.

Neither government cares, Belarus threatening Russian intervention while Poland is backed up by the EU as the EC president, Ursula von der Leyen, pledges more support .

“The Poles have reacted correctly so far,” Horst Seehofer, the German interior minister, told Bild. “We need the structural security of borders. We have to publicly support the Poles![They] are doing a very important service for the whole of Europe.”

For them it’s a game with the Russians, for the migrants it is the lives of their families. A proxy war of petty politics.

These people need material aid now. There have been numerous deaths leading up to this and that’s before winter hits. The British response has been to send army engineers to see if they can improve the border fence.

Please check what means of donation are up after publication., lives depend on this solidarity, check with local migrant solidarity and anarchist aid projects as they will know what is happening and how you can provide support. ■



DETAINED AND BANNED FROM EUROPE

The story of a British journalist in the EU migrant detention system

Guards come and laugh at me through the bars of my cell.

“You’re the English, right?”, they ask me. “What are you doing here?”

“You tell me,” I say, for the hundredth time. But they just laugh, and wander off.

I am the only Westerner in a detention centre full of thousands of refugees. I am also the only inmate waiting to be deported to the UK - though of course, I am pretty much the only person here who would not do anything for a one-way plane ticket to London. In a similar irony, the Greek police who run the facility make it very plain they do not want any of my fellow inmates (Afghans, Iranians, Pakistanis, North Africans) in their country. And yet it is the same police force which violently arrested them and prevented them leaving.

Earlier this year, while on holiday in Greece, I was detained at the Italian border, arrested, thrown into the Greek detention and migration system for two months, and informed I was banned from the Schengen Zone for the next ten years. Though I still haven’t been provided with any documentation about the ban, it appears likely that I am being targeted as a result of my reporting and media advocacy from North and East Syria (NES), the democratic, women-led, autonomous region built around Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava), which the

*Cells in Korinthos, where the author was held.
Up to 40 migrants share a single cell*

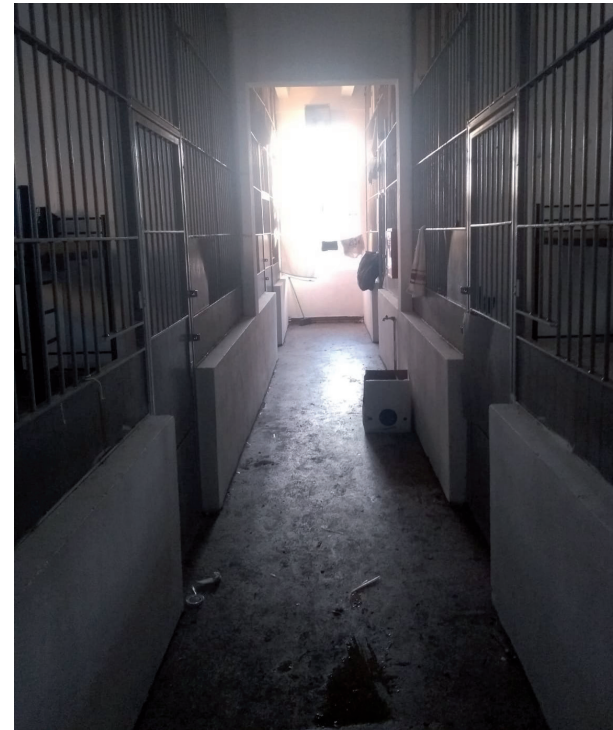


Turkish government is hell-bent on destroying. Chillingly, it seems the autocratic Turkish government now has the power to impose a unilateral ban from Europe on a British citizen, professional journalist and media activist like myself.

My two months in detention were just a brief taste of what many refugees, political activists and journalists from the Middle East and beyond must spend a lifetime enduring. My case provided a window into the violence, squalor and farce of day-to-day life in the EU’s detention-deportation machine. But it also illustrates the complicity of European states and the Erdoğan regime in suppressing journalistic freedom, political dissent, and democratic movements.

Inside the Greek migrant detention system

While travelling from Greece to Italy with a friend earlier this year, I was met off the ferry at the Italian border by a group of armed, balaclava-clad police. I was banned from the Schengen Zone for ten years, they told me, at the request of the German government. Thus began my whirlwind tour of the Greek migrant detention system. The port where I was arrested, Ancona, lies on a popular route for people without papers trying to travel through Greece on to Western Europe, and so the Greek police simply dealt



with me as they would deal with any irregular migrant pushed back from Italy by the Italian police.

I was variously detained in Patras police station, the notorious Migrant Pre-Removal Detention Center at Korinthos which was condemned by the Committee to Prevent Torture, and another Pre-Removal Center in Petrorali, Athens. Conditions were as you might expect. The police station in Patras only has small holding cells, but I spent a week here sleeping on the bare stone. Others were held in the same conditions for a month or more. For days at a time I was locked in my cell and not allowed to mix with other inmates, passing the time squashing cockroaches and playing chess with myself on a contraband paper set. Most of my fellow inmates were cut and bruised from the beatings they’d received upon arrest, trying to smuggle themselves onto ferries at the port. On one occasion, the police violently beat a petty drug dealer on the floor outside my cell.

One day then I and a group of my new friends – Afghan migrants – were handcuffed and bundled into a windowless van. To keep us quiet, the police implied we were soon to be released, but instead we found ourselves issued with new prison numbers and lined up along the wall at Korinthos, a massive, police-run prison facility officially known as a ‘Pre-Removal Detention Center’. This name, we soon learned, was a farce, since there were virtually no ‘removals’ (deportations) taking place due to the coronavirus crisis.



Officially, people here should have exhausted all possible legal routes to remain in the EU, or else voluntarily accepted deportation. In practice, they are held for six to eighteen months or even more before suddenly being released – sometimes with the assistance of the shadowy lawyers who circle the centre like vultures demanding huge cash payments for unclear forms of ‘assistance’, sometimes seemingly at random. People are interviewed about their asylum cases, but these days everyone is being rejected, regardless of the validity of their case. Some people are released, re-arrested days later, and placed back in the detention centre for another undetermined spell.

In Korinthos, as elsewhere, the system is totally opaque. All NGOs are banned from entering. Particularly Kafkaesque is the way some guards will tell you whatever you want to hear, some will say they know nothing, and some will tell you to fuck off, with added racist abuse, where applicable: but they are all simply trying to make their own lives easier. It is impossible to know how your case is going, where you will be sent next, when your interview will be, whether the lawyers (who never actually visit their clients in the detention facility, only occasionally shouting at them through the barbed wire) really can speed up your release. The conditions are squalid, with frequent water outages, and up to forty men sharing each cell.

The result is desperation. In the cell where I stayed, one Kurdish refugee had recently killed himself in desperation, hanging himself with two phone chargers woven together. The lights are kept burning 24 hours a day, and yet when the residents need a doctor or the water runs dry, no-one comes. I see one long-term inmate climb up the prison building and threaten to throw himself off just to get access to a dentist. Another slashed himself all over »

with a razor after being consistently denied access to the doctor for his agonising kidney problems. There are hunger strikes, fights, clashes with the guards with stones and burning mattresses. For the final two weeks I am transferred to a higher-security facility in Petroral, Athens, where we once again spend most of the time in isolation. Here, more troubled inmates kept in isolation thrash against the bars, screaming, cursing, begging, fighting.

Rumours fly through the bars as frequently as the cigarettes and tea-bags passed around via cardboard chutes. Transfers occur in windowless vans. On arrival at a new facility, we are stripped and cavity searched and have our blood taken and are given injections, but not told what the injection is for, fostering a dangerous paranoia among the migrant population. When I arrive at Petroral the medical staff tell me, laughing, that I have somehow contracted multiple forms of hepatitis: that I will never be able to have children: and that there is nothing to be done about this. They send me back to my cell, untreated. It is only after many weeks of worry later, back in England, that my doctor tells me I have nothing to worry about, and what the Greek tests in fact picked up were my vaccinations against the disease. Whether this was done through malice or oversight, I don't know.

I see much comradeship and joy, too. In Patras a brace of Hells' Angels being held on drug charges make the migrants and I laugh by breaking wind, share the festal food brought in by their wives for orthodox Easter, advise the young Afghans on how to handle the guards. In Korinthos we organise language classes, legal training ahead of the migrants' admissibility interviews, work-out sessions where we leg-press the fattest guy in the cell, a clandestine livestream where we relay conditions in the prison to the outside world. We play ludo, chess, football, run out into the yard in the rain and belly-flop on the flooded concrete. I write poetry on the cell wall, Blake, Milton: The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. We laugh a lot, debate politics and religion, comfort one another as best we can.

When I am woken at dawn for the last time and put on a plane back to the UK, my overriding emotion is guilt that I cannot bring all my new friends and comrades with me. But it is all I can do to dish out my last remaining cigarettes before I am handcuffed, and swept away.

A cause worth defending

Six months later, back in the UK, I am still trying to get my hands on any official paperwork to explain exactly what has happened. Since I have never had anything to do with

the German authorities, and given Germany's strong trade ties and strategic relationship with Turkey, it appears likely Turkey asked Germany to issue the ban. This was done via an opaque institution known as the Schengen Information System, which has "been the target of sustained criticism by academics, EU bodies and civil rights organisations" since its inception.

But why should the Turkish government care so deeply about a British journalist on holiday in Greece?

You will have seen the world-famous images of 'Kurdish women fighting ISIS' broadcast around the world, as Kurdish-led forces spent years pushing back ISIS from strongholds like Raqqa before totally eradicating their caliphate in March 2019 – as the main partner force of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, led by the US but including the UK, Germany, and almost all Schengen Zone member states. You will probably also have seen footage from the two Turkish invasions of the region, including the October 2019 assault greenlit by Donald Trump. Turkish warplanes and tanks backed radical militias including scores of former ISIS members to take over swathes of NES, looting, raping, pillaging and murdering as they conduct forcible ethnic cleansing against the region's Kurdish, Yazidi and Christian minorities.

But beyond the frontlines, the political project in NES has endured. Several million people now live in a system of direct, grassroots democracy, with guaranteed female participation and women's leadership at all levels of political and civil life. The project is not flawless, but in a region beset by war, poverty and a total breakdown of infrastructure, NES continues to guarantee remarkably high standards of human rights, rule of law, and due process. The three years I spent living and working in NES were an education in both utopic thinking and practical action, as I witnessed refugees coming together around cooperative farming projects to beat the Turkish-imposed embargo on the region, and the women of Raqqa taking control of their own autonomous council in defiance of ISIS' continued presence. The revolution is very much alive.

You may also be aware that a number of Westerners have travelled out to join the 'Rojava revolution'. At first, many joined the military struggle against ISIS, with scores sacrificing their lives in the process. But these days, the majority of Western volunteers work in the burgeoning civil sphere, in women's work, health, education – or, in my case, media.

I am a professional journalist, and during my time in Syria I filed reports for top international news sources like VICE, the Independent, and the New Statesman, as well as hosting a documentary series for a Kurdish TV channel. But my main role was as a co-founder of the region's top independent news source, Rojava Information Center (RIC). As RIC, we worked with all the world's top media companies and human rights organizations, including the BBC, ITV, Sky, CNN, Fox, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, the United Nations, the US Government, and many more, to help them cover the situation on the ground.

Our *raison d'être* was connecting these news sources with people on the ground, to help them understand the reality of NES, without propaganda. I never sought to hide my presence in Syria, or what I was doing there. On the contrary, I was proud to lend my voice to both advocate for and criticise a political project I wanted the international community to recognise, understand, and engage with.

Political repression

Working in Kurdistan as a journalist is enough to incur political repression from Turkey. Turkey is the world's number one jailer of journalists, has the highest incarceration rate in Europe, and in recent years has dismissed or detained over 160,000 judges, teachers, civil servants and politicians,

particularly targeting Kurdish politicians and members of the pro-Kurdish and pro-democratic party HDP. Turkey's actions reach far beyond Turkey and the regions it invades and occupies in Syria and Iraq, with Turkish intelligence going so far as to assassinate three female Kurdish activists in Paris in 2013, while fascist 'Grey Wolves' paramilitaries linked to Erdoğan's AKP party regularly carry out violent attacks in Europe.

But the EU must turn a blind eye to these abuses, because it relies on Turkey to host millions of refugees who would otherwise travel into Europe. Turkey uses these refugees as leverage to threaten Europe, even while its invasions of NES and military interventions in Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh and elsewhere force hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in the face of ethnic cleansing. Absurdly, even Kurdish refugees in the EU must prove that Turkey is not safe for them, with almost all applications being rejected – if Turkey was shown to be unsafe, after all, that would mean the EU admitting it was refouling migrants into life-threatening danger, in defiance of international law.

The issue is not Turkey alone. EU and Western governments regularly target, harass and detain their own nationals for lending support to the democratic project in NES or the Kurdish rights movement. »



Matt working on the ground in Rojava (North and East Syria) as a journalist and media activist.

Volunteers who fought against ISIS have been charged and jailed in Denmark, Australia, Italy, Spain, France and my own home country, the UK. Danes and Australians can be jailed simply for setting foot in NES – something the UK has threatened, but never enacted.

Fighting for women's rights, democracy and freedom should not be a crime. But as my case illustrates, this repression is not limited to combatants. In the UK, even members of ecological delegations have been detained under terror laws and prevented from travelling to the region. Facing intense, targeted police harassment, unable to find work as a result, feeling isolated and alone, several former volunteers have killed themselves. At least one other British volunteer in NES has been handed the same ten-year ban from the Schengen Zone as myself, and we suspect other peaceful activists have also been listed on the SIS.

Turkish pressure therefore contributes to Western governments' own desire to stop the spread of the decentralised, transformative vision of society put forward by NES. (Turkey, of course, knows they incur much more negative press when their bombs kill British or European citizens than when they are simply wiping out Kurdish and Arab locals – one reason why continued Western engagement in NES is so important.)

Erdoğan is able to use the millions of Syrian now resident in Turkey to tacitly or openly threaten Europe with another influx of refugees if they do not accede to his demands. The UK is particularly close to Turkey as a key trading partner, the more so post-Brexit, and accordingly takes a much harder line against NES than, say, France or the USA, both of whom have welcomed NES' political leaders to the White House and the Champs Elysee. Notably, in the UK, repressive moves have come in response to high-level meetings between Turkey and the UK, in particular when arrests targeted not only former volunteers in NES but even their family members in the days following Erdoğan's 2019 visit to London.

The same shared interests lie behind my own, relatively brief, detention. The political movement in NES resists borders and the violence inherent in the capitalist nation-state. These ideas are anathema to Erdoğan, but they also constitute a challenge to the EU border regime. Little wonder, then, that Turkey and the EU work together to stifle legitimate journalism and political advocacy.

Outside the law

As the British novelty act in the Greek detention center, I was of course spared the racism, the violence, and the worst

of the uncertainty. I knew it would only be so long before I was back in the UK, where, though I had to sit through a 'Schedule 7' interview on my return, the police assured me that I have no charges to face and have done nothing wrong in the eyes of the law. It is an immense frustration to be summarily banned from Europe, but then I FaceTime with friends still detained in Korinthos or playing the dangerous 'game' trying to jump onto lorries at Patras ferry port, and I remember how incredibly free I am.

The effect of repression against Western volunteers, activists and journalists who have worked in NES is to place us, temporarily, outside the normal protections afforded to UK or EU citizens. Millions of civilians in NES, like millions of migrants in Europe, exist in this vacuum as their constant condition. Turkey feels it has impunity to rape, murder, bomb and ethnically cleanse in NES, which remains unrecognised by any government or international organisation, despite its leading role in defeating ISIS. The Greek police can beat, humiliate and dehumanise the migrants in Patras, Korinthos or Petrorali as much as they please, knowing no lawyers or NGOs are able to enter the detention centres to monitor their behaviour.

The inmates of the Greek migrant detention system and the free people of NES are both victims of the same system, which sacrifices peoples' lives in the name of bilateral trade agreements, arms sales, and ethno-nationalist state politics. But this is precisely why I, and other international supporters of the political movement in NES, have chosen to make our voices heard, even in the face of imprisonment and police repression. This is why I hope my ban will be overturned, and that I can continue my peaceful journalism and advocacy in support of this vital cause.

The vision being promoted in NES, of local, decentralised, grassroots democracy, is the only way to resolve not only the Syrian conflict but also a global crisis occasioned by capitalist extraction overseen by neo-imperialist states. Only in this way can we provide people with what they want most – a safe home they have no need to flee. ■

Matt Broomfield

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AUKUS: A BIG STEP TOWARDS WAR

Statement from the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group about the announcement of the AUKUS partnership.



The AUKUS partnership announced on 16 September is a big step towards war against China. The centrepiece of its first initiative is the announcement by the Australian Government that it will buy eight nuclear submarines from the United States or the United Kingdom. The reactions to this announcement are almost as significant as the purchase of the submarines themselves.

Australian military procurement since the end of the Vietnam War has been an ongoing debacle, marked by indecision, late changes of direction, huge cost overruns and major delivery delays. These factors have been a permanent embarrassment to successive Australian governments and generations of military brass, but they are not solely the product of simple incompetence. They also result from Australian imperialism's dilemma: being a European outpost on the edge of Asia and being a developed economy with rapidly growing Asian economies for neighbours. Australia's relative decline means it faces an increasing contradiction between its ambitions and its capacity. Attempting to maximise its capacity via military procurement is extremely risky and is resulting in a decrease in the Australian military's strategic autonomy. The submarine decision is a major step in that process.

By deciding to purchase these submarines, the Government has given up pretending that Australia "doesn't have to choose between its history and its geography". It has decisively opted to stand with the United States against a rising China and to do so in an ostentatiously aggressive way. The submarines have a mission which is so obvious to the security establishment that military pundits were describing it openly on the day of the announcement. They are to hang around in straits and channels between islands in what is called the first island chain, a series of large and small islands that separates the South China Sea and the East China Sea from the Pacific Ocean. There, they will help bottle up the Chinese navy and prevent it having free access to the open ocean. The Pacific Ocean is to remain an American lake and Australia has volunteered to help. However, keeping China in this subordinate position is easier said than done. For over four decades, it has been developing with extraordinary speed. Though it has slowed somewhat in the last few years, its growth is still vastly stronger than that of the US or any other developed country. Its GDP is projected to overtake the US around 2030, give or take a few years depending on whose crystal ball is consulted. The US has seen off previous challenges to its dominance, with its would-be rivals stalling at about two thirds of US per capita GDP. »

China, though, is a different kettle of fish. Its population is four times that of the US, so even if its development stalls at half the US GDP per capita, it will still be double the US GDP in aggregate. The US military advantage over China and its global dominance more generally would become completely unsustainable by then, if not well before. Continued US dominance requires China's development to be halted – either by economic strangulation or, failing that, by war. Indeed, a recent issue of *The Diplomat*, an elite magazine for the Asia Pacific region, said:

“It is probably worth thinking about how and what the the United States might do in order to reduce Chinese economic growth, including aggressive decoupling and the stringent use of financial and technology sanctions.”

The United States and its closest allies (there are none closer than Australia) are attempting to undermine China's Belt and Road Initiative, which is a project by the Chinese so-called “Communist” Party to take China's development to the next level and reorient the economy of the region around it. In addition, the US is increasingly using intellectual property laws to prevent China acquiring technology, trying to prevent China exporting its technology to other countries and waging a trade war against China's exports (something Trump started and Biden hasn't dropped). Australia is somewhat conflicted in this project, since it sells so much iron ore and other minerals to China, but this hasn't prevented it participating in the US campaign. Australia has been especially active in trying to keep the Belt and Road Initiative out of the South Pacific.

However, China's economic strangulation is far from assured. The relative decline of US power in the last half century means that China may still maintain a superior growth path to the US through economic relations with other developing countries, primarily in Asia but also in Africa and even Latin America. US economic warfare may, in fact, backfire and put the US rather than China into the slow lane.

And this is where things get really dangerous. Nobody wants a nuclear war, but nobody wanted World War I either. That war occurred even though the great imperialist powers didn't want it because they wanted something else even less – having their vital national interests subordinated to another power. War with China would occur the same way. The greatest danger is the Thucydides Trap, the temptation for the US to launch a war on China before China becomes too powerful to wage war against.

This, then, is what is driving the AUKUS partnership. It is an attempt to keep China militarily subordinate, even

to the extent that it is surrounded by US military bases and cannot sail its navy into the Pacific Ocean without US permission. Australia already plays a vital role by being a vociferous US ally in the region and, even more importantly, being the site for the US spy base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs. This base is essential to the US military satellite system, since without it there would be a large blind spot in its global surveillance. The role of the Australian submarine purchase is to maintain Australia's leverage in the anti-China campaign. Australian capitalists still want to export to China and also want to preserve Australian imperialist interests in the South Pacific.

The submarine purchase, though, is proving to have unintended consequences. The decision to acquire nuclear submarines with US technology required dumping a \$90 billion contract to buy conventional submarines from France. The duplicity of the Australian Government, particularly that of Scott Morrison, Peter Dutton and Marise Payne, has outraged the French Government at a particularly unfortunate time. With the imminent retirement of Angela Merkel, the senior political leader in the European Union will be the French President, Emmanuel Macron. The Australia-EU Free Trade Agreement, which has been under negotiation for a couple of years, was expected to be concluded very soon. It looks to be an early casualty. More significant is the attitude of France in particular, but the EU generally, towards co-operation with the US over China policy. If France is going to be shafted by its erstwhile allies in the Pacific, it's a lot less likely to see things Uncle Sam's way when the US President wants a common front against China.

Even more important still, especially for Australian imperialism, is reaction in the Asia Pacific. The media constantly refer to unnamed countries which support the submarine acquisition and the US anti-China campaign. Two states which might conceivably approve are Japan and Vietnam, neither of which would be keen to advertise the fact. Meanwhile, both Malaysia and Indonesia have publicly expressed concern. Neither are particularly fond of China, but they definitely don't want a regional arms race. And an arms race is what they will get, since Beijing won't be taking the submarine announcement lying down. While it is possible that the Australian Government under Scott Morrison has simply blundered into this situation (much of his Cabinet, including Morrison himself, have failed upward), the same cannot be said of the United States. Joe Biden is an old foreign policy hand and came to office promising to rebuild US relationships after the chaos and unpredictability of the Trump years.

The US has made a conscious choice in how it addresses

relations with China. Instead of building a broad alliance to push back against poor behaviour by China, it has put together a narrow one (reminiscent of the “Coalition of the Willing” in 2003) to stake out an aggressive military posture. This is not an accident. The US and China are on a path to war and AUKUS is a big step towards launching it.

China is entitled to become a developed country and its population is entitled to the standard of living which comes with that. The US attempt to strangle its economic development and keep it a poor country is a crime against humanity and the barely hidden threat of nuclear war is an even bigger one. Over the next few years, we can expect a strong media campaign in the US, UK and Australia concerning a multitude of complaints against China. Some of these (notably its treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang, the Tibetans and the people of Hong Kong) will be real crimes by the Chinese so-called “Communist” Party. Regardless of whether Beijing's crimes are real or imagined, though, the motivation for the complaints will be the same. They will be attempting to solidify public opinion behind the anti-China policy and the path to war.

In Australia, the public opinion campaign will have one certain result. There will be a massive increase in racism directed at people of Chinese background or appearance. Anti-Chinese racism has been officially frowned on by Australian governments for about three decades. They have preferred to use Aboriginal people, Muslims and, lately, Africans as their lightning rods for social discontent. Developing confrontation with China will change that. Chinese migrants, their children and even people of Chinese extraction whose family have been here for generations will be seen as a potential fifth column. They will be subject to random violence and abuse in the street, suffer discrimination justified by patriotic reasoning and receive unceasing demands to demonstrate their loyalty to Australia



and their hostility to Beijing. It won't be pretty. The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group calls on the labour movement in Australia to oppose the AUKUS partnership and its anti-China campaign. The nuclear submarine purchase underlines our established position: not a person, not a penny for the imperialist Australian military! We have no illusions in the Chinese so-called “Communist” Party. It is a gang of corrupt bureaucrats whose Stalinism is so degenerate that it celebrates Chinese billionaires. There are more US dollar millionaires in Beijing's National People's Congress than there are in the US Congress. Our opposition to AUKUS instead derives from our opposition to our own ruling class.

Against the AUKUS partnership and the looming threat of war against China, the MACG raises the banner of international working class solidarity. We are opposed to all governments worldwide, but our task is to overthrow the capitalist class here in Australia. Our aim is for a workers' revolution which sweeps the world, toppling all ruling classes without distinction. This revolution will abolish imperialism by abolishing the nation state. In its place will flower a global community, organised on the basis of consistent federalism and practicing libertarian communism. Now, that's something to fight for. ■

DOWN WITH AUKUS!

DOWN WITH ANZUS!

CLOSE PINE GAP

MACG

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ORCAO, THE PARAMILITARY ARM

Just this past September 11th, two Zapatista authorities of the *Junta de Buen Gobierno*, the Good Government Council of Patria Nueva of Caracol 10 (Ocosingo), José Antonio Sánchez Juárez and Sebastián Núñez Pérez, were kidnapped. They disappeared for 8 days. They also were robbed of their communication radio and 6 thousand pesos in cash.

It was no minor incident. The provocation was evident. That day, La Extemporánea, the Zapatista airborne delegation of 177 people of Mayan descent was in Mexico City, to embark on its expedition to Europe.

The kidnapping was perpetrated by the Regional Organization of Coffee Growers of Ocosingo (ORCAO), a paramilitary organization responsible for numerous aggressions against the Zapatista support bases in the last 20 years.

The first of these took place the 28th of October of 2001, when members of the group arrived in the community of Cuxuljá to paint over the mural of the *Nuevo Amanecer del Arco Iris* (New Dawn of the Rainbow) trading center created by several autonomous municipalities in rebellion, set it on fire, and threatened and beat those who were there. Since then, and under different pretexts, the aggressions against the rebel support bases has not ceased.

Cuxuljá means “living water” in the Tseltal language. It makes up part of the municipality of Ocosingo. Some 500 people live there. For them the water is sacred. It used to be called *Pozo el Encanto* (Enchanted Well). The well is part of the identity of its inhabitants (<https://bit.ly/2WhONIG>).

In December of 2000, the EZLN demanded of the government of Vicente Fox three signs in order to renew the peace dialogues: compliance with the Accords of San Andrés¹, liberation of the Zapatista political prisoners, and the withdrawal of troops and closure of seven Army posts, of the 259 that it had in the conflict zone at the time.

One of those sites was Cuxuljá, on the highway which connects San Cristóbal and Ocosingo. The military presence in the community was not incidental. The town is part of a corridor of great geopolitical relevance. It is a key communication point for eight autonomous municipalities and a complex social network. So, when the soldiers abandoned it, the government replaced them with a counterinsurgency with a civilian and indigenous face — the ORCAO.

At that same time, according to the warnings of three autonomous municipalities in October 2001, the Army admitted three members of the community who, armed and in uniform, tried to kill the children of Zapatista authorities, and gave out marijuana seeds for planting. “To this denunciation —they pointed out— we add the hostilities from soldiers, and Public Safety and Federal Way officers against our new store that we are building in our place that belongs to us at the post that was vacated by the federal Army in Cuxuljá.”

ORCAO was formed in 1987, from the work of the Catholic church, with 12 communities of Sibacjá. It expanded with the invasions of estates close to Ocosingo, and in towns in the municipalities of Chilón, Oxchuc, Huixtán, y Altamirano. In part, it is a product of the Indigenous Congress in San Cristóbal in 1974 and of the mobilizations against the defunct Mexican Institute of Coffee (Inmecafé) for better prices for coffee, more collection centers and more supports, in which the *Unión de Uniones* (Union of Unions) was formed. It fought also against agrarian backwardness and was opposed to the reforms of Constitutional Article 272. It participated in 1992 in the days of commemoration of 500 years of indigenous, black and popular resistance, and reclaimed indigenous self-determination. At one time, it joined the Emiliano Zapata National Indigenous Campesino Alliance (ANCIEZ). It was, until its expulsion in 2015, a member of UNORCA3 (<https://bit.ly/3goUvWS>).

The municipality of Ocosingo was incorporated in 1921. It is the largest in Chiapas. In July of 1999, as part of the counterinsurgency policy of Croquetas, Roberto Albores Guillén, was broken up to make two new municipalities — Marqués de Comillas and Benemérito de las Americas. The state, and especially its jungle regions, was militarized. So much so, that Juan Vázquez, one of the leaders of the ORCAO, now dedicated to business, before being co-opted by the government, denounced that Chiapas was dressed in green... because of the number of soldiers deployed there. In spite of this, on December 19th, 1994, the EZLN broke the military siege and established 38 autonomous municipalities in rebellion, nine in Ocosingo.

On April 11th of 1998, when the federal and state government launched a violent military-police operative in Taniperlas against the autonomous municipality Ricardo Flores Magón, one of the objectives of which was to destroy a beautiful mural that has been replicated in hundreds of different countries, ORCAO let it happen.

Equipped with a military structure, weapons and uniforms the association promptly forgot its origins and transformed itself into a paramilitary style force against Zapatismo. Its leaders became municipal, state and federal officials during the governments of Pablo Salazar and Juan Sabines. Juan Vázquez was first named Secretary of Rural Development and later Secretary for Reconciliation, and Nicolás López (now dead), director of the Coordinating Center of the National Indigenist Institute in Ocosingo. For more than two decades he has received millions in governmental resources for a multitude of projects, including cattle ranches, a motor for the parceling out of common land.

The political decomposition of the organization has gone hand in hand with the personal decline of its leaders. With the passage of time and various internal crises, leaders like José Sánchez and Tomás Santis Gómez, even more violent than those before them, and at the service of a variety of interests, took control of the association, which became

fragmented. Its shock force adapts to the interests of the highest bidder. Their support of the Green Party in Ocosingo has paid considerable dividends.

In Chiapas, there is not a series of isolated intercommunity conflicts, but rather the crisis of a regional system of domination. ORCAO is one more piece of this system, one of its paramilitary arms. That crisis puts the state, as the Zapatistas warn, on the brink of civil war. ■

Luís Hernández Navarro

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A section of the famous mural of Taniperlas, destroyed by the military raid on Autonomous Municipality Ricardo Flores Magón, on April 11, 1998. This section depicts a women's assembly from which a symbolic dove flies.

CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY ANEW AS ANARCHISTS AND LIBERTARIANS

On the 12th of June, the Philippine Republic will celebrate Independence Day, on the day Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista declared the existence of a free and independent “Republic Filipina” against the colonial government of the Spanish East Indies in the town of Kawit, Cavite in 1898. Myth and legend has surrounded those events, such as the idea that Aguinaldo read the actual declaration on the balcony of his own house, both patently untrue.

However, these stories still circulate, largely because of the prestige and power June 12 holds in the history and consciousness of the people of the Philippines.

Of course, history isn’t as simple though. Looking into Independence Day, one can see how this fact inculcated through years of education and myth-making can easily fall through with the smallest amount of research. Independence hasn’t always been celebrated on June 12 for example. Before Macapagal became president, it was celebrated on July 4, to commemorate the end of the Commonwealth in 1946.

He meant to signify it to highlight the pinnacle of Philippine independence exemplifying the nation’s role in the “first successful national revolution in Asia since the coming of the West, and the Republic to which it gave birth was the first democratic Republic outside of the Western hemisphere.”

Yet a deeper look only presents more questions than answers. If symbolism of the quest for freedom and self-governance is truly the aim of an Independence Day, why shouldn’t the Cry of Balintawak or Pamitinan count, since both could be argued to be the first expression of separation during the Katipunan revolts?

Can independence truly be recognized if there were still areas of the country under foreign control? Wouldn’t July 4 be more appropriate, no matter how colonial, since the Republic exercising independence failed and fell during Aguinaldo’s capture at Palanan in 1901? Even so, if the US government continued to impose economic and military influence into the Third Republic and today, can that be truly considered independence?

And this line of questioning can be extended further! Because in many ways, it feels like our independence is constantly under threat, and this isn’t just in terms of nation-states and governments, but our independence as

people, having the ability to operate freely, associate with one another, express and actualize our views and beliefs.

Anyone not living under a rock can see that in a climate of increased repression against dissenters, especially in a situation where many dispossessed are having difficulty trying to make ends meet, if not survive, it would be difficult to say we are “free” or “independent”. It’s easy to say that it has lost all meaning, but if so, what does it really mean? And how can we make sure that we can defend it from threats to its existence, and in extension, ours?

The Definition of Independence

Independence is very simple to dissect. It is the state of non-dependence on another entity, having the powers to govern itself and choose its own destiny through their actions. The main connotation of is used to describe territories that gained sovereignty over the land and the people from another entity through war or peace, an example of which is the Philippines.

Another way to use independence is for people, usually in the sense that they are not reliant on another person for their finances or decision-making, and are as such largely free to do as they please with their lives and bodies. The opposite of this kind of independence are children who are under their parent’s or guardian’s care or someone that has “utang na loob” to someone (usually a family member or some other patron.)

In the Philippine languages, “independence” comes in different forms, from panagwaywayas in Ilokano, katimawan in Kapampangan, katimawaan in Hiligaynon, kasarlan in Tagalog, kagawasan in Cebuano to name a few, and various localizations of the Spanish “independencia” the political concept. Native translations evoke the sense of outwardness (the “gawas” in kagawasan), the realization of the “self” (“sarili” in kasarlan), or simply political liberty (“wayawaya”, free in panagwaywayas, or timawa, a pre-colonial freedman status found across the Philippines.)

This configures well with the idea of autonomy in its most personal sense; “auto” meaning self and “nomos” meaning system of laws and customs, to literally mean the condition of creating rules without any outward coercion, but only for the self. While many people in the Philippines would probably know autonomy in its use for decentralized government like

in the Bangsamoro, autonomy and autonomism is a concept that has pervaded libertarian socialist and anarchist thought.

Alfredo Bonnano defines workers’ autonomy as a result of the struggle for each worker’s personal interests through not only a “change in the ownership of the means of production” but a change in how people relate to each other socially and economically, rejecting bureaucracy in the very core of organization. Besides, how can we build a future without oppression, if the organizations that represent ourselves easily replicate the power structures that we aim to abolish? Why not build spaces that reflect the urgency of our needs in a way that respects each other’s struggles and actions? If we allow ourselves to use these concepts as the basis for our understanding of freedom and autonomy, applying it onto the real world shows us a clear picture of how our independence is not only under grave threat, but also constantly violated by the systems that permeate our society.

An Indictment of the Status Quo

The most obvious would be politically. Especially under the Duterte’s iron-fist, any significant anti-government sentiment immediately gets red-tagged, with a modern McCarthy following anyone online or in real life with a faceless army of keyboard warriors led by sycophantic lawyers or washed-up journalists.

With all indicators pointing Duterte’s 2016 campaign took advantage of social media algorithms to sway the election, it is clear that the influence political agents have on platforms like Facebook and Twitter have turned our freethinking spaces into spectacles of shade-throwing and mudslinging, fueled by revisionism and propaganda. Coupled with impunity for journalists of various shades and perspectives, it is clear that informed and independent thought is deeply threatened.

The on-going civil conflicts enabled by local elites and national politicians alike in Mindanao and NPA-occupied areas give the police and military blanket authority to violate human rights in the guise of anti-terrorism. Not to mention quarantine protocols that to this day have much more in common with a martial law lockdown than policies meant to minimize and eliminate the threat of the virus.

As a result, intense scrutiny is placed on human rights workers, unionists, and activists, to the point that some of them end up as victims of extra-judicial killings or placed under detention for ill-defined crimes. The passage of the Anti-Terror Law in 2020 further practically institutionalized state repression and though the fight rages on in the Supreme Court, it has already been put into use against

two Aeta farmers, and used as a threat by redtagger-in-chief Parlade to a journalist reporting legal proceedings.

However, that’s not counting the potential financial instability that future Filipino workers have to deal with owing the billions of pesos the government owes to foreign powers, most recently China, which practically enslaves the population to the world markets. While Chinese encroachment on the fishing grounds of the people of the western seaboard, especially Zambales, Duterte continues to act non-confrontational out of “need” even as their imperialist overtures threaten the livelihood of thousands of fisherfolk, and the ecology of the West Philippine Sea.

However, the economic risks of a mismanaged pandemic and a subservient national government pale in comparison to the deterioration of economic freedom for all classes of workers. Industrial workers still have not recovered from the quarantine closures, and those who do still operate on incomplete wages. Filipino agricultural workers, already suffering from poor infrastructure and irrigation, were hardly hit by bottlenecks during the pandemic, even when demand remains practically the same. Informal sector workers, including vendors, online sellers, and distributors, whose job was to facilitate trade between the different spheres of labor had no choice but to find new avenues for their livelihoods, even if it had to contravene quarantine protocols to make the money they need for life.

Innovation and resilience may be admirable traits for us to emulate, but if diskarte was the only reason many had food on the table, then something’s clearly wrong about how our economics operate.

Not when the wage and wealth gap continues to grow in the country. Not only is there a disparity among rich and poor regions of the country but individually, there are only 0.1% of adult Filipinos owning more than \$1 million while 86.6% of adults have less than \$1 million in 2017 (and surely has increased during the pandemic). Not only is taxation in the Philippines a farce, (what with the unequal payment and the corruption of public funds) but could very well be a scam, seeing how little actually goes to benefiting stakeholders in the fields of health, education, and social services. Meanwhile, the witch hunts and massacres get funded by the millions and billions.

The richer get richer, the poorer get poorer. There is no independence for either exploiter or coerced, for the powerful depend on the powerless to fund their campaigns and luxuries; the dispossessed depend on the haves to exercise the choices and the value they deserve, monitored by bosses and cops, threatened with lay-offs and guns. »

Liberating from the Yoke of Domination

It's clear as day that this society is anything but free, and the dispossessed especially are anything but independent. Many people are already keenly and sorely aware of this fact, though the alternatives to the current system are few and far between to find. Within the current statist framework, the only recourse many people have is simply voting for another political party. While different figures seem like breaths of fresh air, nothing really changes overall; just a couple policies and PR tactics. Plus, with the culture of turncoatism (read: a lack of political morals), cliques just play musical chairs over seats in Congress or the Palace in Malacañang.

Even radical and outright revolutionary avenues for change can replicate the problems that cause the structural problems that exist in our society today. Constitutional reform advocates calling for a federal parliamentary republic, though diagnosing the issue of over-centralization and collusion between business and government today, support the repressive institutions and actions of the Duterte presidency and the Philippine state in the same breath. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the larger segment of the Philippine Left, while having a deep understanding of the conditions that govern the dispossessed of the country, tacitly and sometimes openly provide support to key political figures and parties only to be dismayed half an election cycle later. The CPP-NPA, as much an indicator of continuing inequality in rural areas, cannot be excused for even mere allegations of eliminating political rivals, much less outright killings such as what happened to Kieth and Nolvin Absalon.

The key thread that binds all these disparate currents for change together is its reliance of domination. Domination means an unequal relationship, in terms of power and in terms of freedom; where one makes the rules, and one obeys. Society under these futures still relies on the unequal power of one class to enforce their will over another. No matter how federal or spend-happy a government is, at the end of the day, they will still pass their laws; use the police and military to secure it, all for the benefit of the class currently in power. Even if we move past the gatekeeping of capitalists and nationalize production, a socialist state is no less as dangerous to the rights of individual workers who refuse to toe the party line.

The same goes for social and cultural domination. The struggles of queer folk, BIPOC, children, women, and disabled continue to exist because of the same attitudes that cause political repression, and exploitation under capitalism. Independence does not exist in a vacuum, and does not simply apply to just one aspect of life, but to every facet of our humanity. Unless this domination is over come, where a

class can just simply carry out its interests with minimal to no input from everyone else involved, independence is not an event cemented in the past, though perhaps something over the horizon.

A New Declaration of Independence

In the course of human events however, it is necessary for all of us to form bonds with many different people, whom we are equal in station and condition. Many of our friends, co-workers, neighbors, loved ones, and even sympathetic acquaintances and strangers face the same struggles that we have. Many are silenced, whether within social circles or on the national stage, for simply expressing their truths. The challenges they face, whether in the family, community, workplace, or in the national scale, cannot be denied or ignored, but can easily be resolved if the motives for unequal profit and power are eliminated.

Livelihoods that many people barely make do with can be resolved through the co-operation of laborers within the same trades or same working spaces. The people who know the craft and the environment know the best way to create better working conditions, provide higher wages, and give greater representation and control over the work they do. In the same way, different communities connected by shared local issues can easily decide how best to build infrastructure based on the needs of their area, whether in infrastructure, or utilities, or education and public services like health and environment. This holds true especially for indigenous peoples who have been stewards of their ancestral lands for centuries and millennia.

Meanwhile, in relationships among different individuals, instead of fostering a culture of intolerance and hatred based on socially constructed barriers like gender, race, and ability to "work," people treat each other with respect and understanding. Different groups of people connect and associate with each other freely to discuss the struggles they face and act on it according to its necessity and severity. Instead of constant competition in a rat race to who earns the most money or owns the most houses and businesses, it is instead a revolutionary love given out and taken according to need and want. An independence decided by the autonomy of individual decisions and the uncoerced consent of everyone with stake in such affairs.

Every stage in human history, the popular rejection of these oppressions has manifested itself in different ways: civil disobedience, non-violent resistance, armed self-defense, insurrections, and revolutions. It is our right to exercise our freedom, and like other free and independent peoples and movements, whether it is through building institutions to

counter the state and capital, or simply having the backs of those in the spaces we occupy and the relationships we build in our lives.

Independence is not some lofty ideal to be carried by those who claim to represent the people on the vague notions of nations and races. It is the reason why we wake up and fight

DUTERTE IS NOT INCOMPETENT

A certain narrative suggests that Rodrigo Duterte, the sitting president of the Philippines, is incompetent in addressing the covid-19 pandemic.

The idea stems from the country's overwhelming failure to contain SARS-CoV-2 transmissions. Thousands continue to be infected every day. The Philippines remains in the middle of the longest lockdown in the world while other countries already enjoy some return to normalcy. The Duterte administration also botched the vaccine roll-out, implementing mass vaccinations later than other countries did.

Is Duterte and his administration incompetent? To call a government incompetent suggests that it intended but failed to be otherwise—that it had an intent to manage and mitigate the pandemic. On the contrary, I argue that Duterte and his administration had and still has no such intention.

The very first act of the Duterte administration amid the pandemic was to mobilize police and military assets—martial law in fact, if not in law. Indeed, some commentators (including myself) noted that the police mobilization in 2020 led to a quarantine with martial law characteristics.

In the wake of the death and devastation, we must understand that the administration's omission of sensible pandemic policies was not a matter of incompetence, but a deliberate policy choice. Every policy choice taken by the Duterte administration was calculated to construct and consolidate armed rule. Every mobilization of policemen, every State debt incurred, every choice not to conduct mass testing and unified contact tracing was a deliberate policy choice. This is not incompetence; what we saw were components of an intentional plot to extend State power as armed rule using the pandemic as a pretext. Indeed, because the State was so focused on expanding police power, we saw the police itself spreading the virus as in March 2021 when then police Director General Debold Sinas failed to undergo screening before going to Oriental Mindoro where he tested positive for covid-19.

every day, to advance and secure our lives, our fortunes, and our honor as individuals and as a people brought together by mutual care and assistance. ■

Malaginoo - Bandilang Itim

bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2021/06/12/celebrating-independence-day-anew-as-anarchists-and-libertarians

How can we be sure that what we are seeing is not incompetence but are deliberate policy choices? To say so, we must interrogate State power.

State power is a specific form of organization that was constructed out of specific historical circumstances. While there have been some forms of States since antiquity, modern States are very recent constructions dating back to only a few hundred years before which stateless societies were common. Pre-modern States did not have the power and agency that are characteristic of modern States. A king's word may have been law, but out in the frontiers and provinces away from the castles and cities, that law meant very little. In some peasant villages in Medieval Europe, sometimes, village customs prevailed over the crown. But compared to pre-modern States, the power of modern States is totalizing; the modern State has power in every sphere of our lives such as in the bedroom. But where did this power come from?

The power wielded by modern States and other hierarchical institutions can be called power-over as these institutions have power over populations. Power-over is a kind of power where one party (in this case the State) has power over another party where that other party is divested of power. In order to build power-over, the power of people over their own lives and their own communities must be usurped by those building power-over. Thus the lack of power we have over our own lives under the State is inversely proportional to the power the State has over us. That is to say: our lack of power is related to the State having too much power.

For example: Why cannot our most respected and distinguished medical workers form a committee to manage and direct the medical resources of the country? » Why do we have to wait for the State to organize this? We do so because the State has the power to legitimize and delegitimize certain actions and organizations. Medical workers cannot come together because the State has usurped the power to declare what is legitimate or illegitimate and it deems its own Inter-agency Task Force »

as legitimate to the delegitimization of other experts. We cannot act for ourselves precisely because the State has taken unto itself our agency—our power to act.

So how does this relate to the question of Duterte's incompetence? We cannot call the policy actions of Duterte and his administration incompetent precisely because we know Duterte and his cronies have the power to manage, mitigate, and even stop this pandemic. The State embodied in the Duterte administration can stop this pandemic if it wants to, but does not because its real intention is armed rule and expansion of State power, to further usurp and take more power from an already immobilized, disoriented, and despairing civil society.

The State is not a club of “idiots” (let's avoid ableist language while we're at it, hence the quotations), but is a deliberate institution that hoards power the way the kapitalista hoards wealth. Whenever the State chooses not to do something, this is always its choice, inaction powered by the power it usurped from us.

What we are seeing today is not incompetence, but a choice to let thousands die and millions more suffer. We are instead seeing a high level of competence in the construction of ever greater police powers and the consolidation of armed rule—martial law in fact, if not in law.

Look at the actions of the Duterte administration. Who was put in charge of the quarantine? Sycophants and military men. Who got vaccinated first? The cops who guard Duterte. What powers were initially mobilized and which were not? We can see the violence of policing every day with so-called “quarantine violators” themselves violated and activists murdered or framed while they immobilized by the pandemic while proven public health policies like mass testing still are not implemented. So much money has been borrowed and printed, yet has it gone to ayuda or vaccines? It has not; and this raises the question: where is it actually going? These choices are deliberate policy choices and are indicative of a competency geared towards something other than pandemic mitigation: armed rule.

So what can we do against such malevolent competency? Against the power-over us, we have to instead build a different kind of power: power-with. Power with others is not like power-over. If you have power with someone, the power of one does not diminish the power of the other. Instead, our powers complement one another's and together are more than the sum of their parts. Power-with cannot be usurped by this or that party, it can only be built through solidarity.

Actions like opening community pantries and kitchens to give food to those who need it are examples of power-with. The State is hostile to such power because it erodes our collective dependence on the State's power. This hostility was shown to all last year when the State forcibly closed community kitchens for preposterous reasons. We saw this again in the face of the community pantry movement, when armed thugs harassed and red-tagged pantry organizers. Such actions show the State that we have our own power that it cannot steal and the State knows it and does not like it.

Other actions to build power-with include talking to your neighbors to start community gardens, kitchens, journalism, clinics, self-defense lessons, and workshops. Look at what you have and ask your neighbors what resources we can all pool together. Building power-with can also be done through talking with your fellow workers and combining your efforts to struggle for better pay or better conditions, with a union or without one, as a strike committee. We need to build dependence on one another and reduce our dependence on the State. However, we must also beware of false critics of the existing order. There are those on the left and on the right who challenge the power-over of the State with their own power-over, with their own hierarchies and their own usurpations. These false critics are not opposed to the existing order of police, prisons, or precarious labor conditions; they simply want to be in charge of it. If they are indeed opposed to this Philippine National Police, they would want to implement their own police. The false critics oppose this armed rule simply because they want their own.

Duterte and his ilk are not incompetent, and that makes it worse! It is increasingly clear that we cannot rely on the State to save us; the State only cares for its own power. Against this militarized quarantine's power over us, perhaps we can find power with one another. Perhaps against the malevolent competency of the current order, we can find competencies among ourselves and with one another. ■

Simoun Magsalin - Bandilang Itim

bandilangitim.noblogs.org/2021/07/28/duterte-is-not-incompetent

The author thanks the organizers and participants of the Write Night Essay Workshop for their invaluable inputs.

IHUMĀTAO: RECLAIMING THE LAND AND RESISTING SETTLER COLONIAL CAPITALISM IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

In Aotearoa, one of the major forms of social struggle is the indigenous Māori struggling to reclaim the land stolen from them by the New Zealand colonial government as part of the capitalist settler colonisation of Aotearoa. Since 2015, the greatest land struggle in a decade has been happening at Ihumātao in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland, where Māori and non-Māori from the Save Our Unique Landscape/SOUL campaign have been occupying the land to stop the capitalist construction firm Fletchers from beginning a socially and environmentally harmful housing development and return the land to mana whenua. This land struggle is the most recent event in Ihumātao's long history.

800 years ago, Ihumātao was one of the first places where Māori arrived and established settlements in Aotearoa, in the area now known as the Ōtuataua Stonefields. There, they cultivated 8,000 hectares of land to grow kūmara, taro, yams and gourds to feed themselves and later the British settlers/Pākehā when they began to colonise Tāmaki Makaurau to create Auckland following the signing of Te Tiriti O Waitangi between some Māori hapū/sub-tribes and the British Empire. However, such co-operation between Māori and Pākehā did not last, as the drive to accumulate capital inherent to capitalism led to the New Zealand government using various means to transform communal Māori land into state and private land, including the Native Land Court, land sales and war, in Aotearoa's version of the enclosure of the commons.

When the Waikato War, part of the broader New Zealand Wars, began in 1863 between the New Zealand Government, led by Governor George Grey, their Māori allies the Kūpapa/Queenitanga and the Kingitanga/King movement that wanted Te Tiriti to be honoured, a British official was sent to Ihumātao and demanded that the Māori there take an oath of allegiance to the Crown and give up arms or be expelled to the Waikato. The Māori there refused, and in response the Crown illegally confiscated Ihumātao and in 1869 gave it to the Pākehā family the Wallace's to be developed into a capitalist farm, while the Māori there were left landless and destitute.

Over the course of the 20th century, while the Wallace's were running their farm, in the surrounding land from 1960 to 2000 the Māngere Wastewater Treatment Plant was built, polluting the air, water and sea bed, volcanoes are quarried for airport construction and Auckland's road network. In 2009, Auckland Airport's second runway construction leads to the bulldozing of a 600 year old urupā/grave site on the Manukau Harbour foreshore, unearthing 89 graves. In 2012, Auckland Council tried to make the land a public space, but this was challenged in the Environment Court and they had to rezone the land for future economic development. In February 2014, the local iwi/tribe Te Kawerau ā Maki signed a treaty settlement with the Government to settle breaches of Te Tiriti by the Government. »



Ihumātao protesters at the climate change march on Auckland's Queen St on 27 September 2019 (Photo RNZ Veronica Schmidt)

In July 2014, the Government and Auckland Council designated 32 hectares adjacent to the Otuaatua Stonefields Historic Reserve as Special Housing Area/SHA 62 for a future housing development.

When this was announced, Ihumātao local Pania Newton along with several of her cousins, formed SOUL in 2015 to stop the rezoning. In 2016, the Wallace's sold the land to capitalist construction firm Fletcher's, which planned to construct 480 homes. In response, in November 2016 SOUL began their occupation of the land and demanded that Fletcher end their plans and that SHA 62 be dissolved. A month later, Joe Hawke, leader of the Bastion Point occupation, visited to support the occupation and provide advice. For the next three years, SOUL would use a diversity of tactics to try and stop Fletcher's plans, including going to the United Nations, taking Fletcher's to the Environment Court as well as taking petitions to Parliament in Wellington/Pōneke and to Auckland Council with this all being complemented with an extensive social media campaign. However, none of these measures succeeded, with Fletcher's development going ahead. In response, Te Kawerau ā Maki negotiated with Fletcher's (38) to set aside some of the homes to be for the iwi and then supported the development, claiming that this was the best deal possible and that SOUL weren't mana whenua.

With no more obstacles facing it, Fletcher's now tried to begin construction at Ihumātao, with the Police being sent on 23rd July 2019 to Ihumātao to serve eviction notices and arrest three protestors. When this happened, the three years of SOUL's campaigning now bore fruit, with hundreds arriving to blockade Ihumātao to prevent construction from beginning, with members from Tāmaki Makaurau Anarchists being amongst them. Due to holding this blockade the Government, after initially saying that they wouldn't intervene on 24th July then said on 26th July that construction at Ihumātao would stop while a solution was being negotiated between Te Kawerau ā Maki, Fletcher's and Auckland Council.

Unfortunately SOUL was not invited to negotiations and they continued the blockade due to this as well as due to the Police and Fletcher's remaining at Ihumātao, with the katiaki/protectors of Ihumātao being able to push the blockade line closer to Ihumātao while also facing an increased police presence by 5th August. On the following day, there was a national day of actions in solidarity with the reclamation of Ihumātao. This helped keep pressure on Fletcher's and the Government after the Kingitanga offered to hold a hui between SOUL and Te Kawerau ā Maki to come to a common position on Ihumātao that both sides accepted.

As the negotiations continued, the blockade held, with the majority of the Police withdrawing from Ihumātao on 16th August, while SOUL organised a hikoi/march to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's Mount Albert office to get her to visit Ihumātao, which she refused to do. The negotiations ended on 18th September, with SOUL and Te Kawerau ā Maki agreeing that Ihumātao should be returned to mana whenua. Since mid-September 2019, negotiations have continued, although SOUL have been locked out of them. However, there are positive signs that a resolution may be reached soon, with the Government stating on 16th November that it's considering loaning Auckland Council money to purchase Ihumātao from Fletcher's to turn it into a public space, while Pania Newton announced on 23rd December that a resolution would be announced soon. This great news led to Ihumātao having a very Meri Kirihimete/Merry Christmas in 2019.

The struggle for Ihumātao in 2020 started well with Fletcher's removing their fences at Ihumātao. In addition, there was an expectation that a resolution would be reached before Waitangi Day, with the Kingitanga lowering their flag from Ihumātao to symbolise, as their work in helping to resolve this struggle had finished. Unfortunately, Waitangi Day 2020 came and went without a resolution being announced. However, the Kingitanga said following Waitangi Day 2020 that a resolution was imminent, but that some work still needed to be done to finalise the resolution.

This work continued throughout 2020 until 17th December 2020, when it was announced that the Government would purchase Ihumātao from Fletcher Building for \$30 million under the Government's Land for Housing programme. This was done as part of a Memorandum of Understanding/He Pūmautanga that was signed by the Kingitanga, the Government and Auckland Council which set out how they would decide the land's future. In the Memorandum, it was agreed that the land should be used for housing, which could take on various forms, including state housing, mana whenua housing or Papakāinga housing. The Memorandum also clarified that the agreement does not amount to a new Treaty settlement to ensure it didn't re-open the previous Treaty settlement, as all Treaty settlements are considered full and final. In addition, the Memorandum outlined that a steering committee, or Rōpu Whakahaere, made up of three ahi kā/those with links to the land representatives who are supported by the Kingitanga, one Kingitanga representative and two Government representatives, would be formed to co-govern the land. The steering committee will engage in talks for a period of five years to make the ultimate decision on the future ownership and use of the land, with one possible option being returning the

land to mana whenua. Pania Newton said at the time that the deal was a good first step and that it would be up to whānau to decide what to do with the land, although she said it wouldn't necessarily be used for housing.

Since the deal was reached, as of 17th March 2021, the steering committee has not yet been formed as the ahi kā representatives and Kingitanga representatives have not been selected yet. In addition, on 20th April 2021, the Auditor-General announced that the Government's purchase of Ihumātao was unlawful and Parliament needed to pass legislation to make it lawful to resolve this technical error. What both these reports show is that while mana whenua have won an important battle, the struggle for Ihumātao is not over yet.

Looking back, SOUL's campaign to #ProtectIhumātao has been a phenomenal success, with them being able to transform their initially small reclamation action into a direct action campaign that has created a mass movement in Tāmaki Makaurau and across Aotearoa to stop Fletcher's housing development backed by an excellent social media campaign. It's also led to a new approach to Māori politics, with a new generation seeking to engage

in direct action to return stolen land instead of relying on corporate iwi structures (to the exclusion of hapū) negotiating with the Government to get treaty settlements that provide monetary compensation and only return Government land, enriching a new Māori capitalist class.

However, there is still a long road to reaching a final resolution to this struggle. In addition, the Government ensured that the Memorandum did not set a precedent to return private land to Māori in future treaty settlements. If that had happened, then all stolen land in Aotearoa could possibly be returned to Māori, destabilising one of the pillars of settler colonial capitalism in Aotearoa: private and state land ownership. Despite this, SOUL's campaign to reclaim Ihumātao has put into practice the anti-colonial cry from the Māori rangatira/chieftain Rewi Maniapoto during the Waikato War: 'Ka whawhai tonu mātou, Ake! Ake! Ake! - We will fight on for ever and ever!' ■

Tāmaki Makaurau Anarchists
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A robustly cited version of this article is available on our website: organismagazine.org.uk/2021/09/28/ihumatao-reclaiming-the-land-international



Artist: Huriana Kopeke-Te Aho

INTERNATIONAL ROUND UP

A few short notes on events around the world

The situation in **Tigray**, after one year of conflict and genocide continues to slip even further into the abyss.

As the prime minister of Ethiopia posts “prevent, reverse and bury the terrorist TPLF (Tigray People’s Liberation Front)” onto Facebook, the UN Rights Chief reports back that her team “had been subjected to intimidation and harassment during their research, and one was expelled [by the Ethiopian government] on charges of ‘meddling in internal affairs.’” On the 2nd of November there was the declaration of a six month state of emergency by the Ethiopian government, enacting martial rule. Shortly after Tigreans and Oromos found themselves submitted to mass arrests, door to door, through the city.

“All my Tigrean neighbors are now being taken. (Addis Ababa) I’m next. Good bye my beloved ones. Plz be our voice. See you after victory, I hope. Bye.”

This was posted by a Tigrean academic on Twitter on November 3rd. They have not posted since.

Rumours quickly became fact as video after video of Tigreans being kidnapped by the Federal and City Police began to pour out. Many fear they are being used as human shields as the Tigray Defence Forces (TDF) see successes in the conflict. The TPLF, OLA and other rebel groups declared the creation of a nine-group coalition, called the United Front of Ethiopian Federalist and Confederalist Forces.

As the conflict, so do the horrors. Those committed by soldiers and those that come as a result of the situation itself, which now seems to have brought an imminent famine, one which the government is stymieing aid relief for.

Tigray Solidarity Events have taken place across the diaspora, check with your local solidarity group.



Members of the TPLF celebrating the capture of Mekelle. The capital city of the Tigray Region has exchanged hands a few times during the fighting.

In **Sudan**, in the early hours of Monday the 25 Oct, Sudanese armed forces arrested five ministers from the transitional cabinet, including Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. Later in the day General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan declared a state of emergency and formed his own government.

By the end of the day the capital Khartoum was rocked by widespread protesting with roads being blocked to the military advance with makeshift brick barricades and burning tires. Even tho they have face gunfire protestors have held fast for two weeks chanting slogans of the 2019 uprising such as “Freedom, peace and justice.” The violence seems only to escalate tho a Muhayaed Faisal, an 18 year old student and current patient of Royal Care hospital recounts; “I was shot along with nine people. There were no warning shots, they just started to fire. The military... they’re like animals. Maybe animals are better.”

There is widespread belief that the situation was brought about due to the military top brass’ concerned over a civilian investigation into gold smuggling and currency sales which seems set to paint a picture of widespread corruption amongst high ranking officers. They have promised an election in 2023. Meanwhile the streets are full of the discontent who are swiftly brewing another uprising proper.

A protester has recycled teargas canisters into a rosary.



In **Mexico** the The Migrant Caravan for Justice, Dignity & Freedom, composed of some 3000 Central Americans & Haitians set out on 23 Oct from Chiapas towards Mexico City and the United States and at time of writing has entered into Oaxaca and is being predicted to be the largest caravan of it’s kind.

It has already seen the Mexican National Guard shoot two vehicles trying to pass their cordon. This resulted in a wave of self defense and an escalation in the caravans willingness to protect itself. the MNC and Municipal Police forces has responded with near constant agreesion, using riot police, helicopters and armoured vehicles.

Ireneo Mujica Arzate, one of the caravan leaders and director of the organization Pueblos Sin Fronteras and Pueblo Unidos Migrantes, accused the Mexican government of mistreating and provoking migrants in order to bring about these violent acts and disband the caravan.

The Mexican forces are essentially acting as a first line of abuse for the USA Border Patrol who in 2018 were filmed openly and with intent attacking a 1000 person caravan full of women and children, it originated in Honduras and was populated by people fleeing poverty and violence, the UN commented that climate change was a factor in the displacement. How will they respond this time?



AN ODE TO A FELLOW TRAVELLER, MURRAY BOOKCHIN

Murray Bookchin (14/1/1921–30/7/2006) was an American communalist, political philosopher, trade-union organizer and educator. A pioneer in the environmental movement, Bookchin formulated and developed the theory of social ecology and urban planning, within anarchist, libertarian socialist and ecological thought. He was the author of two dozen books covering topics in politics, philosophy, history, urban affairs and social ecology, with the Japanese embassy. The police confiscated the funds. China based Korean anarchists quickly gathered around Manchuria to resume and rebuild Shinmin efforts.



Murray Bookchin, over his lengthy period of writing managed to create within social ecology, a discourse that challenged the dominant pre-existing modes of humanity's role within society. Social ecology offers a political strategy, anthropological and historical investigation whilst also at times criticizing utopian ideas of social order (Tokar et al, 2008). Social ecology is best seen as a complete accumulation of the human endeavour; for one to deal with external determinations within one's own settings, validated and justified against one's own level of scrutiny in context of one's surroundings and relationships to others within the natural environment. At a primary level, social ecology tackles the political, social and cultural roots of modern ecological issues by critiquing traditional environmental policies and practices and encourages activists to uptake radical, community-centered approaches (Bookchin, 2009). The fundamental crux was that ecological issues need to be analyzed and acted upon as social issues rather than the dominant narratives of conventional environmental science (Bookchin, 2009). The holistic nature of such conventional ecological science was deemed to be failing, as is evident today through global warming and climate change and where social ecology implores the analyzation of systemic

roots of environmental crisis it also challenges the existing institutions accountable for maintaining the status quo (Bookchin, 2009). This fundamental shift in the approach to dealing with agency within one's own environment highlights Bookchin's influences from Hegel (Bookchin, 1995). Bookchin outlined this approach in *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, highlighting that the system should be validated against nature itself and not through unjust institutions that are maintaining dominant narratives and controlling discourse (Bookchin, 1995). This is not to suggest that Bookchin was a Hegelian, but his left-wing up bringing will have shaped some of his understanding of the natural order and he himself spoke on occasions of his grounding in traditional Marxism, as well as other left-wing historical writers (Murray Bookchin Explains Anarchism, 2011).

Bookchin's critical outlook into the deeper intrinsic nature of the evolution of relationships that exist between society and non-human nature was radical. Anarcho-communist and liberal societies for the most part have seen nature and its domination as a sense of achievement within their own propagation (Mazurski, 1991, Koch, 2011). Today the same environmental harm is often viewed as a regrettable but compulsory consequence to the subjective needs of capitalism and expanding civilization. This coupled with the current neoliberal late-stage capitalist approach only increases the social and environmental harm observable in day to day society, both nationally and globally. Bookchin however, in *The Ecology of Freedom*, (1982) highlights that the domination of nature as he saw it was a myth predominantly perpetuated by social elites within the most primitive and earliest hierarchal societies, to dominate the natural world in attempt to show strength, and that it is not a historical necessity. This reshaping of the traditional understanding of society is important as it no longer justifies rampant expansion or the more grotesque forms of civilization's expansion such as colonialism and imperialism on the basis of necessity. Bookchin indicates that historical organic societies were based on core principles such as unity-in-diversity, interdependence, usufruct, complementarity and the irreducible principle that society is responsible for meeting its members most basic needs (Bookchin, 1982). A key indication of radical change is Bookchin's inclusion of 'complementarity', meaning that the traditional sense of equals is oppressive of one inequality and that instead, a shift towards creating communities that can compensate

for disparities in ability amongst its cohabitants was needed. Bookchin affirmed his rich catalogue of anthropological study by asserting that these radical ideas were not new creations of a utopian dreamer but historically accurate representations of foundational tenets of a justifiable successful society (Bookchin, 1982). Furthermore, Bookchin indicates that a true liberatory protest movement must include a challenge to hierarchy in general, and not just its hierarchies' manifestations of oppression such as gender and class inequalities, demonstrating a move away and separation from his childhood traditional Marxist beliefs (Bookchin, 1982, Murray Bookchin Explains Anarchism, 2011).

Bookchin's obsession into the study of hierarchies and hierarchical domination within the realms of social evolution and humanity's relationship with nature led to his understanding of the relationship between human consciousness and natural evolution. As previously mentioned, his work on dialectical naturalism featured the study of classic philosophers such as Aristotle and contemporary dialectical philosophers such as Hegel. Bookchin's ideas of dialectical naturalism are highly complex and are a sharp change away from traditional explanations of dialectics. Bookchin emphasizes the capabilities of humans acting outside of the evolution of social and natural phenomena and upheld human creativity and its uniqueness within the universe, whilst also attributing its inherent and emergence from first nature, meaning the world as it was before human influence and damage to the natural environment (Bookchin, 1995). This view instead, shifts nature away from being a necessity-built robot and places deep emphasis on the view that nature was always striving to achieve its own underlying potential for creativity, freedom and universal consciousness (Bookchin, 1995). This is what grounds Bookchin in such passionate writing, his deep understanding of the fabric of reality and how hierarchical domination distorts nature's very own expression of itself. This view sees that the current understanding of human history and the so-called logic of evolution within the social sphere is in conflict with nature itself, such exploitative organisation of infinite chaos only chastises the very essence of life in its own expression (Bookchin, 1995). This lead Bookchin to suggest that nature itself could be studied to form objective principles as to how best organizing social ethics and ideas. Principle such as cohabitation and mutual aid can be viewed within nature (Bookchin, 1995, Kropotkin, 2017).

This in depth look into life, existence, natural dialectics and social ecology accumulated into a political approach from Bookchin, endeavouring to radically alter the hierarchical problems of life by organizing them into libertarian municipalism. Bookchin's approach to libertarian



municipalism is what this study would recommend for a radical overturn of society. The fundamental conflicts between communities and the state that society is constantly experiencing (Cetin, 2020, Jetten, 2020) as well as historical examples from ancient Athens to New England are systemic fluctuations, due to the lack of control citizens have over their own political and economic decision making (Bookchin, 1974, Tokar, 2008). Libertarian municipalism would see assemblies being central to the decision-making processes, with representatives in city councils and wider county councils becoming mandated through their own local assemblies and only have the power to carry out the organized wishes of the localized collective assembly (Bookchin, 1974). Importantly, Bookchin's libertarian municipalism would organise society via confederations with community members working together within confederations to attempt to highlight unjustified current community institutions, constantly attempting to undermine the institutions to advance on inaccuracies of justice via what are known as counterinstitutions and is something as Anarcho-Communists we could draw form (Bookchin, 1992). This mode of political organisation highlights more faith in the citizens themselves and doesn't place governance in the hands of unjust, »

top-down hierarchical social institutions, but rather places emphasis on educating the citizens themselves on principles such as freedom, universalism, altruism, cooperation and public service which further empowers all within society to develop their own autonomy within the collective (*Bookchin, 1992*). The brash, exploitative, narrowly limited scope of the capitalist market would be found unjust and replaced by a moral economy, meaning political and economic relationships would be guided by ethics such as mutualism in a bid for genuine reciprocity (*Bookchin, 1986*).

Libertarian municipalism creates a political strategy within a wider framework of social ecology's reconstructive view of nature and humanity's place within it, as anarchists we can learn from some of the lesson Bookchin's framework offers. The political framework setup around true direct democracy is communities with institutions structured to justify the existence of pre-existing institutions, which constantly achieve the ultimate, most just and verifiable political society and modes of organisation. Murray Bookchin is foremost one of the most influential thinkers in his depth of understanding of human behaviour, humanity's place in the natural order and the very dialectical reality of nature itself. His works need to be studied and analysed in attempt to incapsulate their teachings into a formable revolutionary starter pack, able to bestow onto communities around the world to challenge unjust hierarchies, capitalism and the current exploitation



of billions of people under the remit of neoliberal ideology. An ideology which can now be shown to be ill thought, and not as rich in depth as the aforementioned modes of social ecology and dialectical naturalism.

Anarchism is rooted in the upheaval of the domination of nature created by the self-serving capitalist elite. Anarchism is a green discipline and is focused on harms against, humans, non-human animals, harms against the environment and newer fields of study within the discipline are interested in harms in space. Both individuals and powerful corporations commit these offenses daily in a regulatory fashion however, green anarchism is primarily concerned with the actions of powerful corporations (ie, military operations, global corporations, and governments), as these have the power to change their destructive behaviour and not the employees and or citizens (*Professor Rob White on Green Criminology, University of Tasmania, 2019*). Furthermore, Professor Rob White (2019) puts forward his point in a recent video, highlighting how green criminology is a personal exercise, the planet is ours, it is our children's planet, it is our family pet's planet, it is the vast mountains and the small brooks, this isn't just intellectual theoretical academic jargon, it is a strict discipline concerned with the prior knowledge of consequence. Scientists can now highlight what will go wrong with the planet and give a rough indication to at what time things will go wrong, this is no longer something to brush off, it is something very fucking real, threatening nearly all of humanity (*Harvey, 2021, Carrington 2019, IPCC Special Report, 2019*). As anarchists and decent fucking human beings, it is our job to educate, inspire and encourage the fight back against this current Tory government and the capitalist elite they serve. Too long have the many been exploited at the corrupt blood covered hand of the elite, reclaim the power, it begins with you!

"To speak of 'limits to growth' under a capitalistic market economy is as meaningless as to speak of limits of warfare under a warrior society. The moral pieties, that are voiced today by many well-meaning environmentalists, are as naïve as the moral pieties of multinationals are manipulative. Capitalism can no more be 'persuaded' to limit growth than a human being can be 'persuaded' to stop breathing. Attempts to 'green' capitalism, to make it 'ecological', are doomed by the very nature of the system as a system of endless growth" - Bookchin, 1989. ■

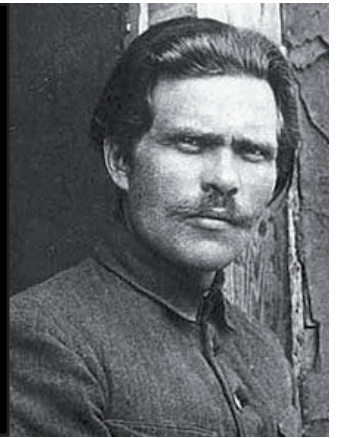
Josh Bannister

Josh is a Critical Criminologist, trainee lecturer and activist, with a background in Anarchism and left wing philosophy. Oh and he likes to drink lots of good beer when he's not putting the world to rights!

THE ABC OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST

Nestor Makhno

The following work first appear in Probuzbdeniye, N°18-20 between January and March 1932. This version is edited by Alexandre Sirda and translated by Paul Sharkey.



Anarchism means man living free and working constructively. It means the destruction of everything that is directed against man's natural, healthy aspirations.

Anarchism is not exclusively a theoretical teaching emanating from programs artificially conceived with an eye to the regulation of life: it is a teaching derived from life across all its wholesome manifestations, skipping over all artificial criteria.

The social and political visage of anarchism is a free, anti-authoritarian society, one that enshrines freedom, equality and solidarity between all its members.

In anarchism, Right means the responsibility of the individual, the sort of responsibility that brings with it an authentic guarantee of freedom and social justice for each and for all, in all places and at all times. It is out of this that communism springs.

Anarchism is naturally innate in man: communism is the logical extrapolation from it.

These assertions require theoretical support in the shape of assistance from scientific analysis and concrete facts, so that they may become fundamental postulates of anarchism. However, the great libertarian theorists, like Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Johann Most, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Sébastien Faure and lots of others were, I suppose at any rate, loath to confine their doctrine within rigid, definitive parameters. Quite the opposite. It might be said that anarchism's scientific dogma is the aspiration to demonstrate that it is inherent in human nature never to rest on its laurels. The only thing that is unchanging in scientific anarchism is its natural tendency to reject all fetters and any attempt by man to exploit his fellow men. In place of the fetters of the slavery currently extant in human society which, by the way, socialism has not done away with, nor

can it — anarchism plants freedom and man's inalienable right to make use of that freedom.

As a revolutionary anarchist, I shared the life of the Ukrainian people during the revolution. Throughout its activity, that people instinctively felt the vital attraction of libertarian ideas and, equally, paid the tragic price for that. Without yielding, I tasted the same dramatic rigors of that collective struggle but, very often, I found myself powerless to comprehend and then to articulate the demands of the moment. Generally speaking, I quickly came to my senses and I clearly grasped that the goal for which I and my comrades were calling for struggle was readily assimilated by the masses fighting for the freedom and independence of the individual and of mankind as a whole.

Experience of practical struggle strengthened my conviction that anarchism educates man in a living way. It is a teaching every bit as revolutionary as life, and it is as varied and potent in its manifestations as man's creative existence and, indeed, is intimately bound up with that.

As a revolutionary anarchist, and for as long as I retain even the most tenuous connection with that label, I will summon you, my humiliated brother, to the struggle to make a reality of the anarchist ideal. In fact, it is only through that struggle for freedom, equality and solidarity that you will reach an understanding of anarchism.

So, anarchism is present in man naturally: historically, it liberates him from the (artificially acquired) slave mentality and helps him become a conscious fighter against slavery in all its guises. It is in that regard that anarchism is revolutionary.

The more a man becomes aware, through reflection, of his servile condition, the more indignant he becomes, the more the anarchist spirit of freedom, determination »



Nestor Makhno (1906)

and action waxes inside him. That is true of every individual, man or woman, even though they may never have heard of the word “anarchism” before.

The nature of man is anarchist: it kicks against anything tending to make it a prisoner. As I see it, this, man’s natural essence, is well expressed by the scientific term anarchism. The latter, as an ideal of life in men, plays a meaningful role in human evolution. The oppressors as much as the oppressed, begin, little by little, to come alive to that role: so the former aspire by hook or by crook to misrepresent that ideal, whilst the latter aspire to make it the easier to attain.

Comprehension of the anarchist ideal grows in slave and master alike as modern civilization grows.

Despite the ends to which the latter has thus far been turned — lulling and thwarting every natural tendency in man to protest every trespass against his dignity — it has not been able to silence independent scientific minds which have exposed the true provenance of man and demonstrated the non-existence of God, hitherto considered the Creator of Mankind. Thereafter, it has naturally become easier to offer irrefutable proof of the artificial nature of “divine ordinances” on earth and of the ignominious relations that they establish between men.

All of these happenings have been of considerable assistance to the conscious development of anarchist ideas. Equally it is true that artificial notions have come to light at the same time: liberalism and that allegedly “scientific” socialism, one of the branches of which is represented by Bolshevism-Communism. However, despite all their vast influence upon the psychology of modern society, or at any rate upon a large part thereof, and despite their victory over the classical reaction on the one hand, and over the individual personality on the other, these artificial notions tend to slip down the slope leading to the familiar forms of the old world.

The free man, who achieves consciousness and expresses it around himself, inevitably lays to rest and always will lay to rest, the whole of mankind’s ignoble past, as well as all that that implied in terms of deceit, arbitrary violence and degradation. It will also lay these artificial teachings to rest. From this moment forth, the individual little by little struggles free of the carapace of lies and cowardice in which the earthly gods have wrapped him since birth, and that with the aid of the brute force of bayonet, ruble, “justice” and hypocritical science — the science of the sorcerers’ apprentices.

In sloughing off such infamy, the individual attains a completeness that opens his eyes to the map of the world: and the first thing he remarks is his servile former existence, replete with cowardice and misery. In making a slave of him, that former existence had done to death everything clean, pure and worthwhile that he had started life with, so as to turn him either into a bleating sheep, or an imbecilic master who tramples and destroys anything good to be encountered in himself or in others.

It is at this point only that man awakes to natural freedom, independent of everyone and everything which reduces to ashes anything that defies it, everything that violates nature’s purity and captivating beauty, which is made manifest and grows through the autonomous creative endeavor of the individual. It is here only that the individual comes to his senses again and damns his shameful past for once and for all, severing every psychic link with it that hitherto imprisoned his individual and social life with the burden of its servile ascendancy and also, partly, through his own resignation, as encouraged and deceived by the shamans of science.

Henceforth, man makes as much progress from year to year towards a lofty ethical goal — not to be and not to become a shaman himself, some prophet of power over others and no longer to tolerate others wielding power over him — as formerly he was making from generation to generation.

Freed from his heavenly and earthly deities, as well as from all their moral and social prescriptions, man speaks out against and offers actual opposition to man’s exploitation of his fellow man and the perversion of his nature, which remains invariably committed to the onward march towards completion and perfection. This rebel, having become conscious of himself and of the circumstances of his oppressed and degraded brethren, thereafter gives expression to his heart and to his reason: he becomes a revolutionary anarchist, the only individual capable of thirsting after freedom, completion and perfection for himself and for the human race, as he tramples underfoot the slavery and social idiocy which has, historically, been embodied by violence — the State. Against that murderer and that organized bandit, the free man in turn organizes along with his fellows, so as to strengthen and espouse a genuinely communist policy in all the common gains made along the road of creation, which is at once grandiose and painful.

The individual members of such groups, by dint of becoming members of them, free themselves from the criminal tutelage of the ruling society, to the extent that they rediscover themselves, that is, they reject all servility towards others, whatever they may have been hitherto: worker, peasant, student or intellectual. In this way they escape from the condition either of a pack-mule, slave, functionary or lackey selling themselves to imbeciles of masters. As an individual, man gets back to his authentic personality when he rejects false thinking about life and reduces it to ashes, thereby recovering his real rights. It is through this dual operation of rejection and affirmation that the individual becomes a revolutionary anarchist and a conscious communist.

As an ideal of human existence, anarchism is consciously disclosed to each individual as thought’s natural aspiration to a free and creative existence, leading on to a social ideal of happiness. In our day, the anarchist society or harmonious human society no longer seems a chimera. However, like its elaboration and its practical planning, the conception of it seems as yet little in evidence.

As a teaching bearing upon man’s new life and its creative development, individually as well as socially, the very idea of anarchism is founded upon the indestructible truth of human nature and on the incontrovertible proofs of the injustice of contemporary society — a veritable permanent blight. Realization of that leads to its advocates — anarchists — finding themselves in conditions of semi- or complete outlawry vis-à-vis the formal institutions of the existing society. Indeed, anarchism cannot be acknowledged as quite lawful in any country: this can be explained in terms

of present society’s being profoundly impregnated by its servant and master, the State. That band of individuals which has always lived as a parasite upon mankind, by cutting its life up into “slices,” has thus identified itself with the State. Whether individually or as a countless mass, man finds himself at the mercy of this band of drones going under the name of “governors and masters,” when in reality they are nothing but straightforward exploiters and oppressors.

The great idea of anarchism is not at all to the taste of these sharks who brutalize and enslave the contemporary world, whether they are governments of right or left, bourgeois or statist socialists. The difference between these sharks boils down to the fact that the former are professedly bourgeois — and thus less hypocritical — whereas the latter, the statist socialists of all shades, and among them especially the collectivists who have illegitimately tacked on the label of “communists,” namely, the Bolsheviks, hypocritically hide behind the watchwords of “fraternity and equality.” The Bolsheviks are ready to give the present society a thousand coats of paint or re-label the systems of domination for some and enslavement for others a thousand times over — in short, to amend the names as their programs may require, without thereby altering the nature of the present society by one iota, even if it means incorporating into their stupid programs compromises between the natural contradictions that exist between domination and servitude. Although they know that these contradictions »



Nestor Makhno (1918)

are insurmountable, they cling to them regardless, for the sole purpose of not letting appear in life the only truly human ideal: libertarian communism.

According to their absurd programs, the statist socialists and communists have decided to “allow” man to emancipate himself socially, without its thereby being feasible for him to manifest that freedom in his social life. As for leaving man to emancipate himself completely, spiritually, in such a way that he may be wholly free to act and to submit only to his own will and the laws of nature alone, although they touch upon that subject, that is out of the question as far as they are concerned. This is the reason why they join their efforts to those of the bourgeois, so that emancipation may never elude their odious supervision. In any event, we know only too well the form that may be taken by “emancipation” awarded by any political authorities.

The bourgeois finds it natural to speak of the toilers as slaves fated to remain such. He will never give encouragement to authentic labor likely to produce something genuinely useful and beautiful, something of benefit to the whole of mankind. Despite the vast capital resources at his disposal in industry and agriculture, he claims not to be able to devise the principles of a novel social existence. The present seems quite adequate to him, for all the powerful kowtow to him: tsars, presidents, governments and virtually all intellectuals and scholars, all who in their turn reduce the slaves of the new society to subjection. “Servants!” the bourgeois cry out to their faithful servitors, “Give to the slaves the pittance which is their due, keep what is due to you for your devoted services, then hold the remainder for us!” In conditions like those, life for them could not be anything other than beautiful! — No, we are not in agreement with you on the above! retort the state socialists and communists. Whereupon they turn to the workers, organizing them into political parties, then inciting them to revolt whilst exhorting them as follows:

Drive out the bourgeois from State power and give it to us statist socialists and communists, then we will defend you and set you free. Bitter, natural enemies of State authority, more than of the drones and privileged, the toilers give vent to their hatred, rise in revolt, carry out the revolution, destroy the power of the State and drive out those wielding it, and then, either through naiveté or lack of vigilance, they let the socialists lay hands on it. In Russia, they let the Bolshevik-Communists lay hands on it like that. These craven Jesuits, these monsters, butchers of freedom, thereupon set to work to strangle, shoot and crush the people, even though they were unarmed, just as the bourgeois had done before them, if not indeed worse. They shot to break the independent spirit, whether collective

or individual, in the aim of eradicating once and for all from man the spirit of freedom and the will to create, to leave him a spiritual slave and physical lackey to a band of villains ensconced in place of the toppled throne, and not hesitating to deploy killers to bring the masses to heel and eliminate the recalcitrant.

Man groans underneath the weight of the chains of socialist power in Russia. He groans in other countries also beneath the yoke of socialists in cahoots with the bourgeoisie, or even under the yoke of the bourgeoisie alone. Everywhere, individually or collectively, man groans under the oppressiveness of State power and its political and economic lunacies. Few people take an interest in his sufferings without simultaneously having second thoughts, for the executioners, old or new, are spiritually and physically very robust: they can call upon huge effective resources to underpin their hold and crush each and every person who stands in their way.

Itching to defend his rights to life, liberty and happiness, man seeks to manifest his creative determination by venturing into the maelstrom of violence. In face of the uncertain outcome of his fight, he sometimes has a tendency to lower his arms in front of his executioner, at the very moment when the latter is slipping the noose about his neck, and this when just one bold glance from him would be enough to reduce the executioner to a quivering jelly and call the burdensome yoke once more into question. Unfortunately, man very often prefers to close his eyes at the very moment when the executioner is slipping a noose around his entire life.

Only the man who has successfully rid himself of the chains of oppression and seen all the horrors being perpetrated against the human race can be persuaded that his freedom and that of his neighbor are inviolable, as are their lives, and that his neighbor is his brother. If he is ready to conquer and defend his freedom, to exterminate every oppressor and every executioner (unless the latter renounces his craven trade) then, provided he does not set himself the target in this struggle against the evils of contemporary society of replacing bourgeois power with some other, equally oppressive power — be it socialist, communist or “worker” (Bolshevik) — but rather aims to achieve a really free society, organized on a basis of individual responsibility and guaranteeing all a genuine freedom and equality of social justice for all, that man only is a revolutionary anarchist. He may without fear look upon the works of the executioner-State and, if need be, listen to his verdict, and also pronounce his own by declaring:

No, it need not be so! Revolt, oppressed brother! Rise up against all State power! Destroy the power of the bourgeoisie and do not replace it with that of the socialists and Bolshevik-communists. Do away with all State power and drive out its champions, for you will never find friends among them.

The power of the statist socialists or communists is every bit as noxious as that of the bourgeoisie. It may even be more so, when it conducts its experiments with the blood and the lives of men. At this point, it does not take long to revert surreptitiously to the premises of bourgeois power: it no longer has any fears about having recourse to the worst of means, lying and deceiving even more than any other power. The ideas of socialism or State communism become redundant: it no longer avails of them, laying hands instead upon any which might help it to cling to power. In the last analysis, it merely uses new means to perpetuate domination and become more cowardly than the bourgeoisie which strings the revolutionary up in public view whilst Bolshevism-communism murders and strangles on the sly.

Any political revolution which has left the bourgeoisie and the state socialists or communists to fight it out is a good illustration of what I have just been saying, especially if one considers the examples of the Russian revolutions of February and October 1917. Having overthrown the Russian empire, the toiling masses consequently felt themselves to be half-liberated politically and sought to complete their liberation. They set about transferring the land confiscated from the great landlords and the clergy to those who worked it or indeed intended to do so without exploitation of another man’s labor. In the towns, it was the factories, workshops, printing-works and other social enterprises that were taken in hand by those who worked there. Embroiled in these healthy and enthusiastic endeavors, designed to institute fraternal relations between town and country, the toilers omitted to notice that new governments were being installed in Kiev, Kharkov and Petrograd.

Through its class organizations, the people yearned to lay the foundations of a new, free society intended, as it develops without interference, to eliminate from the body of society all the parasites and all the power exercised by some over others, these being deemed by the toilers to be stupid and harmful.

This approach clearly made headway in the Ukraine, in the Urals and in Siberia. In Tiflis, Kiev, Petrograd and Moscow, in the very heart of the moribund authorities, a similar tendency surfaced. However, always and everywhere, the state socialists and communists had, and still have,

supporters aplenty, as well as their hired killers. Among the latter, sad to say, there were also many workers. Abetted by these paid killers, the Bolshevik-Communists put paid to the people’s endeavors and in a manner so terrible that even the Medieval Inquisition might feel envious of them!

As for ourselves, knowing the nature of all State power, we told the socialist and Bolshevik leaders:

Shame on you! You have written and talked so much about the ferocity of the bourgeoisie towards the oppressed. You have been so zealous in your defense of the revolutionary purity and commitment of the toilers struggling for their emancipation and now, having come into power, you turn out to be either the same cowardly lackeys of the bourgeoisie or have become bourgeois yourselves through recourse to its methods, to the extreme that the bourgeoisie stands astounded and pokes fun at you.

Moreover, through the experiences of Bolshevism-Communism, the bourgeoisie has been brought to a realization, in recent years, that the “scientific” chimera of a state socialism proved unable to cope without its methods and indeed, itself. It has grasped the point so well that it pokes fun at its pupils who cannot even live up to its example. It has realized that in the socialist system, the exploitation and organized violence against the bulk of the laboring population do nothing to do away with the debauched life-style and parasitism of the drones, that in fact the exploitation suffers only a name change before growing and being redoubled. And this is what the facts bear out for us. One has only to register the Bolsheviks’ rapaciousness and their monopolization of all the revolutionary gains of the people, as well as their police, courts, prisons and armies of jailers, all of them deployed against the revolution. The “red” army continues to be recruited by force! In it one finds the same ranks as before, albeit now given different labels, but even more unaccountable and overbearing.

Liberalism, socialism and State communism are three branches of the same family, resorting to different approaches in order to exercise their power over man, with a view to preventing him from growing fully in the direction of freedom and independence through the devising of a new, wholesome, genuine principle rooted in a social ideal valid for the whole human race.

Rebel! the revolutionary anarchist exhorts the oppressed. Rise up and eradicate all power over you and within you. And have no truck with the establishment of any new power over others. Be free and defend the freedom of others against all trespass! »

In human society, power is particularly exalted by those who have never really lived by their own labor and a wholesome existence, or indeed who no longer live by it or have no wish to live by it. The power of the State will never deliver joy, happiness and fulfillment to any society. Such power was created by drones for the sole purpose of pillage and indulgence of their often murderous violence against those who do produce, through their toil — whether through determination, intelligence or brawn — everything useful and good in man's life.

Whether that power styles itself bourgeois, socialist or Bolshevik-Communist or worker-peasant power, it all comes down to the same thing: it is every whit as damaging to a wholesome and happy individual as it is to society at large. The nature of all State power is everywhere identical: it tends to annihilate the freedom of the individual, turning him, spiritually, into a slave, and physically into a lackey, before putting him to use for the filthiest tasks. There is no such thing as harmless power.

Oppressed brother, banish all power from within you and do not allow any to be established either over you or over your brother, be he near or far!

The really wholesome, joyous life of the individual or group is not built up with the aid of power and programs that seek to enclose it within artificial constructs and written laws. No, it can only be constructed on a basis of individual freedom and its independent creative endeavor, making headway through phases of destruction and construction.

The freedom of every individual is the foundation of the libertarian society: the latter attains wholeness through decentralization and the realization of a common objective: libertarian communism.

Whenever we think of the libertarian communist society, we see it as a grandiose society, harmonious in its human relationships. It is chiefly dependent upon the free individuals banded together into affinity groupings — whether prompted by interest, need or inclination — guaranteeing an equal measure of social justice for all and linking up into federations and confederations.

Libertarian communism is a society that is rooted in the free life of every man, in his untouchable entitlement to infinite development, the elimination of all injustices and all the evils that have hobbled society's progress and perfectibility by splitting it into strata and classes, sources of man's oppression and violence towards his fellow man.

The libertarian society sets itself the target of making

everyone's life more beautiful and more radiant, through his labor, his determination and his intellect. In full accord with nature, libertarian communism is, consequently, founded upon man's life made wholly fulfillment, independent, creative and absolutely free. For that reason its adepts appear to live the lives of free and radiant beings.

Labor, universally fraternal relations, love of life, the passion for free creation of beauty, all these values animate the life and activity of the libertarian communists. They have no need of prisons, executioners, spies and provocateurs, whom the statist socialists and communists employ in such huge numbers. As a matter of principle, the libertarian communists have no need for the hired brigands and killers of which the prime example and supreme chief is, in the last analysis, the State. Oppressed brother! Prepare yourself for the establishment of that society, through reflection and organized action. Except, just remember that your organization must be solid and consistent in its social activity. The sworn enemy of your emancipation is the State: it is best embodied by the union of these five stereotypes: the property-owner, the soldier, the judge, the priest and the one who serves them all, the intellectual. In most instances, the last-named of these takes it upon himself to demonstrate the "legitimate" entitlement of his four masters to punish the human race, regulate man's life in its every individual and social aspect, and in so doing, distorting the meaning of the natural law in order to codify "historical and juridical" laws, the criminal outpourings of pen-pushers on a retainer.

The enemy is very strong because, for centuries past, he has made his living from rapine and violence: he has the accumulated experience of that, he has overcome internal crises and now he puts on a new face, being threatened with extinction through the emergence of a new science that rouses man from his age-old slumbers. This new science frees man from his prejudices and equips him for self-discovery and discovery of his true place in life, despite all the efforts of the sorcerers' apprentices from that union of the "five" to block his progress down that avenue.

Thus, such a change of face on the part of our enemy, oppressed brother, can be noted, say, in everything that emanates from the chambers of the State's erudite reformers. We have watched a typical example of such a metamorphosis in the revolutions we have witnessed at first-hand. The union of the "five," the State, our enemy, seemed at first to have vanished completely from the face of the earth.

In reality, our enemy merely altered his appearance and found himself new allies who schemed criminally against us: the example of the Bolshevik-Communists in Russia, in the

Ukraine, in Georgia and among many Central Asian peoples is very edifying in this regard. This is a lesson that will never be forgotten by the man fighting for his emancipation, for the nightmarish criminality will be engraved in him.

The sole, the surest weapon available to the victim of oppression in his battle against the evil that binds him is the social revolution, a profound leap forward in the direction of human evolution.

Although the social revolution occurs spontaneously, organization smoothes its passage, eases the appearance of breaches in the ramparts erected against it and speeds its coming. The revolutionary anarchist beavers away in the here and now along these lines. Every victim of oppression become sensible of the yoke weighing him down, realizing that this ignominy is crushing the life out of the human race, should come to the aid of the anarchist. Every human being should be aware of his responsibility and see it through by casting out of society all the executioners and parasites from the union of "five," so that mankind may breathe free. Every man and above all the revolutionary anarchist — as the pioneer inciting struggle for the ideal of freedom, solidarity and equality — ought to bear it in mind that

the social revolution, if it is to evolve creatively, requires adequate means, especially ongoing organizational resources, particularly during the phase when, in a spontaneous outburst, it tears slavery up by the roots and plants freedom, affirming every man's entitlement to free and unbounded development. This is the very time when, coming alive to the freedom within and surrounding them, individuals and masses will make bold to act upon the gains of the social revolution, and that revolution will have most need of such organizational resources. For example, revolutionary anarchists played a particularly outstanding role in the Russian revolution, but, not being possessed of the requisite means of action, were unable to see their historical mission through. Moreover, that revolution demonstrated to us the following truth: after having rid themselves of the bonds of slavery, the masses of humanity have no intention of creating new ones. On the contrary: during times of revolution, the masses fetch about for new forms of free associations capable not only of responding to their libertarian instincts, but also of defending their gains should the enemy mount an attack.

Observing this process at work, we were constantly drawn to the conclusion that the most fruitful and most valuable associations could not be other than »



Black Army commanders Simon Karetnik (3rd from the left) Nestor Makhno (center) and Fedor Shchus (1st right) (1919)



Nestor Mahkno and wife Halyna Kouzmenko pictured (1920)

the commune-unions, the ones whose social resources are conjured up by life itself: the free soviets. Basing himself on that same belief, the revolutionary anarchist hurls himself into selfless action and exhorts the oppressed to join the struggle for free associations. He is convinced that not only must the essential creative organizational precepts be demonstrated: there is also the need to equip oneself with the wherewithal to defend the new life-style against hostile forces. Practice has shown that this has to be pursued most firmly and supported by the masses themselves, in person and on the spot.

In carrying through the revolution, under the impulsion of the anarchism that is innate in them, the masses of humanity search for free associations. Free assemblies always command their sympathy. The revolutionary anarchist must help them to formulate this approach as best they can. For instance, the economic problem of the free association of communes must find full expression in the creation of production and consumer cooperatives, of which the free soviets will be the sponsors. It is through the good offices of the free soviets while the revolution is rippling outwards, that the masses will themselves lay hands upon the entirety of the social heritage: the land, forests, workshops, factories, railways and seaborne transportation, etc., and then, banding together on the basis of

interests, affinities or a shared ideal, they will rebuild their social life along the most varied lines to suit their needs and wishes. It goes without saying that this will be a vicious struggle; it will cost a huge number of lives, for it will pit free humankind against the old world for one last time. There will be no room for hesitation or sentiment. It will be a life or death struggle! At any rate, that is how any man who places any store by his rights and the rights of humankind should think of it, unless he wishes to remain a beast of burden, a slave, as he is compelled to be at the moment.

When healthy reasoning and love of oneself and of others alike gain the ascendancy in life, man will become the authentic author of his own existence.

Organize, oppressed brother, summon all men from plow and workshop, from school and university desk, not forgetting the scholar and the intellectual generally, so that he may venture beyond his chambers and help you along your daunting course. It is true that nine out of ten intellectuals may fail to answer your call or, if they do respond, will do so with the intention of pulling the wool over your eyes, for remember that they are the faithful servants of the union of the "five." Even so, there will be that one in ten who will prove your friend and will help you puncture the deceit of

the other nine. As far as physical violence, the brute force of those who govern and legislate, is concerned, you will see it off with violence of your own.

Organize, summon all your brethren to join the movement and insist of all who govern that, of their own volition, they cease their craven profession of regulating the life of man. Should they refuse, rise up, disarm their police, militiamen and the other guard-dogs of the union of the "five." Arrest all governors for as long as need be, tear up and burn their laws! Tear down the prisons, once you have annihilated the executioners and eradicate all State power!

Many paid killers and assassins are in the army, but your friends, the draftees, are there also. Call them to your side and they will come to your aid and help you neutralize the mercenaries.

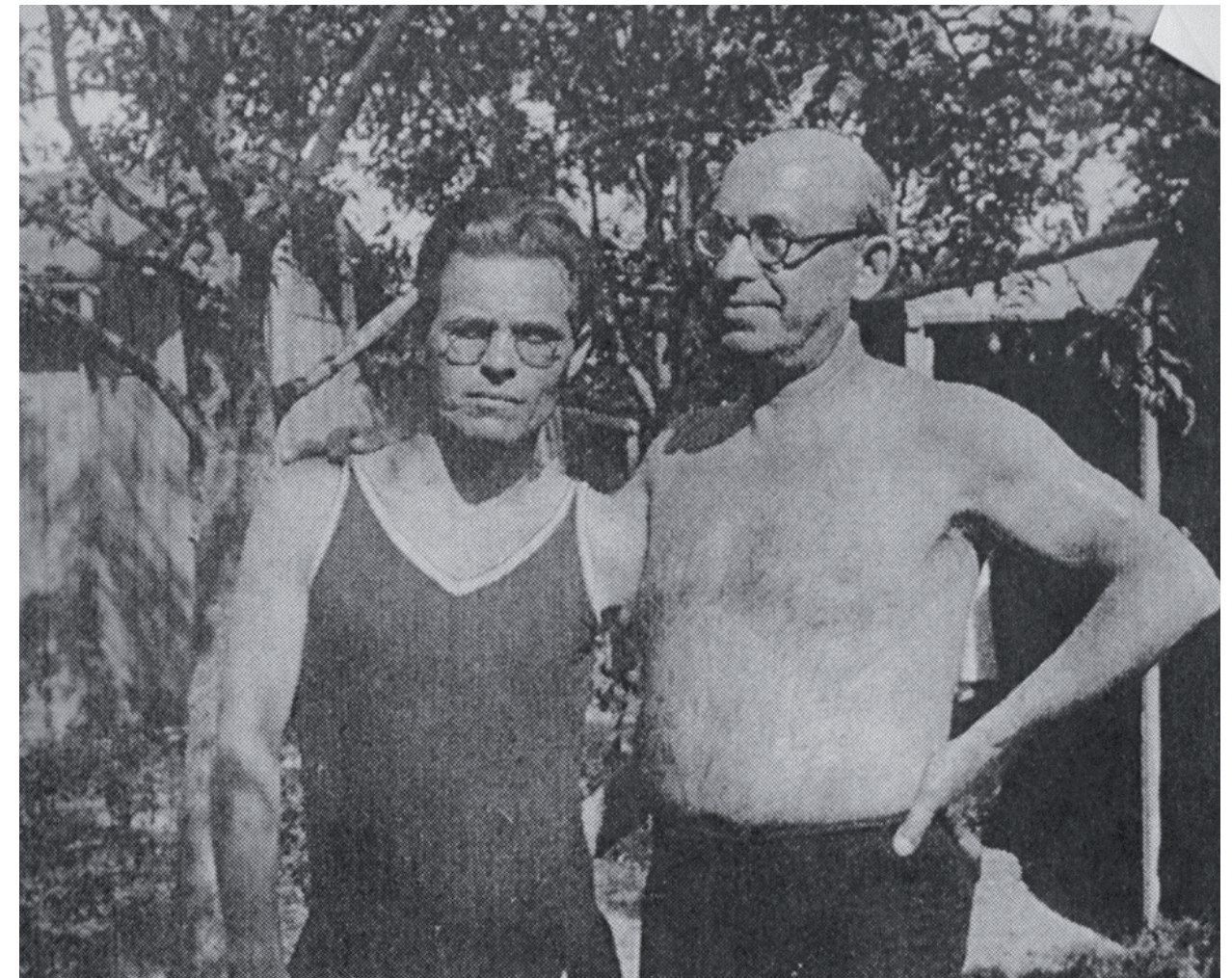
Once you have all come together into one big family, brethren, we will march together down the path of enlightenment

and knowledge, we will leave the shadows behind and stride towards mankind's common ideal: the free and fraternal life, the society wherein no one will be a slave any longer, nor humiliated by anyone.

To the brute violence of our foes we will make reply through the compact force of our insurgent revolutionary army. To incoherence and arbitrariness, we will make reply by erecting our new life upon a foundation of justice, on a basis of individual responsibility, the true guarantor of freedom and social justice for all.

Only the blood-thirsty criminals of the union of the "five" will refuse to join us on the path to innovation: they will try to oppose us so as to cling to their privileges, thereby signing their own death warrant.

Long live this clear, firm belief in the struggle for the ideal of general human harmony: the anarchist society! ■



Nestor Mahkno with Alexander Berkman (Early 1930's?)



BURN AFTER READING

REVIEWING THE BOOKS AND TUNES THEY WOULD RATHER YOU FORGOT ABOUT

AUTHENTIC DEMOCRACY

Written by Dan McKee

Confronting the State on its Own Terms, Dr DaN McKee attempts an ethical proof of anarchism as the only viable political project even by the metrics imposed by some of the most ardent defenders of the state.

Originating from McKee's doctoral thesis, *Authentic Democracy* is, in essence, an attempt to provide an ethical grounding for anarchist politics without the jargon – to present an easy-to-read, accessible answer for one of the many questions that anarchists often find themselves having to answer: how can anarchists provide any moral justification for their ideas? After all, conventional wisdom would have it that at least we *know* that capitalism raises the floor and makes life better for the people, at least in general. Don't we?

Taking this question seriously and anticipating this response, McKee's response is a simple one. He attempts to answer the question – and in doing so, he underlines a serious ethical claim: that the role of the political is to provide a better life for the people. Beginning with discussions on exactly what is meant by 'people' and 'better', McKee attempts to pull the question apart before constructing a framework in which he concludes that not only is anarchism capable of providing this better life, but more importantly, it is the only political outlook which can do so satisfactorily.

McKee's primary success in the writing of this text, reworked from a piece of lofty academic writing, is the rendering of it easy. Beginning the book with a statement of intent outlining the desire to make it readable and remove the dense phraseology that existed to satisfy the philosophers at the academy who had been at least partially against the project in the first place, it is clear that McKee deserves great praise: if the intent of the book was to provide a readable text, he was successful. Reading briskly and with a conversational tone that weaves its way through the topic, McKee's style and control of pace is one of the centrally impressive texts in this style that I have ever read.

The risk that is taken in doing this – in removing the more academic language from the text – is that the levels of nuance and specificity such language was often invented to provide comes into question. The major challenge in the text, therefore, is the preservation of a rigorous and powerful argument without the trappings of a specific academic discourse.

To an extent, McKee accomplishes this well: when asking

what the book is attempting to do and whether it succeeds on its own terms, it is difficult to argue anything other than that it does. However, there are a number of axiomatic assumptions to which McKee falls prey – though he is far from the only one. The primary assumption McKee proceeds under is the assumption that legitimacy matters as a political concept. This assumption is one famously put forward by Noam Chomsky in a number of different forms across several decades, and is equally famously an assumption rejected by large sections of the anarchists with which it has come face to face. By far the largest difficulty that I have with *Authentic Democracy* is this initial framing of the discussion which places the text on somewhat questionable grounds to many.

The second largest concern, though not nearly so significant as the first, is the attempt to conflate anarchism with democracy – indeed, McKee argues that anarchism is the only system under which we could even begin to truly think about democracy in a legitimate sense. Making this titular assumption is a natural one for many people, particularly those who come from a background in the syndicalist tradition or any form of anarchism which relates more directly to the ultra-liberal framing put forward by Chomsky and others, but it is one that comes in stark opposition of many of the more contemporary branches of anarchist thought. The refusal of democracy, regarding it as an arcane and artificial form of engagement that can only result in alienation, is a common perspective within the world of insurrectionary anarchism and post-anarchist thought, and it is interesting to see McKee zig here where the contemporary discourse often zags. While discussions as to whether or not this is a wise idea might be interesting, it's also noteworthy that this mode of common-sense discussion is paramount for McKee's project: to make this discourse accessible without becoming too embroiled in the depths of debate. Here, again, McKee is successful, as a willingness to engage with the text on his terms yields fruitful results despite the potential for debate over specific terms.

Due to this contrast between the framing of McKee's work and post-anarchist fields, there is, therefore, an interesting parallel between McKee's text and another (though much less accessibly written) text from the 1990s: Todd May's *The Political Philosophy of Post-Structuralist Anarchism*. This densely written text is one in which May finds himself embarking on a similar project: how, in the face of the last half-century of critical thought, do we ground anarchism as an ethical project? What is most interesting in McKee's text, and a sign of his skilful navigation of the subject, is how close the conclusions drawn match those of May's despite an almost entirely different pathway towards them.

Whereas May reaches his conclusions via engagement with Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard and Foucault – giant figures in the continental philosophy of the 20th Century – McKee begins his analysis with figures of anglophone philosophy, tracing the roots of the state and its authority to Hobbes and Locke, before proceeding through Nozick and Rawls. Further than this, McKee's premise rests upon an acceptance of the idea of a social contract in some form. For McKee, this contract

A further interesting, though unexpected, strength of *Authentic Democracy* is the willingness McKee shows to engage with economics as a practice. While there is much debate about the place of economics in an anarchist worldview, it cannot be disputed that it is a vital element of discussion regarding capitalist and statist political perspectives and must be addressed by any serious thinker of these things, if only to dismiss the field. McKee does not dismiss it, and by engaging with the economic concerns of the state immediately after detailing some of the roots and effects of ideological social assumptions, McKee directly implies the marriage between the two which so heavily impacts much of modern life. Taking a swift route from the East India Company through to the IMF and David Harvey and Noam Chomsky, McKee effortlessly elucidates the uneasy tension between economic and political power and highlights the failure of representative democracy to reconcile the roiling conflicts inherent to such a system. For many readers who are not familiar with generations of left wing writing, *Authentic Democracy* is a brilliant introduction to some of these nuances, and McKee's willingness to engage seriously with thinkers from a broad spectrum of political thought – from the aforementioned Rawls and Nozick, to the engagements with Gramsci, Marx, and Proudhon – will serve as a wonderful starting point for further investigation.

Finally, revisiting his descriptions of leaving the University to become a school teacher, McKee transitions into a discussion of the educational system under capitalism. Rapidly sketching an outline of education, particularly *British* education, as being a system that seems designed to produce incurious and fearful individuals that cringe under the watchful eye of a superior, McKee condenses many of the critiques of capitalist education into an impressively brief discussion that takes direct aim at the 'conform and obey' model of schooling. While this is perhaps the briefest section in the book, it is clear that it is also an avenue of criticism about which the author is particularly passionate, as the strength and clarity of the argument here reaches a level of almost irrefutable bluntness which is difficult to oppose in any real sense. »

Summarising these previous discussions, McKee closes the book with a return to his original claim: that it is only anarchism which can satisfactorily fulfil this concept of providing a 'better' life to 'the people'. While there are a number of semantic issues that can be taken with McKee's lines of argument – some of which have been delineated earlier in this review – the simplicity with which he presents his conclusions is striking in tone. Despite not wholly rebutting those who would be critical from the start of concepts such as democracy, it is also clear that this is not McKee's task in this book: he is willing to let those conversations take place elsewhere. The primary drive of Authentic Democracy is to confront the statist on their own terms: what claim does the state make in justification for itself, and from how many angles can we demonstrate that even on the state's own terms, traditional notions of anarchism is a superior approach to the traditional notion of the state. In this, it is clear that McKee is successful – any further discussion, it is clear, is to be had from the position that the state is defunct as a concept. Post-anarchists and anarcho-communists can dialogue about the specifics, the frameworks, and the concepts – and these are certainly conversations that are vital to have, with far-ranging consequences – but there is no longer any need for us to spend time entertaining the notion of the state, which dies so piteously when subjected to even the most routine inspection of its own position. ■

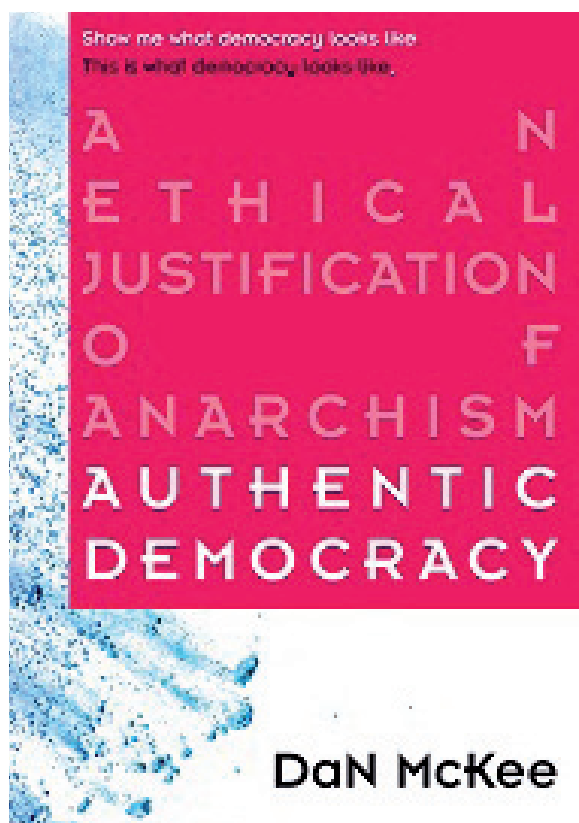
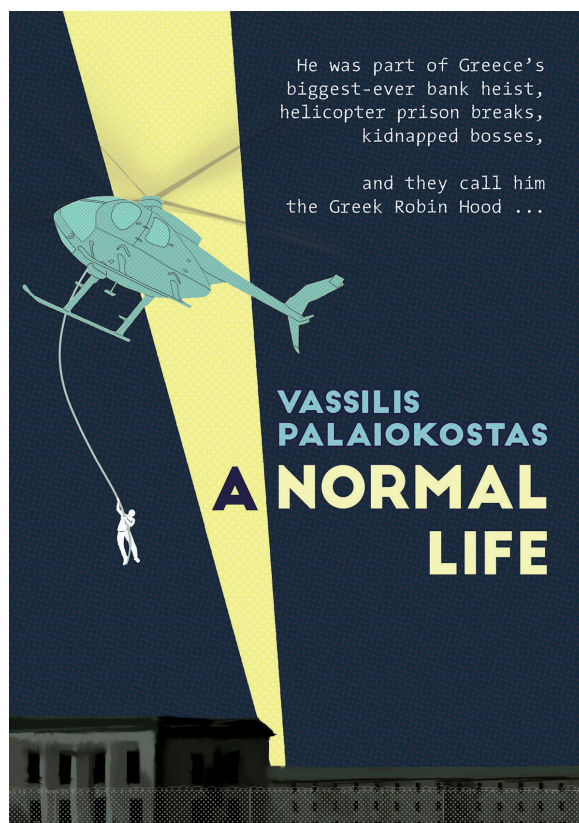
Jay Fraser

Jay is a writer from Lincolnshire in the UK. He is currently completing an MA in English Literature and has written for *Organise!*, *Strukturriss*, and *Lumpen Journal* among many other places. Find him on Twitter @JayFraser1 if you are so inclined.

Authentic Democracy is out now in paperback and is available through AK Press and Tippermuir Books. It is also available as an eBook from Kobo.

akuk.com
tippermuirbooks.co.uk
www.kobo.com

For more information about McKee and the book (including a postscript on how Covid-19 does/doesn't affect the argument in the book), visit <https://www.everythingdanmckee.com/authentic-democracy> or email the author directly at profitganda@hotmail.com



A NORMAL LIFE

Written by Vassilis Palaiokostas

"Freedom is a precious, everlasting struggle for any decent human. There's nothing more beautiful and real than the attempt to achieve the impossible. And when the impossible becomes possible, it's just magic. The few who have lived, even only once, something as intense, know precisely what I tried to describe. The indescribable ..."

A Normal Life is a love letter to freedom. Sure it's absolutely jam packed with thrilling tales of daring do, prison breaks, gun fights and car chases, but from the first page to the last the narrative here is a sweeping a love letter to freedom, not just from the authority of the state but the trappings we place ourselves. It's understandable why some many Anarchists have some much affection for it's author and his story.

Vassilis Palaiokostas is a bank robber, he is a kidnapper, he is an illegalist. He is also labelled terrorist or folk hero depending on who you ask. Vassilis is not a leftie liberal, he is an illegalist, a man of violence and to many, a working class hero. Alongside his brother Nikos, he spent thirty years living a life of crime against the backdrop of a Greece trapped in political turmoil and corruption. A Normal Life is is autobiography which recounts much of their struggle against a totalitarian state, the evils of capitalism and the soul crushing mire of the Hellenic prison system. It opens with a succession of three prison breaks (one which ends in his arrest) and only heats up from there both inside and outside of the prison walls. Ultimately he runs us through a series of robberies, stretches in prison, two kidnappings and a handful of gunfights with charming ease all the more intoxicating because of his dry humour: and roguish charm.

Now when you see a book about a Greek bank robber's exploits you'd be forgiven for half expecting the kind of obnoxious machismo found in the kind of books your racist uncle likes to live vicariously through "SAS: BORN TO FIGHT" type shit. There is none of that here, Vassilis isn't writing to pat himself on the back or assure you how right he is with any of this, nor is he trying to prop himself up as the "Robin Hood" he is often described as. No, it's simple and honest accounts of the shit that happened. Reading A Normal Life feels at like you're sat in the backroom of your local chatting the shit with a mate. We've all exchanged our war stories over a few pints, laughing at our exploits, fuck ups and luck. Vassilis does this with sartorial workmanship, his stories are well formed and handed to you in digestible chunks inbetween rounds. His politics are not trapped in theory and erudite

rhetoric, they are the pure unadulterated love of freedom, distilled through experience. He does however takes tangents to explain a particular matter over a few paragraphs when he needs too mind. These sections come across as the tutelage of an older compatriot, wisdom being passed on between peers, there isn't an ounce of patronising superiority. Vassilis doesn't attempt to manipulate the reader into accepting his truth, he simply tells you how he sees it and moves on with the story.

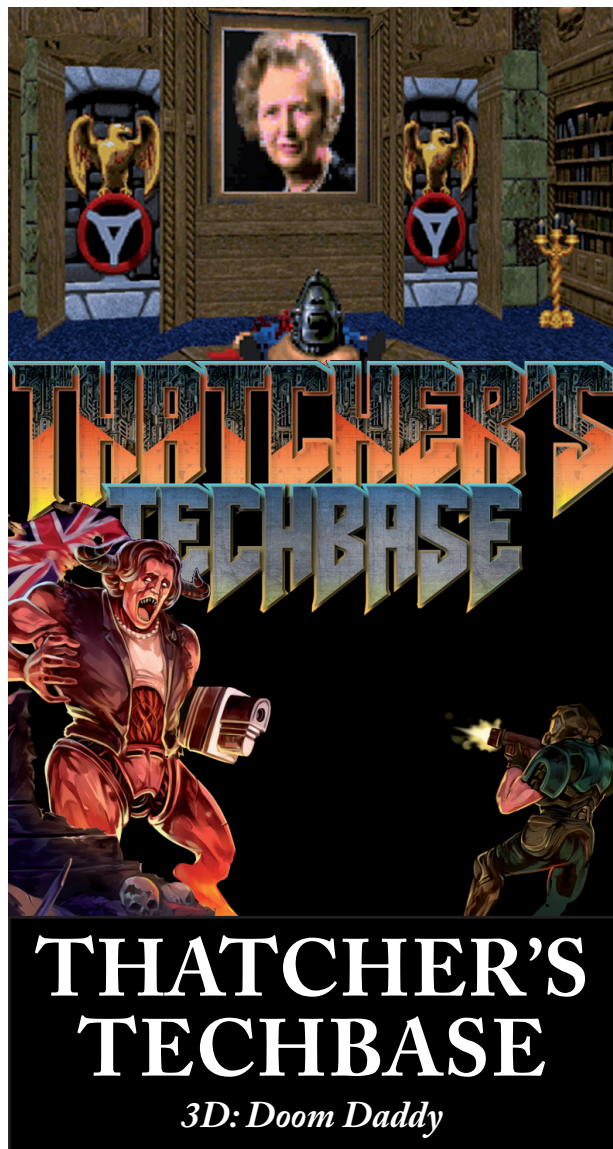
It's hard to ignore how romantic much of this is, his illegalist exploits make me smile, an underdog facing an insurmountable enemy, takes them on and ultimately wins? Fuck yes. I am gripped by the accounts as much as any blockbuster movie. Vassilis is a renegade, a social bandit, a true outlaw. I read some to a friend and he tells me that he reminds him of The Wire's Omar Little, a street level stick up man who makes a point of fucking over the drug dealers and powerful. Like Omar, Vassilis fills the the role of the fearless fighter; a criminal sure, but he's sticking it to the bastards who commit crimes a thousand times worse. His prey are the heartless bankers and corrupt capitalists. After all what kind of bank robber gives the loot to the poor?

Hurrah for the rebel! All of this makes it all the more suprising how he talks about the police and his kidnap victims. Vassilis sees people and talks about his enemies in a fair and even tone, humanising them without animosity except when they come to deserve it. Heck, when talking about Alexander Haitoglou, the capitalist they kidnapped and held for random over a period of days, he's down right affectionate, tho this doesn't dampen his observations of Haitoglou as an industrialist and all that entails.

A Normal Life is a love letter to freedom and to this day Vassilis has his freedom, having made his second escape via helicopter in February 2009. His biography first published in 2019 was an instant bestseller in Greece, while here in the UK, I dare say most of us knew very little if anything at all about the Palaiokostas brothers. I highly recommend you change this and pick up a copy, let Vassilis' stories terrify and inspire you accordingly, perhaps ultimately asking yourself about your own freedom, not just from the state but in your own life.

A Normal life is an action packed romp interspersed with deep dives into contemporary history, socio-political analysis, exploration of freedom and the self against a consistant and intense love of the beauty offered up by the world and the people in it. It's a vital stab at the facade that is our economic jail, a powerful advocate for your own prison break. It'll leave you questioning your own capacities, after all if not Vassilis, why not you? Be brave ■

A Normal Life is available from Freedom Press
ISBN: 978-1-904491-40-8



Thatcher's Techbase (TTB) is a Doom II modification that was released on Friday the 24th of September, with the help of the websites how to install guide after ten minutes of downloading and extracting I managed to get the game working. Six hours later I had made it to the end screen and a sequel hook. My final runtime was just over an hour, the other five hours were me reloading after dying. I've enjoyed Doom, Doom II and Wolfenstein 3D for years, ever since I found them installed on a computer in my town's internet cafe. Though sadly I was never very good at them, so if you were an old school Doom pro you'll probably beat my time, and if you're not a pro then copy my strategy of saving in rare moments of peace from slaughtering everything in a room.

TTB feels like Doom II, its pacing, its maze and gauntlet mix for level design, the soundtrack is original but aside from a few tunes inspired by old British patriotic jingles like Land of Hope and Glory, are just like the soundtrack to the original Doom II, the webpage has a bandcamp that plays some of the tracks and I've been listening to them while writing this. And its covered and I do mean covered in detailed sprite work that's gory and gross, and full of highly detailed 1980s propaganda posters and graffiti. The only parts of the game that show that its a 2020s modification and not from the 1990s when shareware mods were common are the things it does that were simply impossible back then. Apart from a short opening section in a demon prison where Thatcher and her acolytes have escaped, the entirety of the game including boss battles and secrets is in one level. That's over an hours worth of gameplay with dozens of unique assets with no loading in between. The sprite work that covers the walls of this world is just too crisp and clear for an older machine to have run, you can read most of the gravity and text on the vote Tory posters.

The plot is very simple, Thatcher has gained control of a part of hell and is attempting to return and bring an army of demons and party activists with her. Its the players task to go to the tenth circle of hell the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to stop her. The demonic horde is quite diverse, most of the roster of enemies from Doom II are here but have been given a light blue makeover. And jokes aside the world of TTB does look like a hell version of the late 1980s/1990s UK. Apart from some very brief text boxes the old Doom games told their stories through environmental design and TTB maintains that tradition. You can tell Thatcher has escaped because the prison at the beginning has a lot of corpses of guards and busted open cells and damaged machinery. You can tell you're getting closer to the final confrontation the more closely the scenery resembles a Tory party HQ and the British government. The final showdown with a Cyber Thatcher (see the box art) is in the House of Commons complete with both aisles full of sycophants willing to fight to the death to protect her.

Though this does mean that the game has a target audience of people who are already intimately familiar with the legacy of the Thatcher's government and her successors. Which the game acknowledges by being dedicated to them, and since this is a modification of a licensed property, instead of payment which is illegal due to copyright law, the game devs at Doom Daddy Digital recommend that you donate to one of several charities on their webpage, the charities are ISWO support for Mining families, Stonewall, The Hillsborough Justice Campaign, ICTJ - The International



Center for Transitional Justice, Living Rent, and the Scottish Refugee Council. This might at first glance seem a bit of random list but they all represent some of the victims of the Thatcher government, Mining communities were ripped apart and occupied for over a year, Queer Britons were left to die through AIDs with the UK government only taking action once it had definitely started affecting heterosexuals, but even after that Gay people were still criminalised and scapegoated, Hillsborough was off course where the police managed to kill 97 Liverpool FC fans which was covered up by the government in 1989 and to this day the families of the deceased are still battling government indifference and inertia, the ICTJ campaigns to expose systematic human rights abuses and given that Thatcher's administration escalated the conflict in Northern Ireland and turned parks of Britain into militarised states there were plenty of cases of that, Living Rent of course is just one of the many groups dealing with the ugly aftermath of one of the Conservative government's flagship policies, mass selling off of council housing and deregulation of the housing market, and the Scottish Refugee Council, well in addition to using Scotland as a test bed for most of their reactionary policies before rolling them out to the rest of the UK, the Tory party of the 1980s was also openly hostile to refugees, which to be fair is an example of the continuity of British government rather than a break with tradition.

I'm old enough to remember the lingering effects of the Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s partly because the Labour governments that followed did very little to change or counter act that legacy. So I ate everything TTB was serving me. I understood that the NUM stickers on the walls were about the 1984-85 Miners strike, I understood the graffiti that were references to the IRA and the fighting in Northern Ireland, I understood why the 1% health pick ups are milk cartoons and why the words "you've snatched some milk" flash on the screen when you pick them up. »

I also chuckled a little when I noticed that the evil base full of dripping acid and exploding barrels has health and safety at work signs. And I understood what the red baiting vote Tory posters were getting at. But I don't think that'll be easily understood by someone playing this without that prior knowledge.

To take just one example, there's a really clever part of the level that's a BBC communications room, in it there are two banks of monitors with images of the UK and groups of blue uniformed soldiers at the desks. I enjoyed seeing this, but if you didn't know just how overtly pro government the BBC was during this period and how the Conservative party used it to manipulate the population I think a lot of the messaging is lost. I do wonder what a Doom completionist who plays TTB with no real knowledge of Thatcher but loves the game and its modding scene would think. Hopefully the strengths of the game and the sheer never ending examples of just how hated Thatcher and the Tory party were will pique their curiosity and they'll learn more about it when they've made it to the end screen or gotten a 100% of the secrets. On my first full playthrough I only managed 11% of secrets, and there's an entire path of the level locked behind a series of doors that needed a red key card to access which I never even saw, so after finishing I dived back in, though I will probably have to wait for someone else to write up a walkthrough.

In summary, if you like the old Doom games you should play this game its in the top tier of mods and games inspired by them. If you remember the Thatcher administration and its austerity and police state actions, you should play this game even if you don't like Doom games. It'll take a few minutes for you to adjust but once you've got the hang of using a Winchester rifle and grabbed the Trident missile launcher you will find some catharsis. If neither applies to you, I would still say give the game a go, even if the game play doesn't click and you don't come away with an in-depth understanding of the damage the combination neoliberal economics and patriotic traditionalism and respect for authority can do to a people, you will at least get a taste of how varied and visceral the resistance to it was. ■

Reddebek

www.reddebeksbowl.blogspot.com

You can learn more about Thatcher's Tech Base and play it yourself via their Github:
thatchers-techbase.github.io

SUFFRAGETTO

*Women's Social and Political Union
updated by Renee Shelby*

It's 1910 and women can't vote, but they're organising. The British Women's Social and Political Union is disrupting Parliament, doing hunger strikes, and created a 30 woman bodyguard trained in jiu-jitsu to protect themselves. The police will do anything to stop them and preserve the existing social order. There's a riot in the street, and you must develop a strategy to occupy your opponent's territory. Be careful! You must also protect your home base, or you may land yourself in jail or the hospital! 2 players, 30 minutes.

Suffragetto is a feminist, political board game dating to the early 1900s. It was created by the Women's Social and Political Union. It was updated by Renee Shelby.

You can find out more about the game, purchase a professionally made copy or grab the files to print you own here: www.playsuffragetto.com

In the mean time, here are the rules and a smaller version of the board for you to play. You'll need:

16 Small Green Pawns
5 Large Green Pawns
16 Small Blue Pawns
5 Large Blue Pawns.

The goal of the Suffragettes is to break past Police lines and enter the House of Commons. At the same time, The Suffragettes must also prevent the Police from entering Albert Hall, an oft-used meeting space of the Women's Social and Political Union.

It is the Police's duty to break up a meeting of the Suffragettes, currently being held in Albert Hall, all the while, preventing the Suffragettes from entering the House of Commons. The game is won by whoever first succeeds in introducing six members into the building guarded by its opponents.

Set Up

The game is for two players, each of who has 21 pieces—5 large pieces and 16 small pieces, representing the Suffragettes and the Police. A coin toss determines the first player.

The Suffragettes are colored green, and the large pieces are distinguished as Leaders of the Suffragette Party.

The Police Force is colored dark blue, and the large pieces are distinguished as Inspectors of Police.

The Suffragettes are placed on the squares marked 'S' near 'Albert Hall.' The leaders of the party are positioned as follows: One leader is placed in the middle of the front row, and the other four Leaders are placed at the ends of the front and second rows.

The Police Force is placed upon the squares marked 'P' near the House of Commons. One Inspector is placed in the middle of the front row, and the remaining four Inspectors at the ends of the front and second rows.

Moving & Hopping

Each player alternatively moves or hops one of his or her own pieces. Moving can result in moving to one space into a single adjacent square, hopping over your own pieces to move farther along the board, or hopping over an opponent's piece to "arrest" or "disable" your opponent's piece.

Moving

A piece may move horizontally or diagonally one square a turn into any of the 8 adjoining squares, but that square must be unoccupied.

Pieces may freely move over any part of the board except:

- No piece can be moved (except when arrested or disabled) onto the spaces marked Prison, Prison Yard, Hospital, or Hospital Grounds.

- A Suffragette cannot move onto the spaces marked Albert Hall.

- A Policeman cannot move onto the spaces marked House of Commons.

Hopping

On a player's turn, they may hop a piece rather than move it a single square. Hopping means jumping over one of your own pieces into the unoccupied square on the other side of the hopped over piece (as in Checkers). A player may string together hops into multiple jumps, provided that each jump lands in a permitted zone (as listed above) and there is a space in between each piece hopped over. If the square behind a piece is occupied, the hop cannot be completed. Any piece having gained entrance into their opponent's House of Commons or Albert Hall may move about freely on the squares representing the building, but must not move or hop away from those squares. Moving within either the House of Commons or Albert Hall spends a player's turn.

Arresting & Disabling

Properly hopping over your opponent's pieces results in arresting or disabling your opponent's piece(s). Police may arrest Suffragettes and Suffragettes may disable Police through jiu jitsu.

Disable is a term used in jiu jitsu when an opponent is neutralized.

Any piece standing on one of the squares in The Arena (squares marked pink) is liable to be arrested or disabled by their opponent. Any of your pieces may arrest or disable your opponent's pieces. A Suffragette disables the Police by hopping over him in a diagonal direction. A *Leader of the Suffragette Party* can disable any member of the Police Force by hopping over him in any direction. A Policeman arrests a Suffragette by hopping over her in a diagonal direction. An Inspector of Police arrests any Suffragette member by hopping over her in any direction.

A piece can only arrest or disable its opponents when it is hopping, not when simply moving. Thus, one of the smaller pieces may hop over a Leader or Inspector simply to move about the board. A single piece may arrest or disable multiple pieces during one series of jumps. Suffragettes who are arrested are moved to the Prison. Police who are disabled are moved to the Hospital.

No piece can be arrested or disabled on yellow squares outside the Arena, but may move or hop freely on these squares.

Exchanges

If at any point, the Prison and the Hospital each contain 12 or more inmates, either player may insist on an exchange of 6 or less pieces. The pieces exchanged must be of equal value, e.g., A Leader is exchanged for an Inspector, and the rank and file of the Suffragette party for the rank and file of the Police.

The exchanged pieces may start moving from the squares marked 'Prison Yard' and 'Hospital Grounds' respectively. No exchange can be made while any piece remains on the Prison Yard or the Hospital Grounds.

If one player does not agree to an exchange, the exchange does not occur.

Winning

The first player with six pieces in their opponent's home base wins. ■

THE SUPER-HAPPY ANARCHIST FUN PAGES!

Possible Tales from 2036

You know what I miss? Nature. hoh. Yeah. Right.	I miss fishing in rivers and camping under the stars.	I miss snow, tobogganing on my parents estate.
I remember "trees" and going outside without an oxygen tank.	I remember hunting animals instead of poor people...	Wait... are you being serious?
haha... no. Environmental protections were just stupid trade barriers.	lets go hunt some poor people! I like to spear them!	

Tales from 2036

If sure is great that nanotechnology let me transcend my human body and become this robot. Why is that great?	Why, I can live forever. But you can't procreate? Well, I could build a new robot with part of my electro-brain. But you can't have sex?	no... Sounds pretty dumb to me. I have lasers.
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IF GREENPEACE organized a black bloc...

Okay, so we bought 50 black hoodies and 50 pairs of black pants.	have the rental dumpsters to set on fire arrived yet? yup.	lets go!
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No WAR BUT CLASS WAR GREENPEACE

To be fair...

if the black bloc organized a press conference... So far you've talked a lot about what you're against, but not what you're for.	Welfar anti-imperialism, anti-patriarchy, anti-capitalism, anti-authoritarianism, anti-fascism, anti-gentrification, anti-profits, and anti-police. We are also for breaking stuff.	This isn't a press release, it's just a drawing of a middle finger.
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tales of 2036

Where did all the humans and plants and animals go again?	the humans destroyed the weather and then died off, taking most everyone else with them.	Oh yeah. lets go eat their brains. The roaches are in charge now!
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Those pigs are such bastards! one just hit me with his baton!	Do you mean one of the cops you were throwing rocks at?	yeah! He almost broke my arm! Where is the police accountability in this town?
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We at "Anarchy is not Chaos" are trying to dispel the illusion that Anarchism is chaotic. We just advocate a bottom-up power dynamic in the systems of social control.	Social control... you mean like government?	governing body... you mean like government?
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No, no, we're anarchists the governing body will be entirely accountable to the people. You're obviously not listening.

And goods will be distributed through a system of hourly credit.	Oh! you mean like in capitalism?	I miss the days when anarchists wanted anarchy.
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No, we're anti-capitalist. this is the real world, buddy!

what are you doing? I'm writing a manifesto against anarchist authority.	Sounds great. what do you call it?	"Anarchyism: For anarchy to live, anarchism must die."
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Yeah, I'll probably keep travelling until I end up with a kid.	I dunno... it might be nice to travel with a kid.
--	---

Lets see... Dirty socks... Book... Flashlight... What did I do with baby? oh... There it is.

NEED \$ For BABY. No, you CANT HAVE BABY

this one time I was napping a train and...	oh yeah? well one night on this train I...	That's nothing. This one time I caught a train when...
--	--	--

Well, once when I was hitch-hiking...	blank stares	err, I mean I was hopping a train?
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Flies

Oh! trains!	trains trains trains trains	trains trains trains
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Welcome, comrades, to the first meeting of FACASANG-AOCK*	the Federation of Anarcho-Communists and syndicalist allies, Not Green Anarchists Or Crimeth.Inc. Kids	IF there are no objections, I will be acting as facilitator of tonight's meeting.
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We also have Tim to keep stack, John is time keeper, Aaron for Vibes Watch. Does anyone want to take notes? Maybe a woman?	We have allocated the next hour to consensus on an agenda. Maybe we could have a go around to see if people think this is enough time.	3 hours later I'm feeling a bit of a problem with the power dynamic in this socio-political context.
--	--	--

← John ← Aaron

3 more hours I'm hungry. Please dont skip ahead on the agenda.	another 3 hours So then we have just assigned the sub-sub-committee to create our formal critique of the anti-democratic nature of green anarchist practice	3 months later that's right, they appear to have all starved to death.
--	---	--

← Press

* Pronounced Fah-Kas-an-Gock

www.tangledwilderness.org for the web and printable 'zines or check out your favourite disreputable bookstores for the book

WILDCAT

Cartoons by Donald Room
Collected editions available
from Freedom Bookshop

The Cruise Missile will cause more deaths than Hiroshima.

computing.... Statement incorrect. Cruise is aimed at missile silos: not at cities.

The Cruise Missile is a first strike weapon.

computing.... Statement incorrect. Cruise will not be launched until they have launched their missiles.

What is the purpose of firing missiles at empty missile silos??

computing....

er.... computing....

What's the difference between American bloc nuclear weapons and Russian bloc ditto??

computing.... Ours are solely for defence. There's for taking up aggressive postures.

Is that the Nato think tank, or the Warsaw Pact think tank?

Dunno, you can't tell them apart, if you can't see the label.

Correct. We have a joint policy to preserve peace by the threat of mutual destruction.

What a bloody dangerous policy!! Why don't you stop the arms race??

You have three guesses.

Governments need external enemies to keep their own subjects in order?

Guess one: incorrect.

If politicians cut down on weaponry, the military would take over?

Guess two: incorrect.

There's only one other possibility...

Guess three: correct.

Guess three correct. Guess three correct. Guess three correct. We are Daleks in disguise.

Exterminate

Exterminate

FOOM!!

HRUNK!!

Disgraceful, young people rioting when they are given so much ...

Such as, for instance??

... Such as, for instance, little Prince William, and baby Harry, bless him.

GAAARGH!!

They're organized by drug barons, you know.

RIOT! RIOT! RUN AMOK!

O.K. Pussycat. Tell us where you keep your petrol bombs.

I can't afford petrol bombs. The queen confiscates too much, to pay for her hydrogen bombs.

Why are you clobbering a peaceful tax payer?

Because we have a duty to protect democracy.

TANG!!

TANG!!

But you don't protect elected police committees. During the miners' strike you bankrupted a few, paying unauthorized overtime and travelling.

Elected police committees are not democracy. Some are so left wing they even support they Labour Party.

We carry out the mandate, democratically decided, of the Association of Chief Police Officers

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH, ASK A POLICEMAN

WHO ARE THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION?

We are 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 a 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 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 its 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. A 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 as 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**

AIMS 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.



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.

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:-

Website / i-f-a.org

Twitter / IntFedAnarchist

FB / InternationalOfAnarchistFederations

Federación Libertaria Argentina (FLA)
federacionlibertaria.org

Iniciativa Federalista Anarquista (IFABrasil)
anarkio.net

Anarchist Federation (AF)
afed.org.uk

Федерация на анархистите в България (ФАБ)
anarchy.bg

Anarchistická federace (AF)
afed.cz

Fédération Anarchiste (FA)
federation-anarchiste.org

Föderation deutschsprachiger Anarchistinnen (Fda)
fda-ifa.org

Federazione Anarchica Italiana (FAI)
federazioneanarchica.org

Federación Anarquista de México (FAM)
federacionanarquistademexico.org

Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI)
federacionanarquistaiberica.wordpress.com

Federacija za anarhistično organiziranje (FAO)
a-federacija.org

Federazione Anarchica Siciliana (FAS)
fasiciliana.noblogs.org (membership pending)

