

# ORGANISE 93

THEORY AND ANALYSIS  
INTERNATIONAL  
ANTI-FASCISM  
大逆事件  
REFUGEE LIST  
BURN AFTER READING  
RED AND BLACK GAMERS  
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Our cover for this issue features the fantastic artwork of **JESS ROSE**. A perfect accompaniment to our articles from GAF and Earth Strike.

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Fuck the election.

I don't particularly care about which supreme authority the USA ends up with next month.

While that kerfuffle in the states has been going on. I've mostly been looking elsewhere. Movements of liberation and revolutionary actions have blossomed all over the world. It's been beautiful to watch and deeply inspirational. That we have hours of two old pricks having a bunfight instead of analysis of these manifestations of revolutionary action is deeply telling don't you think?

It seems to me that people started looking to elections as their solutions because somewhere along the line we seem to have stopped believing in ourselves. The waxing and waning of movements has taken a near fatal blow these past few years where we have seen very little distinctly Anarchist organising, we've deferred responsibility and let's be honest, sat idle as liberal movements paraded about. (Well except GAF, props. to 'em)

So look, we are about to enter an "inbetween time" as we step into the British separation from Europe. Anarchists thrive in these times. They are the window in which we are best suited to taking action. However we can't take action if we don't believe in our purpose, our method and ourselves.

Self belief only comes with actions and results, so start taking some and getting some. Little rebellions. Instigate them and help them to snowball. I hope the stories contained within this issue help to inspire you to act. Let us know about it.

We're entering the inbetween times and it's time for some thrilling revolutionary action. Believe.

Love and Rage  
Peter Ó Máille  
Editor of Organise!

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.

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84b Whitechapel High St.  
London E1 7QX

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# THE QUEER POLISH REVOLUTION IS JUST BEGINNING

When I received news about the first arrest I was working a summer job in the middle of nowhere, pruning flowers as a gardener's assistant. My fingers left traces of soil on my phone screen, as I read one Facebook post after another: Margot arrested. Nobody knew where she was. At 5am She was forcibly dragged out of a friend's flat by people in plain clothes. She was barefoot. At that point nobody was able to contact her. At that moment, I remembered what Margot had posted on her Facebook on the national dog day (In Poland we call cops dogs instead of pigs) "I know that Polish police will sooner or later kill me". Suffice to say, the whole community was worried sick. Margot later was released from detention after 24 hours - but she was soon to return behind bars - and this time, she would be kept there for three weeks, shake this shitty country to its core and unmasking fake allies.

Margot is a member of "Stop Bzdurom"(Stop Bullshit), which is a queer anarchist collective that has been continuously targeted by the Polish government. To understand what "Stop Bzdurom" is all about, you first have to get familiar with its polar opposite, a group whose bigotry pushed LGBTQ activists to action. The group is a branch of Pro Foundation and despite the rationally sounding name, their activities revolve around spreading disgusting lies about the LGBT community. They spread unfounded claims such as "Paedophilic acts are committed by homosexuals 20 times more often [than heterosexuals]" They also claim that any kind of sexual education is child depravation and that it actually leads to child sexual abuse, despite numerous studies proving the exact opposite. The group other unsavoury acts include calling the W.H.O guidelines on sexual education "LGBT lobby" while taking their fragments out of context to feed their narrative to then blast those claims through loudspeakers mounted on trucks, or while just standing around on city squares, collecting signatures under some kind of bigoted petition while they're at it.

But what can be expected from people calling the W.H.O's guidelines o sex ed "an LGBT lobby" misreading them, and then blasting said claims through loudspeakers mounted on trucks, or while just kind of

standing around on city squares, collecting signatures under some kind of bigoted petition while they're at it.

It was on such an occasion in the spring of 2019, when Margot and her wife Łania decided that something should be done. They organized a series of dancing protests in front of Stop Pedofili's loudspeakers, drowning out their bigotry with queer bops, and drawing in crowds of beautiful, rainbow-clad people. They distributed leaflets debunking the groups' lies one by one, and put up a website. And thus, Stop Bzdurom was born.

They have organized many protests and other initiatives since. The one that began this whole ordeal this summer was pretty tame when compared to the avalanche of events it started. The Pro Foundation's truck, spewing hateful bullshit from a loudspeaker and banners on its sides, had the audacity to drive through Wilcza street, where the Syrena squat is located- and where a community of anarchist activists, including Margot and Łania, lives. Margot and a few other girls stopped the truck, tore down the banners, and confronted the agitated driver who jumped out of the car. Margot tried to stop him from recording the situation, and in the scuffle the driver fell down. And that seemed to be about it.

That is, until the early morning of July 14, when the arrest took place. Margot is the only one facing charges in this case at the moment, of battery and criminal damage to be precise, and faces up to seven years in prison. She also spent three weeks in detention - all of which is extremely severe and unfair treatment for the misdemeanours she committed. Her harsh treatment was requested by the D.A General Zbigniew Ziobro, and other high ranking institutions, who usually do not take care of such infractions. It is a clear attempt to use Margot as a scapegoat, along with the rest of Polish LGBTQ community. To understand why, you have to understand the environment in which polish queers have lived for the last couple of years.

Election years have been tough for minorities in Poland for some time. The ruling populist party >>

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (ironically, it means Law and Justice), utilizes the tactic of presenting a group as a threat to the Polish nation and its values. In 2015, it used to be refugees and for the last couple of election cycles it has been the LGBT community. The party has been portraying the community as something lurking in the shadows, conspiring to destroy the Polish values, way of life, and families.

PiS claimed that only their party was able to save the true Polish way of life. It has worked splendidly so far. You might have heard about the famed LGBT-free zones established by various local governments all across Poland. Fortunately, the resolutions don't introduce any new laws yet, besides stamping the region in question with a "we officially, and proudly, hate fags".

Recently, there also have been an influx of queerphobic statements made by people in the authority - most notably archbishop Jędraszewski's words calling LGBTQ community "a rainbow disease", or a opinion stated by no one other than the president of Poland Andrzej Duda "LGBT aren't people, they are an ideology". At the time, he was running for re-election at the time, and is now serving his second term in the office - so no, no serious repercussions for that dude.

The Queer community has been presented to the mainstream public as sort of a United Front of Destruction of Polish values, families, faith and, on a productive day, the polish identity itself. What that was lacking image lacked, was a face - it's not that easy to instigate burning hate in a disembodied concept. And then, Margot's actions came as a godsend. She is gender non-conforming, transgender and non-binary - all of these words sounding like hexes to an untrained Polish ear. Stop Bzdurom doesn't politely ask for basic human rights to be granted to LGBTQ people - they demand them and are willing to fight for them, which is something that makes even the self-proclaimed allies-neo-liberals clutch their pearls. The government had the unique opportunity of killing two birds with one stone, by punishing Margot severely, and then publicizing it heavily- they could both break the spirit of some of the boldest queers on the block, and instil even more hate in the Polish nation.

General public reaction? Well, the right-wing erupted in death threats, and graphic wishes for Margot to get raped in jail - no surprise there. Many "well-meaning" neo-liberals claimed that if the queer community wants to be taken seriously, they should be more timid, polite, stop making a fuss and politely wait for civil rights to be granted to them. Well, I don't think they will be taking that particular advice.

What the government did not expect, was somewhat cliché- the solidarity of the queer community. When cops arrived to take Margot to jail for two months (in the end she served three weeks of that), hundreds of people protested, even in the face of atrocious police brutality - 48 people were arrested in the process, many faced physical and sexual abuse in jail. Dozens of solidarity protests were organized all over the country and abroad. The uproar resulted in bringing the queer community to light, into mainstream discourse.

Margot was released after three weeks, spent mostly in isolation. The queer community in Poland is changing - there are some that will rather distance themselves, desperately hoping to gain the approval of heteronormative society. But the rest is radicalising- and that's exactly who has the chance to finally make this shithole a better place. Radical solidarity, intersectionality, rejecting false allies who only care about profit, and sisterhood with other marginalized groups such as sex workers- this is Stop Bzdurom's plan for a queer polish revolution.■

## Mordekaj Poćwiardowski





## THE THREE-HEADED LEFTIST

Janus, the Roman god of gateways, duality, and transitions, had two faces: one facing the future and one facing the past. This makes him a kind of patron saint of our times. We are caught in the chaos of transition, the gateway to the future is open but we are trapped on the edge. As Gramsci said “the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear”. One such symptom is the wailing of the centrists, particularly normcore liberal politicians and journalists, who without a critique of capitalism or any project for a good society are completely bereft. To the side of this are the leftists - a ragtag mix of electoralists and revolutionaries, on a spectrum from capitalist-critical to full anti-capitalist. Our morbid symptom is that despite recent advances, through the current social and ecological crises - we lack mass organisation to tackle capital and the state.

We leftists face a dilemma, we are always vulnerable to burying ourselves in the tactics of the present, whether campaigning or direct action, at the risk of forgetting the long term utopian goal. Conversely, we can often get lost in theory, particularly online, and never actually organise to do something. And what is it we should be doing anyway? We want to link our short term tactics, with longer term strategies towards our goals but let's face it, against the totalising leviathan of capitalism, this is can seem impossible - and the inherent tensions between elections and revolution; and short and long term goals; direct action and community organising - make this even harder.

I want to discuss a tool for negotiating this, one that Janus may approve of, and one that involves embracing this duality, or triality, in a productive way, not to remove the contradiction but to reconcile with it so that we might chart a productive way forward. I think that to overcome this we should embrace three personalities, three modes of thinking: the politician, the revolutionary and the utopian. These roughly fit into the short, medium and long term; a continuum of tactics, strategies and goals. The aim is to mediate between these three modes, too much emphasis of any one will cause damage to the others and ultimately damage our efforts overall. Equally to ignore one will be detrimental as well. Furthermore, they are not a set of directives, but a map. The aim is to make the territory clear, so that we can know where we are when we move between them.

First, permeating through these three modes are the principles of political change developed by Aaron Moritz and Shawn Vulliez on the SRSly Wrong podcast, a “utopian comedy podcast” and powerhouse for libertarian socialist ideas. They talk about influencing change through Narrative, Prefiguration and Entryism. Narrative is the struggle for counter-hegemony, promoting persuasion, ideas and theory related to your goal in all media platforms and spaces. Everything from conversations with family to speculative fiction. Prefiguration is already well known, but to recap, involves the shaping of your current means >> of organisation and action to match your future ends, building the new within the shell of the old. It is to

recognise that to a man with a hammer everything looks like a nail, and a cruel movement will create a cruel world. Entryism is appropriating, occupying and using current systems in ways that benefit your future goals. They argue that whatever strategy or project you have, it will inevitably involve these principles.

### **The Politician**

The politician is the realist, the footsoldier, the tactician adept in realpolitik. I have been deliberately provocative with the name, one could just as easily call them the activist or just the realist. The question for them is: what is most immediately beneficial for vulnerable people? What can immediately benefit the movement? Therefore their thinking is primarily tactical. We can formulate this in terms of elections, or supporting particular policies, but we can also formulate this in the sense of community organisers, and their day-to-day decisions around what to prioritise and support now. Should we focus on counter-protesting fascists? Building a mutual-aid food bank? Starting a magazine? All of these are important but time, resources and energy are scarce. The value of the politician is developing the skills required to out-fox our adversaries, a hostile media, and an increasingly totalitarian government. And still being able to relate to the mainstream, acting as a friendly gatekeeper to more radical politics.

The main principle here is entryism. We should use the existing power structures to our advantage as far as it is beneficial to do so. I agree wholeheartedly that capitalism will never allow itself to be reformed out of existence, but equally there is no denying that we are not in the position for a direct social revolution, and massive power exists in the state - power that can improve the conditions for the working class, give vital oxygen to the flame of radical politics, and fight the ecological crisis. Furthermore, if we do not contest this power it will inevitably be taken by the reactionaries. It is madness to me that we would never hesitate to organise a protest to contest the detention of migrants but we view contesting the right's power by voting for a leftist candidate as a controversial issue.

I'm not denying the tension here, anarchists have a long history of being betrayed by their supposed allies, and as we all know that electoralism can sap energy from

a radical movement. The anarcho-communist critique is that you cannot achieve a social revolution through elections, essentially Audre Lorde's the "master's tools will never dismantle the master's house". Ultimately, this is undeniable but the answer is that there are people in need of help now, who we do not have the resources to reach ourselves. We should not accept any blackpill accelerationism. It is a grim form of leftism to happily let things deteriorate to improve conditions for revolution. It's more likely to inspire a fascist one. Equally, the desire to remain unsullied by politics, a 'beautiful soul', though a more understandable objection because politics is hard, disappointing and dirty, falls down also. Voting, or even some doorstepping is not going to make you a corrupt political insider.

I draw the line at an 'anarchist party', for me the history of social democrat parties show us this is likely to cause more harm than good. Equally, not voting if the candidate is not aligned with our principles is essential. The 'lesser of two evils' means that the neoliberal social democrats can count on left wing support no matter what they do. Biden being the perfect example of this. Our support for candidates should be conditional and temporary, but equally if there is someone who is genuinely leftist then we should support them, and if we are inclined, even campaign for them and influence the party at local levels. Beyond voting, it is the pressure that we can exert externally that is most important. The history of social movements often show a productive dialectic between moderate and radical wings of a movement, a la suffragettes and suffragists. There can be mutual autonomy whilst still achieving success. Let's also not deny reality, the Sanders and Corbyn campaigns have been the most powerful recruitment drive for anticapitalist politics in recent history. There has always been a creative tension between electoral and revolutionary politics, arguably these movements originally fed off the disappointment following the Occupy movement and post-crash apathy; and we in turn can feed off the disappointment that they generate (no matter how they do in the ballot box).

The Politician must be balanced with the other modes. Alone they are future-less, all they can offer is an apology for a managed decline. This is the territory of Mark Fisher's Capitalist Realism - that currently it is

easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. Ultimately the pure politician will slip into the seductive ideology of the system, whose main priority is the maintenance of the status quo, the ultra-cynical repetition of the election cycle skewed in shows like *The Thick of It* and *Veep*. How many leftists in politics have fallen for this siren song?

However, the radical left is not off the hook either. Activism can become an escape fantasy if it lacks a wider vision, as in the case of many communes set up after the 60s, and many state socialist parties that have become a machine for newspaper distribution. Because there is a performative element to much direct action, which in itself is no bad thing, but alone without any other goals this can quite easily become the end in itself. I'm sure we can all think of close-to-home examples. I'll try to show that in combination with the other modes of thinking, we can balance the inherent risk of forgetting what we set out to achieve.

### **The Revolutionary**

The revolutionary is the midwife to the future. This is our medium term project, to raise consciousness and expand the movement to deliver the social revolution. Like the real midwife this project is bloody, traumatic and beautiful. Their concern is primarily strategic, they must ask what wider strategies should we employ that can bring about our goals? But balancing the politician and the utopian is the hardest position to maintain.

I want to clarify what is meant by a social revolution. There is a spectrum of revolution; from a popular rebellion, to the profound far reaching revolution that really encompasses the change that the term literally implies, i.e. on the scale of the transition between feudalism and capitalism. This didn't happen all at once but in stops and starts, with lacunae of the new emerging, in some places there were ruptures of violence and in some change was more subtle, but the change ultimately affected all societies on earth. The social revolution is the directed goal of the movement to affect change on this scale.

The mention of the 'R' word is usually when you get the pearl-clutching pacifist response from liberals. We should never be flippant about violence, as it doesn't

much prefigure our utopia, but we should always calmly explain that the aim is a vast reduction of violence from our current level. We should point to the immeasurable amount of structural and direct violence perpetrated by capitalism and nation states (e.g. constant warfare, environmental catastrophe and starvation amidst abundance), and remind the liberal that not one of their bourgeois revolutions was won without violence. Would they have asked the Haitian slaves to lay down their arms in favour of peaceful protest in the marketplace of ideas? At the time probably they would have, but now this, the French and the American revolutions, the suffragettes, civil rights... all have been entered into the ledger of the heroic past. Despite this, I think a popular insurrection is only actually likely to happen, when the amount of direct violence imposed by the state has reached a certain level. This is clearly not the case yet in major western democracies. The genius of capitalism is to decentralise and depersonalise the violence. When a homeless person freezes to death outside a heated empty building, who is to blame? The system, but we cannot storm the system.

Between the Politician and the Revolutionary, are 'revolutionary reforms'. These are specifically measures that make organising towards the social revolution and pushing for future reforms easier. I, of course, support anything that makes material conditions for the working class better - healthcare, minimum wages etc - but I am specifically interested in reforms that can give the working class more time, space and power. Ideally satisfying several of these needs with material benefit as well. Deregulation of union laws, four-day week, even universal basic income (with expansion of universal services) these hand space and time to the working class - spaces to organise, time away from work, time to recover, time to think about life beyond survival. I think that the pressure of capital on our time, and the exhaustion it produces, is a major method of control, and one that is vital to contest. UBI in particular, if it is not accompanied by a rollback of welfare, has the power to decouple wages from work and hand real bargaining power to people with a massive improvement in material conditions. Additionally, anything that decentralises decision-making in the hands of local communities makes it easier for us to gain power. We should push particularly for forms of democracy outside >>

parliament; e.g. participatory budgeting, sorticians (citizen juries), citizen assemblies - anything that can develop the practices of horizontal direct democracy in the real world. We must be aware that these will all likely require sustained external pressure from an organised left movement, but equally they can be rallying points to build an organised left movement. We must also be prepared that we may never achieve these through the state, they will always be partial and vulnerable to undermining from a hostile establishment. For this reason we must never fall for 'waiting for salvation'. As Malatesta said "we will take or win all possible reforms with the same spirit that one tears occupied territory from the enemy's grasp." Ultimately, no revolutionary reform will be enough, they are just a tool to help oxygenate the movement, not an end in themselves.

I think we should pivot away from thinking that any one confrontation will bring about lasting revolution. The building of community and workplace mutual aid and solidarity networks is the key to social revolution. The starting point should be finding out what needs are not currently being supplied, and then figuring out how we can meet them through non-hierarchical mutual aid. For example, For workplace organising the principles are the same, but the emphasis may be on forming a radical union within a union or fighting for democratic decision making. It is vital that this is not missionary work, imposed by leftist orgs on working class people. Therefore, we must accept that ideological purity is not a prerequisite, the need must always come first, linking this up to the politics will follow organically later. We should of course be open about anarchism, and in other spaces like info-stalls, we can be more direct, but we must never proselytize. On top of this good faith we can build more complex structures to widen the scope of what needs we can supply. I think the only path towards mass organisation is firstly it must come from the needs and decisions of communities, and secondly it must connect to a wider political narrative. It is only through a genuinely bottom-up, embedded, democratic movement that we can exploit the deep techno-economic transition and when the rupture with state and capital comes, actually succeed long term. I like to think of a mighty tree that, having started growing through the floorboards, now stands tall over the ruins of the old house.

The revolutionary mode incorporates the weaknesses of both politician and utopian modes; it can create a 'grey goo' organisation. One that just seeks to increase in size and replicate, converting everything around it into something recognisable within its ideology. Often these kinds of parties or organisations have no conception of a utopia, and they will describe their politics only in terms of negation - anti this and that etc. It is not surprising then that the most important principle for the revolutionary (though all three are critical) is prefiguration. It is prefiguration that ties the realist tactics to the goals of the utopian, it is also what keeps organisations honest and accountable to their project and members, and it gives us the best guide as to how to act. As we all know, the danger of a toxic organisation is that they actually succeed.

Finally the unique danger of the revolutionary mode can occur even in the best of organisations. The problem comes from the change that comes about when one accepts revolutionary politics, because to do so is to leave the comfortable hope of electoral salvation, and the fantasizing of 'after the revolution'. It is to take your share of the responsibility for changing the world. All whilst surviving under capitalism and suffering harassment from the police. The weight of all this is a good way to burn out, or worse - depression, anxiety and suicide. This is why the revolutionary mode is the hardest position.

### **The Utopian**

The Utopian is concerned with the realisation of communism - a society in which, as much as possible, all human needs are satisfied to nurture and promote human flourishing, with power decentralised in our social networks of communities and workplaces, and organised along consensus decision-making and direct democracy federated up to a council of councils. The long term, multi-generational goal. A goal which is not an ending but a beginning of history. Namely, the project of universal human emancipation. This gives us something worth fighting for, something to balance the despair of daily set-backs and the cruelties of the system. This thinking is critical, vital to breaking the frozen thought of capitalist realism. We must open up imaginary horizons, and never concede this territory to the right.

Utopianism is widely criticised from all sections of politics, especially from liberal centrists. But how barbaric is it that our 'leaders' have no project for a good society? At best we are offered miserly portions of social democracy; a little extra public spending here, some fiddling with income tax there. When we think as a utopian we can see these for what they are: poorly constructed sandcastles ready to be washed away with the next wave, designed to placate us and keep our eyes off the horizon.

The utopian is vulnerable to not actually doing anything to achieve these goals. Certain of our fellow travellers who have drunk too much deterministic dialectical materialist kool-aid, have been seduced by the thought that communism is inevitable (a misinterpretation of the original idea but nonetheless widely held). Whether it may seem this way in hindsight, we cannot act like it is, to do so would make failure inevitable.

We must also reject any blueprint thinking, or 'bad utopianism'. To paraphrase Anarchopac: anarchism is not a blueprint for a perfect society, but a method for a better one. We should not pretend that we can work out how to organise every aspect of anarchist society, flawlessly, in advance, in a single totalising plan. Of course we would organise things through existing expertise on technical matters, communal self-determination and experimentation. Equally, this does not mean that we should not discuss these ideas and experiment with them in our organising now, because after all to ask people to step into the unknown with no plans at all would be impossible. To a reasonable extent we should lay our cards on the table. Though it always must remain an open question.

Above all it is the narrative work that is most important to the utopian. We must plant a garden in everyone's head. As Eduardo Galeano said "Utopia is on the horizon. I move two steps closer; it moves two steps further away... As much as I may walk, I'll never reach it. So what's the point of utopia? The point is this: to keep walking." The purpose is not to create a perfect society but one with better problems.

## Conclusion

The point of this is to give leftists some kind of compass to help them decide what to do. To realise that there are tensions within our politics, but that some cognitive dissonance (or split-personality) might go some way to reconciling with them without having to resolve them. So what should we do? For me the answer is clear. At the time of writing the COVID-19 epidemic is spreading widely throughout the world and causing waves of confusion, isolation and solidarity in the UK. This crisis beautifully exposes the heart of the left's message: Humans are what matters, we are all vulnerable and interconnected, and our needs - food, healthcare, relationships etc - are what's essential in our society. Everyone can see clearly that it is the precarious groups - retail workers, delivery drivers, refuse collectors, not marketing executives that are the true critical infrastructure of this country. The response has been the formation of nationwide mutual aid groups, swinging rapidly into action along non-hierarchical structures, to deliver food, medicines and human interaction to people self-isolating. In the future, as we build deeper links to our communities, we can tackle the slow burn crises of capitalism, ecosystem and state, by linking this mutual aid to the narrative - that these problems are a feature not a bug of the current system. This is not political opportunism of a crisis, it's because these crises turn political theory into common sense.

This then is the task of the left: The Revolutionary to prefigure the social revolution by building a mutual aid network in every neighbourhood and a radical union in every workplace, not as missionary work but genuinely from the people who live there. The Politician, to respond to these crises when they occur, and to contest power wherever it may lie, both with electoralism and direct action: conditional support of parties, but most importantly keeping constant external pressure to force them to deliver revolutionary reforms. Finally, the Utopian to narrate the crisis, form a counter-hegemony to the right and reclaim the project for a better society by expanding the horizons of people's imagination. ■

**Ben Fricker-Muller**

# ANTI-FASCISM

## Fighting to Win

We're living in a period of huge political significance and it can be seen everywhere. From passing conversations about the current state of affairs to the increasing division in our cities to the international insurrections that are taking place in Hong Kong, Haiti, Ecuador, Lebanon, Catalonia, Colombia, Chile, West Papua and of course Rojava. However despite many of these movements being anti-capitalist and anti-state in nature, there is also a terrifying potential for fascism to further capitulate on the vacuum that is left by the demand for change being unfulfilled by leftists in many nations.

It is not new knowledge that fascism is on the rise; arguably the last 20 years have all been a part of fascism's return to the main stage. Even before the fascistic rise to power of Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and a host of other authoritarians like Viktor Orban in Hungary, Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, the Law and Justice party in Poland, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Narendra Modi in India, the signs of a latent fascist movement have been there.

For example, the BNP, one of the most continuously present fascist movements in the UK in the last 40 years have long been seen as a failed movement that haven't been a serious threat since they were beaten off the streets by the AFA in the 80's. However, following the 2008 financial crisis, the BNP managed to gain 2 MEPs in 2009 and receive over 500,000 votes in the 2010 general election.

How did this happen? Firstly there are the obvious reasons, the fact that fascism thrives in response to economic turmoil is well known and is often one of the main reasons given as to how Hitler rose to power following Germany's economic destruction. This is a very real point to be made, when you cannot feed your children, it is very hard to say no to someone promising you a rapid solution at the expense of a minority of people who you often don't know.

Looking slightly deeper we see that a vote for a fascist is often a desperate vote, one which is only done by

working class people when it is believed there are no other options. This being said, it is extremely important to note that it is not fair to blame the 'white working class' for fascism as many liberals do, fascism has and always will be supported by the middle class when the fear of decline is in the air.

Trotsky wrote that "The main army of fascism still consists of the petit bourgeoisie and the new middle classes; the small artisans and shopkeepers of the cities, the petty officials, the employees, the technical personnel, the intelligentsia, the impoverished peasantry". The point I believe can be made that the reason fascism grows within the lower middle-classes is because primarily, fascism is an ideology of conservatism. Many would argue that fascists are inherently revolutionary in that they seek to overthrow the liberal democratic system, but ultimately the destruction of the current system is only to create a much more explicit version of itself. A fascist society would not be revolutionary to western society, especially for those who have long been targets of the state's near-totalitarian measures.

Fascism has appeal to those who already have a stake in society but who are fearful of losing it, this stake can be seen financially in economic crises, but also culturally, the idea that 'to those accustomed to privilege, equality looks like oppression' is key to fascism's appeal to the 'white working class'. The hierarchy proposed within fascism already exists in current society due to systemic racism, anti-immigrant laws, vast inequality and the continued efforts of the state to attack working people. The 'white working class', having close to nothing economically, but feeling accustomed to the privileges of being white and 'British' in a racist society, turn to fascism to defend this privilege. Whereas the middle class turn to fascists to defend their economic and social status in the face of far left movements which often rise at similar times.

All of this discussion of what fascism really is can be useful in understanding modern fascism, but ultimately fascism is an incoherent ideology that is most strongly characterized by a concentration of power in the

hands of those who will do anything to hold on to it. This incoherence can be seen in the twists and turns of the German Nazi party who started as explicitly anti-capitalist, yet upon gaining more and more power consolidated their power by privatizing industry en masse to strengthen links with industrialists and raise funds for the party.

This incoherence does not mean there are not ways we can fight fascists that are concrete, it does mean that any serious anti-fascist movement must be adaptable and willing to deploy a wide diversity of tactics.

### **Using physical opposition to stop fascists**

One of the most controversial things in discussion with liberals is the use of violence to stop fascist movements. You have most likely heard a lot of the liberal arguments so there's no need to rehash them, but the reason violence is necessary is more complicated than just the fact that fascists don't deserve teeth (although this is true).

Firstly and most importantly, is community self-defence. Fascism kills, and as we've seen in the past with the harrowing murders of Altab Ali, Stephen Lawrence or Rolan Adams who all died at the hands of racist thugs emboldened by fascist rhetoric. For non-white and non-'British' people living in the UK, existence is enough to provoke attacks that historically the police will not prevent or commit serious resources to solve. It is for this reason that the 'violence' that is labelled as dangerous by right wing institutions is often just community self-defence. Having a strong and militant resistance against the far right in your community can quite literally save lives.

Only recently did we see the Finsbury Park Mosque attack, with it's perpetrator having received direct messages from fascist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon in the run up to the attack. The far-right always have a violent wing ready to attack innocent people, and therefore it is necessary to have militant wings dedicated to the self-defence of communities and the people who are targeted most.

The second main reason as to why physical resistance to fascism is necessary is because as previously discussed, a fascist movement can only succeed when it unites it's

base of the disenfranchised working class, the fearful middle class and the ultra-rich who bankroll fascist movements in an attempt to drive a division in working people and stop real left wing movements from gaining traction.

In the UK we can see many of these groups that are required for fascism to succeed are stratified and lack unity. Groups like the DFLA and many of Tommy Robinson's core fanbase appear to be the traditional base for the BNP and National Front, consisting of largely working class men who are seen as 'football hooligans' instead of a serious political movement. These groups are dangerous, not only can they attack civilians but they also act as the boot boys of more organised fascist movements, providing a fear factor to middle class fascist movements. However they fail to gain the real momentum needed to amount to serious political change.

By keeping a physical presence on the football hooligan movements, anti fascists not only can limit the level of damage inflicted by these groups on civilians by redirecting the fascist's violence towards themselves but also the physical presence stops the groups from gaining traction within the middle classes and those who don't feel comfortable in confrontational situations -- the simplest way to put this is not many middle class fascists, moderate fascists or financiers can line up to support a leader with a black eye and a ripped suit. Anti-fascists in the UK must start thinking seriously about whether mass demonstrations are the best place to keep those who are willing to put themselves in physical danger, or if they would be more effective in smaller groups directly confronting fascists in other ways. The mass demonstration will always have a place within the anti-fascist movement, but it can't be the only weapon in the arsenal. Ultimately we need to create an atmosphere in which the real far right, the fascist leaders, are scared to walk down the street alone.

**Ripping out the roots - targeting the cause of fascism**  
Lenin, someone I don't enjoy quoting, famously said "fascism is capitalism in decay" and this, in my opinion, can be read in two main ways. Firstly that when capitalism is under threat from anti-capitalist movements, the rich will deploy fascism to >>

stop these movements both physically and ideologically. Secondly that the conditions created by late-stage capitalism provide a strong breeding ground for fascism. This is observable today and is a constant reminder that fascism will exist as long as capitalism exists.

The link between capitalism and fascism is not a recent revelation and it doesn't need any more time dedicated towards it, what is an issue is that this isn't taken into account as much as it should be when discussing anti-fascism.

Building a revolutionary anti-capitalist movement is necessary in the fight against fascism. It will of course cause tension between anti-fascists who are noted for being broad left, but it stands as a point of necessity. If you are an anti-fascist and you are serious about fighting fascism and have the capability, you ought to be spending time supporting and organizing with groups fighting for revolution as a large number of anti-fascists do. The roots of fascism lie in capitalism and this should underpin any and all anti-fascist organisations.

While a revolution is necessary and possible, there is a huge amount of completely non-violent anti-fascist work that must be done that doesn't normally fall under the banner of anti-fascism. Through mutual aid, anti-fascists can reduce the appeal of fascistic ideas and create structures based upon intersectionality and support. This can mean setting up or supporting a community garden that feeds those who are food insecure without relying on donations. This also pushes those inclined towards fascism through desperation to realise that supporting one another through cooperation leads to a greater outcome for all.

Similarly, building community structures can connect those who are distrustful of refugees, immigrants or people of colour based on a lack of interaction that leaves them vulnerable to right wing scaremongering and propaganda to the people they despise in a way that makes their fear irrational. As a friend told me recently, "The fash bus into London, they don't live here because more Londoners live side-by-side with immigrants and people of colour and see them as their neighbours than out in the country". While I don't want to idealise metropolitan areas as free of racism or pretend that the

only difference between a racist and a non-racist is a friendly meeting with a person of colour, there is no stronger way of removing false ideas about a group than by living and interacting with the group in question.

This is also an important point about the inclusivity of the anti-fascist movement. As many have seen through organising, anti-fascism can be lacking in diversity in many areas where the 'violent' image of anti-fascism attracts those who seek to bolster their own masculinity while discouraging those who don't feel comfortable or are not able to participate in direct confrontations. By recognizing that anti-fascism can be done peacefully, and that a social center or community-run food bank can be more damaging to a fascist than a direct confrontation, the anti-fascist movement can be open to a wider range of people.

### **Communities against fascism**

One of the biggest failings of many modern anti-fascist movements has been and continues to be the fact that those organising and turning up to anti-fascist demonstrations are in the class of 'activist' many of which are not the primary targets of fascists themselves. If we look back in history at the great and widely celebrated victories in British anti-fascist organising like the Battle of Cable Street or the lesser known Battle of South Street, the largest difference between these and many modern day anti-fascist demonstrations is that those in attendance in the past were primarily from the local area and not necessarily anti-fascists above all else, but workers and local community members opposed to fascism.

It is fairly well known that one of the main reasons behind the success of Cable Street is that the area itself was heavily populated by Jewish and Irish workers who were direct targets of Oswald Mosley's BUF. The area was quite literally defending itself because the community knew their threat and worked with what we might call more organised antifascist groups coordinated by communists and anarchists to achieve a huge turnout on the day.

This should be the role of anti-fascist groups in regard to mass demonstrations, to coordinate and support communities who are directly impacted by fascism

to turn out and oppose them while defending their communities.

Obviously in recent times this has become more complicated with fascists deliberately holding demonstrations in commercial and non-residential areas where there is very little community to stand against them. In London this is seen as protest after protest is held in the completely non-residential area surrounding Parliament and Westminster. This is an issue but ultimately there still exists communities close by that have workers and residents who are willing to stand up and fight back against the far right.

The actions here need to involve not only leafleting in centers of communities but also being willing to support and work with a wide range of community groups. Many groups are taking steps in this direction, but things are moving slowly.

Overall I have a lot of confidence in the future of anti-fascism. Young people growing up in a world where many of the ruling powers are either implicitly or openly supportive of racism and authoritarianism as a means of securing their goals are forced to choose a side and from what I've seen they're choosing to fight against it.

However, despite the potential for increased numbers and momentum, anti-fascists in the UK need to seriously assess their tactics in combating the far right in the long term and ensuring that we see an end to fascism in our lifetimes. ■

### An antifascist organiser in London



**HELLO**  
my name is

Lorin Radu (21)  
00023/34,361

Shot in front of police station in  
Saxony-Anhalt (Germany) during escape attempt

21/01/93

## REFUGEE LIST

### Using Social Media and Art Activism to Fight for Refugee Rights and the Victims of 'Fortress Europe'

*"Most refugees don't want to live in Europe, they want a decent life back home. Instead of working to achieve that, Western powers treat the problem as a 'humanitarian crisis' whose two extremes are hospitality and the fear of losing our way of life. They thereby create a pseudo-'cultural' antagonism between refugees and the local lower-class population, engaging them in conflict which transforms a politico-economic struggle into one of the 'clash of civilizations'". - Slavoj Žižek*

The European border-defence industry is booming, with the European Commission pledging €11.2 billion over the next decade to Frontex, the EU's Border and Coast Agency. In 2015 the Head of Frontex stated that "Saving migrant lives in the Mediterranean should not be the priority for the maritime patrols." Since then over 15,000 people have perished trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to safety. If a refugee is fortunate enough to survive their journey, they face dehumanising political rhetoric, far-right violence and impossible asylum processes. In 2012 Theresa May stated, "The aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration." This declaration signalled the beginning of the 'Hostile Environment', a collection of policies that lead to the Windrush Scandal, the rise of xenophobia across the UK and EU, and the further deaths of thousands of refugees. >>

As a recent arts graduate I felt that I had a responsibility to use my artistic practice and public platform to bring light to some of the realities faced by the victims of “Fortress Europe”, this developed into the social media project, @Refugee\_List, the British and European refugee policy summed up in the name labels of those who didn't survive - 40,500 deaths and counting.

At the time of writing the UK is seeing a rise in far-right anti-refugee rhetoric caused by an increase in asylum seekers coming to the country. The reason for the rise in refugees attempting the dangerous journey at this time is insultingly claimed by the media to be caused by things such as good weather, although a crackdown on refugee camps in Calais by the local police is more likely to be the primary motive. Care 4 Calais and other refugee advocacy charities are reporting that police are taking refugee's bedding, food and other comforts, essentially forcing them to make the desperate decision of attempting the journey to the UK or starving to death on the streets of Calais.

When refugees and the issues surrounding them are discussed, especially by politicians and the media, we often find that refugees are spoken of homogeneously, as a social and cultural monolith. Labels such as ‘immigrant’, ‘migrant’, ‘asylum-seeker’ and ‘refugee’ are used interchangeably with little concern for actual definition and always used as a pejorative. The far-right of the political and media classes will use more overtly xenophobic language or refer to vastly different groups of displaced people as some kind of indistinguishable mass of people, even going so far as to recycle actual Nazi propaganda, as Nigel Farage did with UKIP's ‘Breaking Point’ campaign. The reason behind this tactic is simple, to dehumanise refugees, and to misdirect the European populace.

By painting desperate men, women and children as some sort of hive-mind intently opposed to “western values”, it forces the people of Europe to see refugees as an ‘Other’, an invading enemy, rather than the truth that these people are our equals escaping the destruction and despair brought on by capitalist imperialism, who are desperate for the safety and prosperity that we also strive for. This tactic is very often laser-focused as propaganda for the working class who are traditionally most disposed to see eye-to-eye with refugees. This is why

**HELLO**  
my name is

**Name Unknown (Child, 3)**  
1,641/36,570

Drowned with 25 others in the Adriatic Sea near Vlorë (Albania) while trying to reach Italy

16/05/1999

you will constantly see anti-refugee rhetoric stating that “Immigrants are taking your jobs” or paradoxically, “Immigrants are just coming here for the benefits.” Ultimately if you are made to believe that a victim of a humanitarian crisis is responsible for you losing your job, it lets your boss, your MP, and ultimately, Capitalism off the hook. This tactic also has the added benefit of eradicating the very concept of working-class solidarity. It instils a selfish, individualist attitude that leads to the skewed logic that these ‘Others’ are coming here not to escape war, famine, oppression, rape, torture and slavery, but to have a free ride on benefits. This logic obviously ignores the fact that it is essentially impossible to live comfortably on the contemporary benefits system and that the system is intentionally designed to ensure that even native claimants are forced to live in abject misery, let alone someone who was not born in the UK. This attitude of “I've got mine” is a great way to ensure that workplaces no longer have any sense of class solidarity, which in-turn eradicates unionism. The perks of fostering this selfish xenophobia in the working class

**HELLO**  
my name is

**Name Unknown**  
3497 /36,570

Missing with 46 others after vessel cap-sized in rough sea between Lampedusa (Italy) and Malta.

07/03/02

# HELLO my name is

**Ebune Christian Ecole (Man 31)**  
2802 /36,570

Died of heart failure. Beaten by police during violent deportation from Budapest International Airport (Hungary).

18/12/00

are virtually endless for capitalistic oppressors.

Along with erasing class solidarity, scapegoating refugees is also an incredibly potent diversionary tactic. The rhetoric and aesthetics of refugees create a compelling spectacle that is very easy to weave into a dangerous nationalist narrative, drawing eyes, minds and newspaper columns away from what is truly worrying for the government. As I write this, recently it was announced that following the government's homicidal reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK has fallen into the deepest recession since records began. For the Tories, a political party that brands itself on being good at economics, and that must consistently justify the decade of catastrophic austerity measures it burdened the British people with, falling into another recession, one that is worse than any other country in Europe, is not a good look. Conveniently for the Tories, the French police in Calais (who are indirectly funded by the British government) have been making the lives

# HELLO my name is

**Felix Garcia (28)**  
1,872/36,570

Stowaway, found dead in wheel bay of British Airways plane at Gatwick Airport (UK)

21/08/1999

of refugees so unbearable that many of them have been forced to risk their lives crossing the Channel. Suddenly, "illegal migrant crossings" have been a top priority for every fascist-adjacent hack in the government along with every unscrupulous worm in the media who have, unsurprisingly, been doing the propaganda groundwork of their Oxbridge friends in the government by filming dinghies of desperate and terrified families frantically bailing the water out of their sinking vessel. A fully dystopian level of poverty-porn that the government is using as justification to send out fucking Navy warships, and pure heroin for the fascist knuckle-draggers in the EDL and the dozens of other Neo-Nazi groups just looking for any excuse to murder another working-class person of colour.

At this point, it's important to point out that crossing a border in order to seek asylum is not illegal. There is no such thing as an "illegal immigrant" when it comes to refugees. This has been true since 1951 when the Geneva Convention on Refugee Rights was written up, as an individual is specifically required to pass into the territory of a country in order to claim asylum. By shutting down the usual safe methods of seeking asylum, the UK Government is intentionally forcing refugees to risk their lives to fulfil this criterion. This fact is not unknown to the Home Office.

The fact of the matter is that borders and border "protection" do not stop or even discourage refugees from attempting to migrate. Generally, people don't go through the trouble of leaving their country behind unless they are left with no other choice, a blindingly obvious point to those who aren't having their policy decisions guided by careerist xenophobia. For example, in 2016 Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, declared "irregular flows of migrants along the western Balkans route have come to an end." However, in the next 6 months more than 24,000 people would cross the supposedly closed-off region. As Warsan Shire wrote in her beautiful and poignant poem, 'Home':

*You have to understand,  
That no one puts their children in a boat,  
Unless the water is safer than the land.*

>>

Closing safe and legal checkpoints, sewing fields of mines and putting armed guards at borders does not stop desperate people, it just kills them. The governments of Europe are fully aware of this fact, although they will publicly claim that to do anything that might preserve the lives of refugees will create a “pull factor”.

*We do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. We believe that they create an unintended “pull factor”, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths.* -Baroness Anelay of St Johns, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Of course, you will seldom hear a politician talk about the ‘push factors’ that force people into becoming refugees. In the last decade the UK Government has sold £11 Billion worth of weapons to the Saudi Arabian government, who have been mercilessly using those weapons against the Yemeni people. Yemen is now facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis with around 22 Million people facing starvation. If the British, and other Governments, truly, honestly, wanted to discourage vulnerable innocents from attempting to seek asylum in Europe, the bafflingly obvious first step

would be to ensure that their policies don’t result in people having their homes, schools, farms, infrastructure and lives destroyed. Again, our Governments already know these facts, I believe it’s time the people were made aware of them too.

For the last 30 years, United for Intercultural Action has been collating and publishing it’s List of documented deaths of refugees and migrants due to the restrictive policies of Fortress Europe, or ‘Refugee Death List’ for short. This list contains within its data the final moments of over 40,555 people, almost all of which have gone completely unknown, unreported and unconsidered by Europe’s population and it’s leaders. This data is the source of the Refugee List project and the anonymity of the victims is what the project aims to tackle.

Refugee List began as a sort of performance at an art exhibition. I stood at a Typewriter with the list and several rolls of “Hello My Name Is” stickers and spent a week typing out the name (if known), number (out of over 40,555), date of death and cause of death of every individual victim on the list. The name stickers were then stuck, without permission, onto every visitor to the exhibition, a new identity forced upon them that they must carry around, like the identity of “refugee”,



“Immigrant”, “asylum-seeker” or simply “unknown deceased” that is forced upon those who seek safety in Europe. In reality, I was only able to make about 600 stickers throughout the week of the exhibition. I knew, however, that I wanted to complete the list and spread the impact further.

I decided that the best method for this was to move the project online. I created the @Refugee\_List social media accounts and began individually making each label and uploading it. Other than the obvious ilk of fascistic flag-shaggers, I think that the average person is aware of refugees and would probably agree that them dying is a bad thing, however, I think that this is often where the thought ends, which is no fault of their own. When the public discussion around refugees is limited exclusively to them being Britain-hating scroungers or the occasional rare tragedy, it means it is impossible for most people to have the ability to see the deeper systemic injustices, the blatant falsehoods, or how to tackle and improve this situation. My hope is that by presenting the final moments of thousands of refugees, which are being retweeted, pinned and shared onto people’s timelines, it will present the viewer with an unassuming but vastly different perspective on the matter than the one presented by the mainstream. 40,555 people may not sound like a lot of people when compared to other tragedies, especially in the context of Covid-19, but when we consider that it will take almost a decade to publish the details of every victim on the list, I believe it puts things into perspective and illuminates just how needless each instance of Refugee death is.

The infamous quote about one death being a tragedy and a million being a statistic applies here. 40,555 deaths is a statistic, but if a viewer is presented with the individual details of every person that makes up that statistic it, I believe, makes it clear that these are real people, not just numbers. I believe it also cuts through the unspoken narrative that Refugee death is a rare tragedy, only occurring when the media deems it enough of a spectacle to report on. One of the most well-known instances of Refugee death is that of Alan Kurdi, the 4-year-old Kurdish-Syrian child who fled Isis with his family in 2016 and ultimately drowned in the Mediterranean sea off the coast of Turkey. What most people don’t realise, however, is that since then more than 10,000

more people have died whilst trying to seek asylum in Europe. We are only told of the tragedies that create a spectacle for the parasitic mainstream press, such as the time over 400 refugees drowned in one instance in the Mediterranean Sea in 2016. Or we are only told when the spectacle occurs within our borders, such as when 39 Vietnamese, including several teenagers, were found asphyxiated in the back of a lorry in 2019.

The important question for us, in the knowledge, that the politicians already know these tragedies are occurring and are preventable, is what can WE do? When faced with systemic injustice, backed up by decades of state propaganda, the best way to tackle that is by building a grassroots Opposition of the People. This means countering and disproving misinformation, whether it be on Twitter, at the pub or the dining table, learn the facts and use that knowledge to disallow anti-refugee rhetoric. It means joining a public protest, a form of activism that is effective at creating solidarity and community whilst showing others that the media spin isn’t the only narrative. By witnessing groups of people publicly opposing government and media messaging it tells others that they should be sceptical and to seek out the truth about Refugees. It means organising to push forward the truth and those who speak it, whilst discrediting those would spread lies. However, the first step anyone can take as an individual is simply to learn. Follow (credible) people who work in Refugee justice, read books that explain the situation and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

My hope with this project is that it will instil an attitude of scepticism when people interact with anti-refugee rhetoric. The next time a ratty tabloid publishes an article about “the tidal wave of immigrants”, I hope that people will think of Refugee List and consider not only that the article is a lie, by why are they being lied to, what is being hidden from them, and they would seek to answer those questions. Ultimately I hope this attitude of revolutionary scepticism would extend to all arbiters of power and capital. ■

### **Christoph Jones**

*You can follow Refugee List on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook at @refugee\_list.*

# MARKET VS STATE VS COMMONS: which future are we heading towards?

When thinking about how we function as an environmental movement, it's important to consider what we're demanding and what potential future these demands are moving us towards. To do this, I often think about three different models of land management which I've encountered working as an environmental scientist in the UK. I've spent a lot of time monitoring catchment management schemes to improve drinking water quality. How we try to change land management behaviour in these schemes depends entirely on one thing: who owns the land. The three different forms of ownership provide interesting models of how our future could pan out; one controlled by the state, one mediated by the market and a further future where our resources are held in common and decisions are made collectively.

In this essay I will consider how different forms of current land ownership and management can be used as tools to understand how our relationship with nature is mediated, and how this can be seen as model for the future. The real future is unlikely to fall neatly into either of these three categories, but by being aware of them we can try to shape which future our movement is pushing us towards.

## **State or top-down model**

The first common scenario is where the water company actually owns the land in their catchment. This is quite common in the UK as originally, before privatisation, the water companies themselves were owned by local authorities. In this situation changing management of the farms, for example to stop pesticides entering the river, is easy. The landowner simply tells the farmers leasing the land that they can no longer use pesticides within a certain distance of the river. It's simple and effective.

I see this as analogous to a state-centric model of change where a single actor makes the decisions and has the power to implement them without consultation. An example of this top-down approach favoured by states is the Three Gorges Dam in China. This massive engineering project was justified by the

need to provide low carbon electricity, however little concern was given to the millions of people displaced when the gorge was flooded, or the species of dolphin which went extinct. These kind of considerations don't really matter when you concentrate power in the hands of people disconnected from communities affected by their decisions.

In wider management of the environment and the economy, the state typically favours large engineering projects which are easy to control from above and increase our reliance on the state itself. It does not like projects which increase our independence and ability to provide for ourselves. This is particularly worrying because as climate change gets worse, we can expect an increase in nationalism and authoritarianism justified by the need to keep climate refugees out and manage the crisis. This is the very time when we need to be fighting the state rather than depending on it.

## **Market-based model**

The second scenario I often encounter is where the farmer owns their own land. Now we can't just tell them what to do so instead have to pay them for the outcomes we want. This usually takes the form of what is known as a 'payments for ecosystems services' scheme. Essentially, we pay the farmers to provide a service like, for example, pesticide-free water in the river passing through their farm.

For the water company this transaction is simple—they know how much building a new facility to remove the pesticides would cost so they can calculate how much it's worth to them to not have to build it. What is more difficult, however, is trying to value the more abstract parts of nature. What is the value of being able to walk through the beauty of the Lake District national park? Perhaps more urgently, what is the value of Bangladesh not being underwater? Although never specifically articulated, these are the calculations being made whenever the government decides for further inaction on climate change or when we put our faith in carbon offsetting markets.

As well as the problematic way in which this model puts a value on nature, allowing destruction and mismanagement as long as it's paid for, we can hopefully also see that allowing whoever can pay the most to decide what happens to our environment is never going to lead to equitable outcomes. In this scenario we are likely to see an increase in corporate power in how the environment is managed and the preservation of only parts of nature which can be easily monetised. This is already becoming the case in the UK as Heathrow airport has begun funding peatland restoration schemes as part of its greenwashing campaign.

### **The commons**

Although now rare, there are still areas on commons in the UK in areas such as Dartmoor and Exmoor. Here, an altogether different process determines how the land is managed. Instead of dictating from on high or buying off farmers, instead we actually have to talk to people and convince them what we want to happen is the right thing to do. While more time consuming, the people living in the area usually want what's best for the environment around them and so get on board once we explain why we're restoring the peat bogs, reintroducing beavers or whatever it is.

Whenever I talk about the commons the usual reply is that it never works- the classic 'tragedy of the commons' argument. While well debunked, this argument does have some truth to it- common resources are always doomed to exploitation under capitalism. Elinor Ostrom won a Nobel Prize for her work into how the commons can operate harmoniously and effectively. She showed what was needed was strong community ties and mechanisms for collective decision making over who gets access and to how much. Sadly, this is the exact opposite of conditions under capitalism where neighbours are incentivised to compete against each other and use as much of the communal resource as possible before it is depleted.

An example of this can be found in farmers in Texas and Uttar Pradesh, two areas in which my colleagues work on water scarcity issues. In both areas the water table is getting lower but instead of preserving the

resource, farmers must try harder to pump out water for their farms before their neighbours do. Under capitalism, they must ensure theirs is not the farm that fails and so must do what is the worst outcome for the community as a whole- pump as much water as possible. In Texas this is leading to higher costs; in Uttar Pradesh the consequences are more severe as farmers who've gone into debt are killing themselves when they can't afford to pay back loans.

Communal ownership of resources has been demonstrated to work, but only if we break with capitalist mode of production for profit and at any environmental cost.

### **So which future are we heading for?**

It's important to consider these models when we make demands- are we asking the state to mediate capital, pushing us more to the market-based model? Are we asking the state to take control, building new nuclear plants which we could never run ourselves and thus increasing our dependence on them? Or are we taking steps that increase our autonomy and resilience to future shocks?

If we stay on our current path, we're heading towards the market-based future. One of green capitalism, of solar powered exploitation of the working class. To get a glimpse of what's in store for us its worth reading the Committee of Climate Change's (CCC) Net Zero report, commissioned by the government to map out a path to 2050. Previous carbon budgets suggested we needed to decrease carbon emissions by 80%, meaning the big polluters all claimed to have the right to be in the 20% of the economy which didn't have to decarbonise. The new pathway requires net zero by 2050 so now there is nowhere to hide, although there are still some surprises and plenty of scope for clever accounting in offsetting schemes.

One revelation on reading the report is that despite acknowledging that the aviation industry can't decarbonise, the CCC suggests it should still be allowed to grow by 60%. This will create a massive requirement for carbon removals somewhere else but capitalism requires growth, and the right for the capitalists in aviation to make profit can not be questioned. >>

This growth paradigm is a failure of both the left and right to move beyond the talk of growth as the solution to all our social problems. For years neoliberal economists told us constant growth would be possible because we could simply mine asteroids once we had run out of resources on earth. Once laughable, now, under the guise of Fully Automated Luxury Communism and the Green New Deal, the left is beginning to swallow this argument as well. All these ideas are predicated on an idea of 'green growth' where the economy is somehow decoupled from carbon emissions and resource depletion.

Green growth simply does not exist – any reduction in carbon emissions is likely to create rebound effects as over-exploitation of other resources are justified as it is now carbon neutral. For example, everyone in the UK switching to electric cars would require more than double the world's annual production of cobalt meaning a global transition is an impossibility if we continue with current ownership models. Like carbon capture and storage before it, asteroid mining is not feasible in the short timescales needed to halt climate change, so it merely acts as another smoke screen for justifying further destructive growth.

So, the government finds itself in a situation where, firstly, it cannot question the profit motive and so must allow oil & gas exploration and further aviation expansion at the same time as trying to push its green credentials. Secondly, it can not say anything to worry voters as, after all, electoral cycles are much shorter than climate cycles. Instead, the government lies about the scale of the changes which need to happen to every part of our lives if we're to avert climate change.

And the reason they're lying is because what the CCC report doesn't address is who will pay. Ultimately, it will be the working class. The costs will be socialised while the profits are kept private. Some people will get very rich from the transition and be able to insulate themselves from any impacts. Others, like the Gilets Jaunes, will find that carbon taxes, although good intentioned, push them over the breadline while doing nothing to halt the consumption of the rich.

## **Another future**

What we need, then, is a break with the market mediation of our interaction with nature. A break from the state trying to control nature from the top down. A break from demands that just push us towards green capitalism and further exploitation.

But what actions push us in this direction? This could be anything from working with your neighbours to build a community solar scheme, starting a food growing and distribution project or building networks of solidarity and mutual aid. It could be not allowing advertising in your neighbourhood. It could be joining a union and demand an end to the polluting industry you work in. It could be taking action on the streets, not asking for the state to step in but demanding that this system of total exploitation of nature ends immediately.

Ultimately we need to be doing any action which increases our ability as a community to provide for itself and to build resilience to the impending physical and emotional shocks of climate change. We need to do this with as little reliance on the state as possible as it lurches in favour of authoritarianism, nationalism and hyper-exploitation of the global working class. That's not to say we can ignore it at all; it's unlikely we'll be able to pull off a global anticapitalist revolution in the timescales necessary to halt climate change. But when we do engage with the state, we must do this with our eyes wide open to which potential future we're moving towards.

Act now, the commons awaits us.■

**John Warwick**

# LANDLORDS NEED US

Rent is a tax that poor people pay to rich people for the right to live in society.

We can build a world where landlords don't exist.

- Join a Tenants' Union: ACORN (England/Wales) Living Rent (Scotland) or London Renters' Union.
- Organise a rent strike.
- Squat empty buildings.
- Build housing cooperatives.
- Build social housing.

# WE DON'T NEED LANDLORDS.

**AUTONOMOUS**  
DESIGN GROUP

ADG are selling A2 prints of this poster for £10. Each print funds 50 more to go up on city walls.  
[www.autonomousdesigngroup.bigcartel.com/product/landlords-poster](http://www.autonomousdesigngroup.bigcartel.com/product/landlords-poster)

# SEEDS OF CHANGE

## GAF one year on & a call for autonomous gardening

One year since forming, the Green Anticapitalist Front hit national newspapers with our week of action after occupying Paddington Green Police station and attempting to storm the London Stock Exchange. What didn't get as many column inches were the hundreds of people who came to our talks and workshops on everything from community gardening to the Rojava revolution. Anticapitalists doing community organising doesn't make a sexy headline, and so it is forgotten, but this is what the beating heart of GAF is: education, education, education! (to quote a famous war criminal). When we started, anticapitalist organising was at a low ebb with many people seduced by the prospect of a centre-left Labour government coming to power. Although the environment was becoming a more prominent issue, this narrative was being dominated by Extinction Rebellion (XR), who's central message is essentially 'climate change is bad, the government should do something about it'. We were also startled by the tactics of XR which focussed on deliberately getting arrested and the 'lovebombing' of the same police which had very recently been discovered to have used undercover agents to father children with activists. Amongst all the celebrity endorsements and yachts, we didn't see a place for ourselves in this new group.

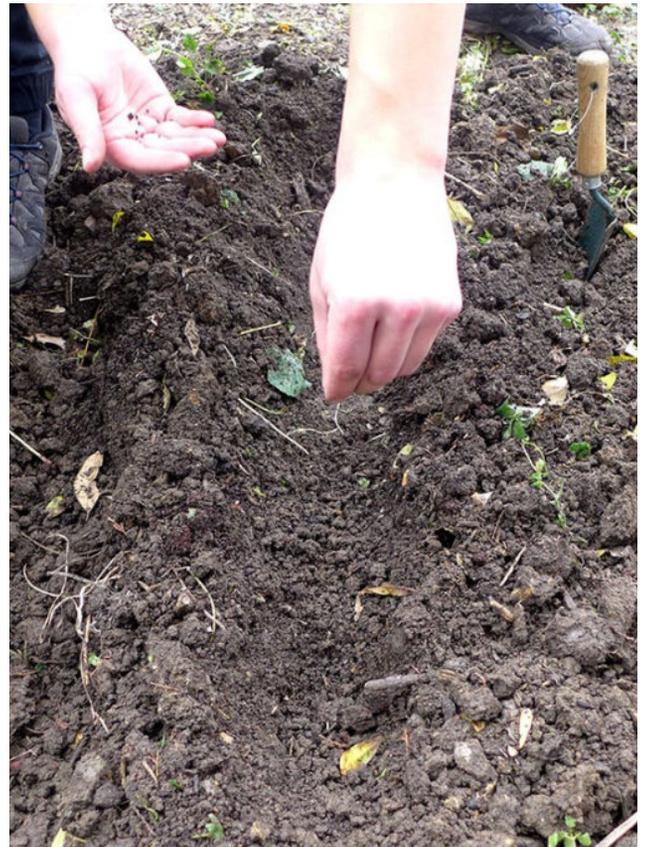
### A way forward

What we wanted instead was to create a movement that was clear that capitalism was the root cause of the environmental crisis and that the government could not be relied on to solve it. We wanted to build power from below rather than asking the government to manage the crisis in a way that benefits their donors. We know in this scenario it will be the working class who foots the bill whilst suffering the worst impacts.

To do this, we took a joint approach. Firstly, we started educating ourselves and others about the links between capitalism, colonialism and climate change. We did this through publications such as *Capitalism is Killing the Earth* and by learning from people involved in global struggles such as the All African Women's Group, London Mining Network and Kurdish Solidarity groups.

What we didn't want, however, was simply a paralysing focus on things going on elsewhere, with the implicit assumption that nothing will change here in the UK. In all of our educational efforts we try and lead into action. We do not simply say it is bad that oil extraction is still happening- we go to the oil company's private dinners and we show them just how unhappy we are. While we need to be focussing on the impact climate change will have on the global south, we also can't fall into same ideological trap XR has of assuming radical action is OK in the developing world but here we have to be respectable. This colonial attitude gets us nowhere.

Our second strategical strand aims to show groups like XR, and the more promising youth strikes, that by not working with the police and by being directly antagonistic towards capital, our actions can be more successful. Instead of telling the police what we're doing, we occupy their buildings. Instead of crowdfunding hundreds of thousands of pounds, we simply squat a building to open up a community social centre.



## Action on all fronts

Through educational projects as well as direct action we have been able to both provide accessible spaces for self-education that anyone can get involved in whilst also increasing the militancy of demonstrations. This has been one of the downsides to XR's dominance of the environment movement: although we've got beyond the simple A to B march, their stewards and Rebel's Agreement make sure that standing in the road is as far beyond as we go. And this dogma is being passed onto the next generation as XR and Greenpeace now provide stewards (working with the police, of course) for youth demonstrations which were previously self-organised and spontaneous.

We do not claim to have invented anything new here. The slogan of 'Educate, Organise, Agitate' has been around for generations. What we do feel is novel about GAF is that we do not claim to have the right answers. We don't force our ideology down your throat or insist you sign up to a code of conduct. We've started out with some pretty useful anarchist methods of organising and then we've set out to learn as much as we can about environmental movements in Rojava, Chiapas, anti-fracking camps, the ZAD and even Cuba. We're striving to collectively build an idea of what the world could look like in the future outside the constraints of capitalism and the state.

This is not an easy task and we need to talk to as many people as possible to make it happen. This will involve getting outside the circles of people we're used to speaking to without watering down our core message. We're still leaning the best way to do this but each time we run an open assembly or community action we reach more people whilst becoming better organisers ourselves. We don't have the budget or numbers than the mainstream environmental groups can rely on; this is why we have to be fluid in our actions and focus on building a movement through demonstrable successes.

This is working: since the week of action we've heard from three groups across the UK that plan to follow our example and create a squatted social space to host environmental talks and workshops.

## Planting Seeds

Recently, GAF London went out for a session of guerrilla gardening. Like many green spaces in London, we saw a small plot of land that wasn't being used for anything useful. Instead left barely maintained. We envision a world where communities grow stronger and autonomous by developing a mutually beneficial relationship with the land on which they live, tending to it and enjoying the riches it has to offer. The global chain of food distribution is ecologically unsustainable and based on the exploitation of the global south. The alienation from our own environment has damaged our relationship with nature and with each other. We must rebuild them if we want to create a better world in which future generations may be able to live.

The benefits of urban gardening are multiple. There is the practical: research has shown that growing fruit and vegetables in just 10 per cent of a city's green spaces could provide enough for 15 per cent of the population. And this is without even using permaculture techniques! There is the personal: research has also shown the positive effects of gardening on people's emotional well-being, especially in the case of women or people on low incomes. There is the social: common projects like communal gardens help foster stronger community links and resilience, becoming places where people can meet their neighbours, learn useful skills and empower themselves to self-organise and become self-sufficient. And this is without mentioning the health or environmental benefits.

In GAF London, we believe in making our means fit our ends, using direct action to create the future we want to see in the now, "acting as if one is already free" as David Graeber would put it. That's why we didn't beg the council or any authorities to do it for us or give us permission. We saw an opportunity to put our ideas into practice and we got digging.

First, we cleaned all the garbage that had accumulated. Then, we started digging out the weeds while respecting the existing plants. The soil turned out to be more fertile than we initially thought, with many worms living in it. Next, we dug the paths, added compost and planted seeds of lettuce and onion, which will grow over the winter. >>

Finally, we added some signs and a stone path to make it look more friendly and approachable.

As we were working, we talked with some curious neighbours, who were quite happy with what we were doing. One of them in particular lamented the state of disuse in which the plot had been left and was glad someone was doing something about it. Given that, now that we have the experience to know we can do this successfully, we will continue reaching out to the people in the area to get them involved. As that's fundamental for the garden to succeed in the long-term. We will continue to look after the garden over the months to come and hopefully start many others. So if you want to get involved, contact us and start taking action right now. Or if you want to support us so we can continue doing these and other actions in the future, consider donating to help us get the tools we need.

But more importantly, take action by yourself. Every day we walk by the streets of our cities and villages disillusioned by the state of things and the passivity of people. But you don't have to accept the world as it is. Instead, look around your neighbourhood and find a patch of unused land. Knock on your neighbour's door and get them involved. Borrow or steal some tools and seeds, look up some tutorials and get going. We don't need governments, parties, or leaders. We need a decentralised movement of autonomous yet interconnected communities and individuals acting to create a better world around them. Every mighty tree begins as a single seed. Start sowing.

P.S: if you take gardening actions under the GAF banner, send us photos and reports so other people can be inspired by them.■

[greenanticapitalistfront@riseup.net](mailto:greenanticapitalistfront@riseup.net)



# TOGETHER WE FIGHT!

## Why an alliance of progressives forces is vital to achieve a just transition

Nowadays workers around the world are assailed by simultaneous crises. First came the worldwide recession caused by the 2008 financial bubble. In its wake, neoliberal governments have bailed out banks and offloaded the costs on the people which now have to deal with the consequences of over ten years of austerity, including slashed services, loss of purchasing power and the dismantling of workers' rights.

Thanks to the incapability of most centre-left parties to present an alternative to neo-liberal policies and protect their constituents from the diktats of financial institutions, fascist and authoritarian forces have managed to make significant advances in most major democracies, endangering the rights and lives of many. Finally the world is now facing unprecedented, large-scale disruption to the lives and livelihoods of billions of people because of the climate crisis, which far from being a tide that sinks all boats, is disproportionately affecting the poor and disadvantaged, especially in the Global South.

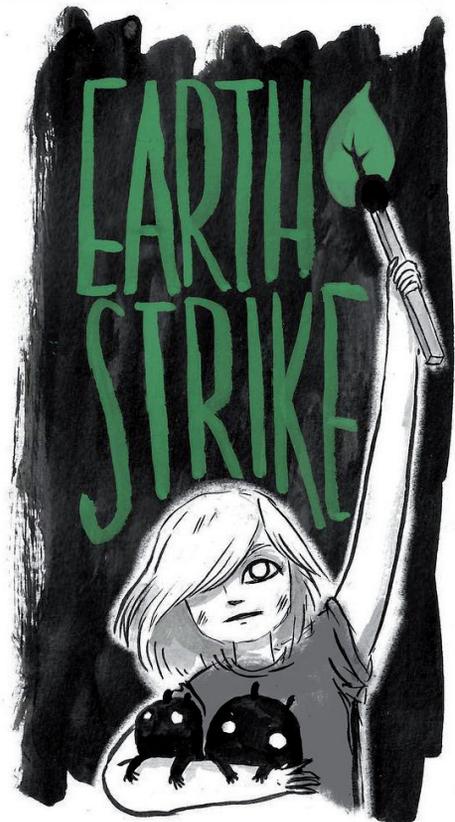
What we need to understand is that these crises are not separate entities, but rather three facets of a massive crisis whose root cause lies in the current economic and productive system and in its exploitation of both people and nature in its perpetual quest for profit and growth. Because of this, progressive forces are not going to make much headway unless they recognise their fundamental unity and unite to fight together, but in order to do so those who fight for the rights and livelihoods of working people must recognise that there can be no jobs on a dead planet. A complete change of system is required to avoid complete climate catastrophe, but with their guidance it can lead to a system that creates stable, unionised, satisfying jobs focused on creating social value and restoring the environment.

Those who fight against fascism and for democracy must realise that a crisis of such magnitude can easily lead to undemocratic, racist "solutions" and that the issues raised by the working classes must be addressed in order to remove any ammunition from the reactionary forces. By joining forces with the environmentalist and

trade union movement, they can work towards a system where democracy is embedded in every aspect of life, from workplaces to neighbourhoods and where both positive and negative human rights, foremost that to a liveable, healthy environment are centred in decision-making.

Environmentalist forces must recognise that under the current system a "sustainable lifestyle" is a privilege that most people cannot afford. It must realise that the crisis is urgent, yes, but that a sustainable transition that does not put the rights and livelihoods of working people around the world at its centre, making reparations where most oppression has been placed, does not challenge the current production system and does not expand democracy, is unjust and must be rejected.

It is only by working together, by learning from each other and challenging each other that progressive movements can become even more powerful and bring about the change we all need. The path is open before us, but only if we march together we can reach the goal that lays at the end. ■





# TOWARDS AN ANARCHISM IN THE PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGO

There is a necessity for a liberatory politics in the Archipelago known as the Philippines and as anarchists we think Anarchism has the framework to fill this need. The dominant forms of politics we have now are insufficient for developing a liberatory politics in the archipelago. This liberatory politics becomes a necessity because politics in the Philippines is currently an alienating affair—a politics done to people rather than people doing politics. We are also dominated by domineering structures and institutions like the market, capitalism, and the state. Against these we forward the liberatory politics of anarchism for a world beyond domination.

## The Necessity for a Liberatory Politics

Let us analyze what kind of politics dominates our lives right now and why we think these are insufficient for liberation.

At work we are subjected to the tyranny of the boss, who commands a great deal of power over at least a third of our day. For those blessed enough to forgo traditional bosses, the impersonal domination of the market instead dominates their tasks, pushing for enough productivity to pay for daily needs. Under capitalism, we can indeed be our own terrible boss. Ultimately, boss or no boss, our lives and our days are structured around the extraction of labor: preparing for work, doing work, and recovering from work, leaving us exhausted for things we would want to do.

When not at work, we are assaulted by the scarcity imposed on us by capitalism. We must pay exorbitant rents or pay back endless debt because we were not fortunate enough to have the resources to care for ourselves to begin with.

It is not enough that capitalism mines us for our labor, rent, and debt, capitalism must literally mine our environment for value. Our very ecologies are under assault by capitalists who wish to extract as much as they can from it, leaving whole communities and their surrounding environs devastated. Oftentimes, extracting wealth from the environment intersects with

colonialism where indigenous peoples are involved, with capitalists and state bureaucrats conspiring to divorce them from their homelands. Indeed this was most apparent in Casiguran, Aurora where indigenous peoples were actively being dispossessed of their land to make way for the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone (APECO), a collaboration between the state, local political dynasties, and capitalists.

In the sphere of government, we are faced with alienation in the politics of the state where so-called representatives are only accountable every other year and who often do the barest minimum between elections, all the while labor is immiserated, farmers are killed, and indigenous peoples are dispossessed. And what of the large sections of the government who are unelected—the bureaucrats, the appointees, the police? Who are these people accountable to, and how can they be removed?—if they can even be removed at all! So much of our lives are decided by people who are effectively not accountable to us—the ballot box notwithstanding. Ultimately, the politics of the state is statecraft—the management of the state. It is consistently an alienated politics done to people rather than by people. By political alienation, we mean the overwhelming powerlessness individuals have over the political affairs over society and the meaninglessness of these politics that is engendered into these individuals.

And what of President Rodrigo Duterte whose populist politics promised a break in the governance of the archipelago? Has Duterte and Dutertismo empowered the people of the archipelago? We think not. Dutertismo has conquered the presidency by mixing reactionary politics with promises to left groups. Dutertismo has ruled the political landscape since 2016, yet it has proven itself at once incompetent at providing social services and at the same time highly effective at maintaining and reproducing its own power to the point of a murderous campaign against the urban poor. The Duterte regime have proven themselves divorced from the people and indeed outright malignant when faced with environmental and human rights activism.

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Outside Duterteismo, we find the oligarchy and political dynasties dominate the state and its appendages in local government. Powerful families use their power to plunder produce from the countryside, immiserating and dispossessing agricultural workers, peasants, and indigenous peoples in the process. In the cities these families convert the capital they plundered from the countryside into capitalist enterprises that dominate the markets of urban residents. Their economic power is then translated into political power when the political dynasties cash into government offices through expensive electoral campaigns that others cannot afford.

Can we pin our hopes in an opposition politics in the revolution of the Maoist insurgency and National Democracy? Unfortunately, the Maoist CPP-NPA and National Democrats has proven themselves content with conservatively insisting on outdated guerrilla war tactics while demanding for reform and reconciliation with the national burgis. They ultimately have no program for social revolution and are content to push for “national liberation”—really an attempt at class collaboration with the national burgis. We find their vision to be insufficiently liberatory.

Against the incessant extraction of value from our lives and our environs and of the alienation and powerlessness felt, the struggle for a liberatory politics becomes urgent. We think this need for a liberatory politics can potentially be filled by the theory and praxis of Anarchism.

Anarchism, whose ethos is inherently suspicious of hierarchies and concentrated power, has the theoretical tools needed to counteract alienation and powerlessness and fill the need for a liberatory politics—indeed, an unalienated politics done by people where people are made subjects in their own right rather than objects of another’s power. We think Anarchism is suitable as a liberatory politics for the archipelago that can move past hierarchies and the limitations of reformism and National Democracy and empower people with the agency to enact the change they wish to see.

Hereafter we shall refer to an alienating politics done to people as statecraft, which includes the management of the state and of power struggles to take state power

by elected officials or by a revolutionary party. Statecraft is mediated by power brokers like elected politicians, bureaucrats, or party officials. Statecraft is ultimately the monopoly of power by a few, whether these few are inside or outside the state. Against statecraft, we forward an unmediated politics, which we situate as the discursive actions between people interacting with another as equals. Politics is us talking with another discussing the problems we face in our lives and decide together how to move forward with the issues we face. Politics is us becoming subjects in our own politics rather than as objects of statecraft and power plays. Subject here refers to a person who has agency over their politics rather than as a passive observer or sometime elector. An unmediated politics is then the unalienated politics done by people.

Anarchism, being against hierarchy and the concentration of power into the hands of a few and for the development of politics as unalienated and unmediated discourse and action, is the perspective that we believe the archipelago needs for a liberatory politics. Hierarchy and its consequence the concentration of power is a stupefying force. The inferiors of the hierarchy learn to rely on their superiors for guidance instead of relying on their own action. The superiors on the other hand end up relying on the inferiors for everyday tasks. The two dominant paradigms in the archipelago of reformism and National Democracy do not hold these perspectives of opposition to hierarchy and concentration of power as central to their paradigms and thus suffers for it in the form of reproducing statecraft and an alienated politics.

### **Against Reformism**

The ‘unfinished’ revolution of EDSA was ultimately a revolution of mere elites rather than a revolution of the whole people. The elites changed, but social relations and structures of domination remained the same. The potential for a social revolution in EDSA—a revolution where the social relations between people are dramatically changed and the possibility of new liberated social forms becomes palatable—was apparently stillborn. Rather than new social relations and a revolutionary new way of doing things, the oligarchs took over again, replacing a Marcos dictatorship with a mixture of old and new cliques. Instead of revolution, we merely got reform and more of the same.

The promise of liberal politics has become lost in the competing interests of various oligarchic cliques. Nothing really changes, or if there are changes, these are too little too late. Minimum wage, contractualization, ecological destruction, neoliberal policies, RH Law, indigenous dispossession, and land stolen from those who work the land—all are symptomatic of reforms proving themselves inutile against the issues of the day. Indeed liberal politics is subsumed into oligarchic rule and even used as a site of plunder—as seen with neoliberal policies where public services are made into corporate fiefs like with our water and electricity in Metro Manila. Besides, “never be deceived that the rich will allow you to vote away their wealth,” as ex-slave and anarchist Lucy Parsons once said. What she said was true for black liberation in the so-called United States during the 19th century and it is still true for the liberation from capital and the state in the 21st century.

Dutertismo does not break with the liberalism of past presidents. Duterte’s populism is resulted in insincere promises and is all talk. The electoral wing of National Democracy, the Makabayan bloc, shamefully allied with Duterte back in 2015 and early 2016. Duterte was then an infamous and controversial figure who was an outspoken murderer of the urban poor in his home Davao City. The Makabayan bloc allying with an outspoken murderer shows how congressional progressives betray their principles in favor of opportunism in the arena of reform—indeed an opportunism that resulted in almost no gains. The left-wing policies promised by Duterte such as peace with CPP-NPA-NDF insurgency and an end to contractualization have both collapsed into nothing—false promises by Duterte used as a means of capturing power.

The non-National Democratic electoral socialists and social democrats are as equally guilty of opportunism. We have witnessed how the social democratic Akbayan party-list practically attached themselves as the left-wing of the Liberal Party during the regime of President Noynoy Aquino, the predecessor of Duterte. Congressional politics is fundamentally a politics that removes agency from the people—it disempowers them by design. There is a hierarchy between the representative with power and the supposed

constituent below them. Voting for a candidate every few years is not power, it is a mere image of power—indeed a spectacle. The voter is merely a passive spectator in the congressional process mediated by parties and representatives. Voting a politician out of office is not control over that politician when during their four- or six-year term they cannot be recalled. After winning, the representative do not even have to listen to the concerns of their voters. Meanwhile, the voters who did not vote for them are simply not represented at all! Voting does not empower the people; the most voting can do is prevent gains won in previous skirmishes of class struggle from being rolled back. Indeed any gains of the class struggle in congressional politics are ultimately fragile gains, with the ever-present possibility of reaction from oligarchs and capitalists rolling back gains. Congressional politics and reformism ultimately renders voters and constituents as objects of the power plays of mediators and representatives. Voters and constituents—who can only spectate in these power plays of statecraft—are not full subjects in their politics and are forced into a passive and mediated role.

We think resources spent on building votes ought be spent on building a politics based on popular power instead. Building agency among the disempowered is more important than providing them a mere image of agency. Politics is too important to be left to electoral politicians.

Reforms are the end-goal of reformism; in contrast, we anarchists seek social revolution. Reformism and electoral politics risk transforming social movements into defenders of capitalism and the welfare state in order to defend the gains won through representatives. We are against reformism because we are for a revolutionary politics that seeks a break with the state and capital. That does not mean we are against reforms. On the contrary, we think the best way to win reforms is through building social movements based on popular power and an unmediated politics where people become full subjects in their politics. These social movements would use direct action to force concessions and reforms from the state and similarly defend those reforms through direct action as well. Reforms won through militant action are >>

more durable than those won through representatives alone. “Power concedes nothing without a demand,” as Frederick Douglass said. By using direct action instead of relying on representatives, a social movement builds the conditions of a revolutionary politics when in time they can challenge the state and capital.

Building popular power is not easy—indeed it is more difficult than canvassing votes—but if we want to build a liberatory politics that could develop and defend real gains against reaction and oligarchic plunderers, organizing a liberatory politics outside and beyond the ballot box becomes a necessity.

### **Beyond National Democracy**

We do not doubt that National Democracy has had made numerous gains in their revolutionary struggle. The Maoists of the National Democrats have created liberated barrios and conducted acts of sabotage against mining operations. They have armed peasants and indigenous peoples against the tyranny of landlords and landgrabbers. They have created networks of samahans and people’s organizations and created spaces for proletarian and peasant democracy. They have unionized workers and peasants and engaged in class struggle. Yet the politics they forward is still the hierarchic and mediated politics of the vanguard party and the potential alienation of a state. Our issues with National Democracy are too numerous to fully discuss here. We will focus our critique on our opposition to a vanguard party and the harms of building yet another state and aiming to seize state power instead of aiming for a liberated society free from hierarchy and domination. Going beyond National Democracy means understanding why we need to reject the vanguard party and the state as disempowering for the vast majority and building an unmediated and egalitarian politics.

Anarchists reject a vanguard party because we believe in the universalization of political power and agency, not in its concentration in certain party officials. In centralizing power, a vanguard party concentrates revolutionary agency into a hierarchy within itself. In contrast we believe revolutionary agency belongs to all the toilers and dispossessed. The politics of a Leninist vanguard ultimately alienates the people it tries to liberate—once again politics is something done

to the people, not done by the people. Because of its goal of controlling the revolution, the vanguard party is a stoppage upon the vitality of the revolutionary movement. Indeed, revolutionary action done outside the control of the party is even opposed and threatened with violence by the CPP-NPA. The Party is suspected of being behind the murders of other revolutionary and social democratic activists after their publication labeled other revolutionary and social democratic personalities as “counterrevolutionary” and those named started turning up dead. The Party is then hostile to socialist plurality and thus is hostile to a social revolution which is fundamentally pluralistic.

How much power does rank-and-file communists of the party have on the machinations of the CPP-NPA cadres? We doubt their influence is considerable. Indeed during the second congress of the Communist Party of the Philippines last October 2016, the youngest delegate was 33 years old at the time—the CPP is an old boy’s club where the youth rank-and-file have no sway! Indeed, it was only their second congress in their 51 years of existence! All decisions are effectively made by a small cadre, accountable to no-one.

Party officials have immense power—even power over life and death—and are functionally only accountable to the central committee, which is practically not accountability at all. This concentration of power has had violent and fatal consequences for the committed communists cruelly tortured and murdered during the purge campaigns by the CPP-NPA during the 1980s. Cadres who were accountable to no-one murdered their own comrades in a fit of collective paranoia. If even without taking state power we see the CPP-NPA brutally murdering their own communist comrades, what more if they take state power? What more tyrannies would they inflict on non-party folk? It would be state-sanctioned violence recalling the worst of the Stalinist terrors.

The exclusionary politics of the vanguard party is replicated in the peace process between the government of the Philippines and the CPP-NPA-NDF. The peace process is a negotiation between the Philippine government and the cadre of the CPP-NPA-NDF—essentially negotiations between the bureaucracy

of the state and the bureaucracy of the party. It is a collaboration between erstwhile revolutionaries and sections of capital and of the national burgis. Indeed this collaboration quickly turned into opportunism with figures like the National Democratic figurehead Joma Sison haphazardly endorsing Duterte for president. The people are not truly involved in the machinations of the peace process. We doubt that the denizens of the liberated barrios and the rank-and-file agitators—who participate in the class struggle alongside the working class in picket lines—actively participate in the negotiations as active agents in their own right. We think they are instead represented in a process mediated by others. The peace process is then statecraft and an alienated politics one can only spectate in. The supposed stakeholders in the peace process are rendered mere spectators in a process separated from them. Such is the politics of the vanguard party where agency and power is concentrated on a select few acting on behalf of the rest. Besides, a peace mediated between the elites in the state and the elites of a vanguard party is not a durable peace. We see this with the peace process between sections of the Bangsamoro revolutionary nationalists and the Philippine government which historically kept generating splinter groups because these groups felt excluded from the process.

Ultimately, the party does not have a monopoly over resistance, however the CPP wants to monopolize the revolution. It cannot dominate naturally-occurring pockets of resistance that forms against greed and tyranny.

While anarchists may reject the Leninist vanguard party, anarchists are not opposed to revolutionary organization. Anarchists understand the necessity of creating networks and structures between movements. Indeed there have been anarchist and libertarian revolutionary organizations throughout history and some that still exist today. Historical examples include the Black Army in Ukraine, the CNT-FAI in Spain, and Korean Anarchist Communist Federation in Shinmin. Examples of libertarian revolutionary organizations that exist today are the Zapatistas in Chiapas, and the YPG-YPJ in Rojava. Another reason for this opposition to the vanguard party is that

anarchists reject their quest for state power.

We anarchists reject the state and reject seizing state power as a strategy for liberation because as the preeminent manifestation of hierarchy, it is acutely insufficient for liberation. This does not mean we are against organization and institutions, but rather we believe these ought be organized in a libertarian and egalitarian manner. After all, the state is not merely its organization nor its institutions. Nor is the state its provision of social services nor merely its prerogative for violence. The state is a territorial concentration of power in the hands of a few situated above society—to use the definition by anarchist writer Pëtr Kropotkin. The state is power excluding the society at large. The state is necessarily a concentration of power, otherwise the institution would not be a state. The concentration of power in the hands of a few implies a social relationship where power—particularly its decision-making form—is held by a minority where the majority is excluded and therefore disempowered under the state.

Just as the Communist Party concentrates power unto itself, just so their future state would hoard power into its own structure. The National Democratic construction of a future proletarian state will ultimately reproduce statecraft and an alienated politics because of their continuing use of hierarchies.

While the Marxists-Leninists—and by extension National Democrats—are absolutely correct in wanting to abolish the capitalist social relations such as those of burgis–proletariat, they stop short of wanting to abolish hierarchical social relations altogether. Marxist-Leninist societies in the former USSR and the Eastern Bloc states abolished the burgis, but were still hierarchical societies. Going beyond National Democracy also means understanding why hierarchy itself must be dismantled, not just capitalist social relations. Hierarchy itself must be opposed and dismantled in order to secure a free and liberated future.

As we reject the state that the National Democrats aim for, we also reject their nationalism. Nationalism in socialism is an abomination and >>

it creates deep contradictions in theory. The very concept of nationalism is precisely a trans-class solidarity between the proletariat and the burgis in a particular country. This trans-class solidarity makes it appear that the burgis and proletariat of a particular country have the same interests—they do not. This thus masks the contradictions and struggles between the two classes. The toilers and dispossessed have no interests in common with the class of oligarchs, hacenderos, political dynasties, and warlords. It is the trans-class solidarity of nationalism that leads to class collaboration and the betrayal of the interests of the dispossessed.

Make no mistake, we anarchists are not calling for the fragmentation of struggle or a parochialism of isolated groups. Instead of nationalism and a unity based on identity, we want unity on the basis of the affinity of all who struggle for liberation. All those who despise tyranny and greed are our comrades. We are in solidarity with the oppressed not because we are both Filipino, but because we understand that our liberation are tied up together.

The National Democratic program for a state is insufficiently liberatory. Their project of a vanguard party is stuck in the past and is led by a entrenched cadre of old men. Relinquishing your agency to the party bureaucrats of the vanguard does not liberate you. The aim of capturing state power or setting up a competing revolutionary state reproduces the mediating and alienating politics that renders people as objects of statecraft and does not empower them. Going beyond National Democracy does not necessarily mean rejecting everything the National Democratic movement does or what they stand for, but understanding that their praxis is limited by their use of hierarchy and is thus ultimately insufficient for the goal of liberation. Therefore the politics they forward is still a continuation of hierarchy and domination and cannot forward a liberatory politics. National democrats take their poetry from the past; we must take our poetry from the future.

To revitalize revolutionary politics in the archipelago we need to move beyond National Democracy, beyond vanguard party form, beyond the state, and beyond

nationalism. This means a commitment to a deliberative politics and shunning hierarchy and domination in our revolutionary organizations. We anarchists do not aim to control and dominate a revolution but to build the capacities of people for direct action, mutual aid, and revolutionary action to allow a social revolution to bloom into its fullest potential. The liberation of the working class and of the dispossessed can only be done by them alone and will never be done by a state or a mediating party.

### **For Anarchism**

Instead of reformism and beyond national democracy, we forward the liberatory politics of anarchism, a movement for the self-emancipation of the toilers and dispossessed from all forms of hierarchy and domination.

A revolutionary anarchism is about spreading freedom and anarchy to all spheres of life. Anarchy is about social relationships based on consent and free agreement. It is about treating each other as equals and as individuals we are interdependent with and whose freedom is bound up with ours. Anarchy is freedom from authority and freedom from hierarchies. Doing anarchy means doing a deliberative politics that seeks to make people full subjects in their politics. Therefore anarchism shuns mediation and statecraft and seeks to maximize the agency of people over their own lives and of things held in common.

Anarchism is the fullest conclusion of the desire for freedom because it is a consistent application of freedom. We cannot use hierarchical means to create a liberated society. We must take care of what our means are becoming. Hierarchy can only become domination, not liberation. Hierarchy engenders an alienated politics where those at the lower rungs of hierarchy are disempowered and dispossessed. As an egalitarian idea, anarchism forwards liberatory means to create a liberated society. When we instead consciously organize in an egalitarian, non-hierarchical manner, we are building the foundations for a social relations based on freedom. These social relations then can become that liberated future.

A revolutionary anarchism has the tools for forwarding

a liberatory politics with tools like as mutual aid, direct action and egalitarian organizing. These tools of anarchism existed in various forms long before anarchism existed and what anarchism does is unite these in theory and practice.

Anarchists practice mutual aid which as Filipinos already know as bayanihan. Mutual aid or bayanihan is a mode of cooperation based on solidarity. It is us helping each other because it benefits all. The image of bayanihan is often a village (or a bayan) working together to carry a house. By themselves the villagers could not lift the house, but all together they can—their toil is minimized with collective action. What is more is that by participating, they know the other villagers will similarly assist them when they need it. Thus mutual aid or bayanihan becomes a system of support and collective action that improves the quality of life for everyone involved. It is then a safety net that everyone can participate in. These systems of mutual aid can be found in nature and in human societies throughout history and today all around the world. What anarchists want to do is universalize mutual aid over other modes of organization like competition, profit, or bureaucracy.

Anarchists also practice direct action. Direct action can take the form of strikes, rent strikes, occupations, expropriation, and blocking construction. Direct Action, according to libertarian socialist theorist Murray Bookchin,

is the means whereby each individual awakens to the hidden powers within herself and himself, to a new sense of self-confidence and self-competence; it is the means whereby individuals take control of society directly. ... Direct action, in short, is not a 'tactic' that can be adopted or discarded in terms of its 'effectiveness' or 'popularity'; it is a moral principle, an ideal, indeed, a sensibility. It should imbue every aspect of our lives and behavior and outlook.

To add, direct action directly changes the terrain of struggle against capital and domination. Through its interventions, direct action shapes the capacities and agency of the persons doing the action and makes them full subjects in their politics. Through a strike

for example, the workers involved learn they have power over their boss and this gives them the capacity to demand more and more concessions. Using direct action instead of relying on mediated forms of struggle like representative politics is a major part in anarchist theory and praxis. Using the unmediated politics of direct action implies a rejection of the mediated politics of states and vanguards.

Instead of states or vanguard parties, anarchists would forward the use of horizontal and egalitarian organizing. A reason why anarchists use egalitarian organization is that it prefigures the kind of liberated society we seek to bring about. By prefiguration we mean that the means we use now foreshadows and envisages the future we want to bring about. Prefiguration is a unity of means and ends—in this case, egalitarian means for a liberatory end. Prefigurative politics means building the world we want to see in the here and now. Egalitarian organizing also means eschewing hierarchy in our organizations. This does not necessarily mean eschewing leaders, but rather building the capacities for everyone to lead and cooperate. Some alternatives to leaders in egalitarian organizing is the rotation of tasks that normally leaders do. Instituting egalitarian organizing also does not mean rejecting scaling up our organizations. Rather, scaling up egalitarian organizing means that agency and decision-making flows from the bottom-up rather top-bottom. This can be done with the use of mandated delegates. Mandated delegates cannot decide for the group they represent like representatives in congress do. The group they represent decides the mandate of the delegate and what that delegate can say or do. Alternatively, if the delegate has a mandate for negotiation or representation in a council or assembly, what they do is subject to ratification from the group they came from. If these delegates overstep or fail their mandates, they can be immediately recalled and removed as delegate. Delegates can be chosen through sortition or rotation, though electing or consensus is also used. These methods are few examples of preventing the concentration of power in a position and retaining agency and political subjectivity on the individuals and preventing the concentration of power in positions. Egalitarian organizing helps preserve freedom and individuality of those making decisions. >>

While anarchists believe in freedom, we do not believe in bourgeois notions of freedom and bourgeois individuality. Freedom to starve, the freedom to exploit, the freedom to choose our boss—these are no freedoms at all! Our freedom is based on the communization of social life, where our freedom is guarded and enhanced by the freedom of those around us. Only when society as a whole is liberated will we be free to fully express our individuality, free from the constraints of domination. Until then, individuality under capitalism would usually be limited to consumption and the demands of capital. Our freedom is bound up together and we will be free when we regard our fellow siblings as equals and free. The possibility for freedom and total liberation opens up in a social revolution. A social revolution is not a simple change of leaders like the EDSA 1/People Power Revolution of 1986 and the EDSA 2 of 2001. It is not a coup by the vanguard party and the takeover of government. A social revolution is the blossoming of possibilities. It is a time when what was previously thought unthinkable enters the realm of possibility. It is a time for a break with the past and a new way of doing things. It is social transformation in the political, social, economic, and interpersonal relations. A social revolution is liberating because the illusions of control by capital and the state have shattered and the people learn that they have their own power to enact change as full subjects in their own right. Social revolutions like those in the past in Russia, Spain, and Cuba are inherently liberatory where people spontaneously develop new forms of social relations that heighten their agency and political subjectivity. Revolutionary anarchists agitate for this social revolution because a break with the past is the best time for the promulgation of libertarian ideas and practices.

These anarchist theories and praxis have applications for the archipelago. After all, anarchism is not a foreign western idea being supplemented into Philippine soil, it is an idea about liberation and the universalization of this liberation. Anarchism is universalizable because freedom is universalizable. The ideas that people can and should manage their own affairs, that workers should manage their workplaces, that indigenous peoples are the best managers of their land, and that a community in discussion with its citizens are its best administrators are all universalizable. Just as it is inevitable that the

labor under the capitalist process necessarily creates more value than what is paid to the laborer in order to maintain profit margins, anarchism holds that where there is authority, there is tension against it; where there is hierarchy in decision-making, its alienation from the disempowered will be felt.

Because of this universalizability, the principles of anarchism—of opposition to tyranny, to capitalism, to hierarchy, and to the state—are reborn in each and every generation. The ideas of anarchy was born to the ancient Taoists meditating upon the wu-wei and wu-jin, and to ancient Skeptics and Cynics of the Hellenic world. Anarchy was reborn to the anarchist theorists of the 19th century and to the anarchists revolutionaries of the 20th century in Shinmin, Ukraine, Spain. The hope for anarchy lives again today in the libertarian revolutionaries of our own time in Rojava, Chiapas, and Kabylia. Where there is tyranny, there will be opposition to it; where there is injustice, a cry for liberation. Anarchism is not its theorists or revolutionists—Bakuninism, Proudhonianism, Kropotkinism, or Makhnovism. Anarchism is an-archos, without rulers. Should all anarchists today be killed by the vilest reaction, should such a reaction burn all the books of anarchist theory and erase the memory of libertarian praxis, anarchism will not die for the very essence of freedom, of opposition to authority, of a liberated society, cannot die. Indeed, anarchism was already wiped out once in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines in the early 20th century yet in these countries anarchism reemerges from its ashes, again ready to rally to cause of liberty and freedom.

Thus, we anarchists finding ourselves in this archipelago known as the Philippines have not come to the conclusion of the necessity for an anarchist politics because of what an old writer had to say or what dead revolutionists had done. We have been convinced for the necessity of an anarchist politics because we believe in the necessity of freedom in all things. We believe that this freedom then necessitates an opposition to capitalism, to hierarchy, to the state. We believe in building popular power where people would fulfill themselves as full subjects in their politics rather than mediated by those from above. We believe in the freedom to enjoy the work we want to do rather than being dominated by work. We believe

in the freedom to develop our capacities to our fullest abilities for our own sake rather than that of profit. We believe in the freedom to manage our own lives and of the things we hold in common. We believe in freedom and total liberation.

### **Towards an Anarchism in the Archipelago**

Where does anarchism then situate itself in the archipelago known as the Philippines?

Historically, it is plausible that there existed indigenous groups in the archipelago that organized non-hierarchically and therefore anarchically. After all, the Ifugao people carved the very mountains in a monumental effort all without use of governments or states. However it is mistaken to proclaim that anarchy was the mode of governance before colonization as this falls into a romantic notion of a 'noble savage' or a 'pure' indigeneity unsullied by the state. In reality, indigenous peoples—indeed all peoples—have widely diverse ways of organizing themselves. There have been hunter-gatherers that organize hierarchically and urban people that organize in an egalitarian manner.

Where Anarchism can situate itself in the archipelago is in the history of struggle against authority. Anarchism in the archipelago is but a young member in the long line of indigenous opposition to colonial authority and domination. Roger White says it best that anarchism finds itself as part of a family of other anti-authoritarian struggles throughout history:

A different way of understanding anarchism in relation to the centuries-old struggle against arbitrary power is to view it as the newest member of a global family that includes numerous historical and present day communal societies and struggles against authority. The village communalism of the Ibo, and First Nations like the Zuni and the Hopi are a part of the family. The indigenous autonomist movements for self determination going on today in West Papua and Chiapas, Mexico with the EZLN are a part of the family. The international prison abolitionist movement, perhaps to most coordinated attack on the state's monopoly of the administration of justice, has deep anti-authoritarian currents, just as the numerous stateless hunter and gatherer bands, clans, and nomadic tribes that have managed to survive centuries without armies, flags, or money systems do.

Thus working within this post-colonial framework we find that the Indokumentado (the undocumented natives) and the rebels of the Dagohoy Rebellion who resisted the efforts of the Spanish colonial authority to constrain them to labor camps to be the natural forebears to an anarchism in the archipelago. Anarchism in the archipelago situates itself in the innumerable acts of resistance against the colonizers and their institutional descendant in the state. While anarchism is a relatively recent phenomenon, anarchistic elements very much already exist in the archipelago for as long as there has been resistance to tyranny and greed.

A bookmark in the situating an anarchism in the archipelago is Isabelo de los Reyes. Tutored by anarchists and revolutionary socialists while exiled in Catalonia, Isabelo de los Reyes brought Marxist and Anarchist theories to the Philippines in 1901 during the American colonial period. He used the principles of Marx and Malatesta to set up the Union Obrera Democratica (UOD), the first labor union federation in the Philippines. While not specifically anarchist, the UOD did incorporate mutual aid and direct action into their praxis and was a thorn on the side of the American colonial administration.

A later example of anarchistic elements in Philippine history is the Diliman Commune which was a student uprising against the Marcos administration in 1971. While the uprising was ideologically influenced by National Democracy, it contained several anarchistic elements. Being a spontaneous uprising, it was not dominated and directed by a vanguard party. Revolutionary students and faculty used direct action in defense of their commune instead of relying on representatives and mediators. Power was not monopolized by a few select leaders and decisions were made in an egalitarian manner in councils and assemblies using consensus.

Anarchistic elements also emerge in more contemporary times. Land and housing struggles in the Philippines are sometimes fought with direct action. The urban housing group Kadamay in 2017 used direct action to occupy and directly expropriate empty homes in Bulacan by occupying them with families in need of a home. They were also able to defend this >>

expropriation through direct action to the point of even President Duterte conceding the issue. Indeed, they were even decried as “anarchists,” much to the chagrin of their national democratic orientation.

We also see direct action in the countryside. Peasant groups use direct action to till idle land they do not own in a practice called *bungkalan*. Instead of relying on the notoriously slow and corrupt Department for Agrarian Reform to expropriate land from landlords and oligarchs, these farmers do it themselves and hurt no-one except property rights in the process. Peasant group *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* has called *bungkalan* a “collective efforts of farmers to assert genuine land reform.” *Bungkalan* then becomes a form of resistance against feudal landholders who hoard land for themselves.

Direct action is also practiced by environmental activists. In Palawan, environmental activists take it upon themselves to confiscate chainsaws and guns from illegal loggers and poachers. These activists understand that if the state cannot protect their environments, they will have to do it themselves, sometimes at the cost of their lives.

Direct action also dovetails with mutual aid. After the reemergence of anarchism in the archipelago, Food Not Bombs organizations were set up as systems of mutual aid/*bayanihan*. Food Not Bombs are networks of mutual aid that freely distribute food among indigent people. These networks are organized along anarchist lines using voluntary association and egalitarian organizing. Rather than waiting for an authority to organize food distribution or lobbying for such a thing in congress, Food Not Bombs does it themselves. They are able to distribute food to people all the while rejecting the use of hierarchical organization.

Beyond anarchistic elements in existing movements, it can be argued that anarchy already exists all around us, as Bas Umali suggests in his essay *Anarki: Akin ang Buhay Ko – Sariling Determinasyon at Pagpapasya Tungo sa Panlipunang Rebolusyon*. For Umali, anarchy is mutual cooperation without need of coercion or payment. Anarchy is whenever we relate to each other

as equals and peers and whenever we discuss among ourselves the issues we have instead of relying on an authority figure. We already naturally organize ourselves in egalitarian and non-hierarchical lines when we organize among friends. Human cooperation is already natural. What anarchists want is for all social relations to be organized under egalitarian lines with free association and free from hierarchy and coercion. These examples of anarchistic elements—Mutual aid/*bayanihan*, direct action and egalitarian organizing—are then not foreign ideas. They already exist today in our lives and in our contexts. These elements—which are already anarchistic—can be reused for an anarchist praxis. What anarchists in the archipelago want is to universalize these anarchistic elements and universalize freedom and liberation.

Currently, anarchists in the archipelago have been able to create spaces for autonomy and mutual aid such as infoshops and Food Not Bombs networks. Infoshops are spaces for the dissemination and propagation of anarchist materials and are sites for autonomous organizing. These Infoshops and Food Not Bombs are embedded in urban communities and conduct community outreach and mutual aid activities. These are spaces where anarchist principles can be practiced and taught. When there is a need for local action such as in resisting evictions, these local anarchist groups mobilize for these tasks.

However, while creating spaces for autonomy away from state, capital, and hierarchies are good it is still insufficient for liberation for revolutionary anarchists. We revolutionary anarchists are not content with spaces for autonomy, we desire total liberation for all. More than an autonomous anarchism, we must forward a revolutionary anarchism in the archipelago. Much more than creating autonomous spaces, this revolutionary anarchism aims to challenge capital and the state. By revolutionary we mean a movement to abolish the current state of things, to challenge hierarchy and domination and not merely carve spaces for autonomy.

For anarchism to become revolutionary, it must become a social movement. Anarchism as a social movement entails organizing at the point-of-production and

organizing communities. We have already established that anarchistic elements already exist in social movements in the archipelago. What anarchists would like are these social movements to consciously organize in non-hierarchical and egalitarian manner and use the tools promoted by anarchism like direct action, solidarity, and mutual aid. By forwarding such a liberatory politics, these social movements have the potential to become spaces for creative deliberation that expands the agency of the people involved to become full subjects in their politics. Such an anarchist social movement ought show people that they have the collective power to emancipate themselves. Such an anarchist social movement would do so not as an authority figure, but as a partner and collaborator in liberation. As the anarchist theorist Errico Malatesta noted,

And when we will have succeeded in arousing the sentiment of rebellion in the minds of men against the avoidable and unjust evils from which we suffer in society today, and in getting them to understand how they are caused and how it depends on human will to rid ourselves of them; and when we will have created a lively and strong desire in men to transform society for the good of all, then those who are convinced, will by their own efforts as well as by the example of those already convinced, unite and want to as well as be able to act for their common ideals.

As we have already pointed out, it would be ridiculous and contrary to our objectives to seek to impose freedom, love among men and the radical development of human faculties, by means of force. One must therefore rely on the free will of others, and all we can do is to provoke the development and the expression of the will of the people. But it would be equally absurd and contrary to our aims to admit that those who do not share our views should prevent us from expressing our will, so long as it does not deny them the same freedom.

Freedom for all, therefore, to propagate and to experiment with their ideas, with no other limitation than that which arises naturally from the equal liberty of everybody.

Thus anarchists are not the kind of revolutionaries who “grant” liberation to others, as we think liberation is a thing that can only be done by those oppressed. As the classic socialist adage goes: the liberation of the worker is the task of the worker alone. Liberation is not granted, it is built, taken and defended. This liberation, as Malatesta also noted, is tied up together and requires the liberty of everybody to be fully enjoyed. As anarchists, we must be in the business of “arousing the sentiment of rebellion” of people and allow them to know they have this power to liberate themselves when organized.

By organizing a consciously liberatory politics of anarchism, the people involved would begin to foster the kinds of social relations that prefigures the liberated society we want to create. Engendering the development of social relations based on solidarity and mutuality is then becoming the liberated future we aim for. Such a revolutionary anarchism would value the unity of means and ends, using liberatory means to reach a liberated future. It would reject statecraft and focus a deliberative politics where people would be full subjects in their politics.

This anarchist social movement would be the scaling up of anarchist praxis. Groups would federate into larger organizations while keeping political subjectivity and the power over decision-making to the lowest level of the individual. Scaling up does not necessarily mean separating the individuals from decision-making if the scaling up is consciously egalitarian and non-hierarchical. We have mentioned before that mandated delegates can be used and whose positions can be organized in such a way that agency is retained with the individual. Such techniques and similar creative measures can be used to consciously prevent alienation in politics.

Being a revolutionary social movement, anarchists aim for these social movements to eventually challenge capital and the state. By this we mean that both erosion of the power of capital and the state and by building a counterpower independent of capital and the state. This erosion can be done through direct action like strikes, occupations, and the forcing of concessions, slowly eroding >>

the power of the state and capital while expanding spaces for autonomy and freedom. Challenging capital can be not just going on strike but returning to work in expropriated workplaces by using direct action to occupy workplaces under new management—those of the workers themselves. Building a counterpower would mean creating alternative institutions from the state like creating systems that fulfill needs instead of profits. One way this can be done is through organizing free assemblies among communities where people can discuss what needs and challenges that need addressing and collectively collaborate on how to fulfill these needs. These free assemblies could decide to implement solidarity economies that exchange goods between urban and rural communities without the use of market or state mechanisms. Gradually people would disengage from the institutions of the state and capital.

In a social revolutionary situation these alternative institutions and counterpower would compete with the state and capital for legitimacy, a situation called dual power. In a dual power situation, the two sources of power inevitably clash, forcing one or the other to dissolve. In such a situation, anarchists hope for the victory of the counterpower comprised of social movements and alternative institutions over the forces of capital and the state.

As revolutionary anarchists we aim to build a foundation for a social revolution—a mighty confrontation between the people and their social movements versus the state, capital, and the forces of domination. In a social revolution, what was previously thought to be impossible or unthinkable enters into the realm of possibility. In a social revolution, the people find they no longer have to listen to the demands and orders of the oligarchs, of the bosses, or of the cadres. They find a new sense of revolutionary agency to create enact history as full subjects in their own rights, no longer as mere objects where history is done to them. A social revolution makes possible the creation of new social relationships that reject capitalism and hierarchy. It is in this social revolution that the potentiality for a liberatory politics can blossom into liberation.

We cannot say when such a social revolution arrives, but we must be resolute in building political consciousness among the working class and dispossessed. Their

consciousness must be awakened to realize that they have the power to directly change their own lives if they organize themselves in popular power.

For now it is vital that for anarchism to become revolutionary, it must become a social movement in the archipelago. This transition from autonomous anarchist spaces towards a revolutionary anarchist social movement is possible and has been done before in other countries. For example, anarchists in Java, Indonesia started out in a similar position to anarchists in the Philippines. Just as it was in the Philippines, Anarchism was totally wiped out in Indonesia in the early 20th century. Yet the desire for freedom cannot die and anarchism reemerged in Indonesia the 1980s. In its reemergence, anarchists in Indonesia also started with building spaces for autonomy and mutual aid but in time organized a revolutionary workers movement in the *Persaudaraan Pekerja Anarko Syndicalis (PPAS)*. Now Java has a vibrant anarchist scene with links with other international anarchist activities. We think revolutionary anarchism in the Philippines could take a similar road to becoming a social movement.

### **The Tasks of Revolutionary Anarchists in the Archipelago**

In forwarding a liberatory politics in the archipelago then, the task of the revolutionary anarchist militants in the archipelago would be to move past propagation of anarchist ideas towards building anarchism as a social movement. This liberatory politics becomes urgent in the face of the inutility of reformism and the hierarchical domineering politics of the National Democrats.

Being revolutionary anarchists, we aim to build a social movement that can challenge capital and the state, not be merely content with autonomous spaces. Challenging capital and the state would take the form of scaling up our efforts. Rather than atomized and isolated struggles in the workplace and communities, social movements can federate and scale up.

What follows is not yet a program, but rather some suggestions for what the tasks of the revolutionary anarchists in the archipelago could be. This is not exhaustive nor definitive, but rather a start of a discussion on what the liberatory politics of anarchism

could look like. Thus, what revolutionary anarchists in the archipelago could do is to:

Continue to propagate anarchism and anarchist ideals as liberatory alternatives; promote a discursive politics that rejects hierarchy and the alienation that comes with it;

Continue to develop systems of mutual aid/bayanihan that acts as both harm reduction measures against the tyranny of capital and the state and as spaces to build autonomy from domination and hierarchies;

Struggle for a blooming environment with the understanding we are interdependent with our ecologies and the recognition of the political nature of environmental problems;

Build an inclusive movement incorporating intersectional perspectives on gender and struggle against oppression like the hetero-patriarchal order;

Organize our workplaces and communities; build subjectivity into our everyday politics; build the agency and capacities of people for direct action, mutual aid, and solidarity; create social relations conducive for a liberated society; build the new liberated society in the shell of the old;

Federate our efforts and scale up until we reach a point where our mass movements can challenge capital and the state; and

Create systems of popular power with governance structures based on solidarity rather than hierarchy and forward a deliberative politics that rejects statecraft.

We ask you to join us as our liberation is tied up together. You can start in your own workplace and communities. You can start with kindness and resist with rage. You can scale up your efforts by coordinating with other efforts and then federating. You can reach out to others who also struggle for total liberation and work together for a better world.

A better world is possible and is already being built. Against hierarchy and domination there is solidarity and cooperation. Join us in our struggle for a liberated politics, for a world beyond work, beyond the state, beyond capital, beyond hierarchy and domination itself! For a liberatory politics in the archipelago! For freedom and total liberation!

**Mabuhay ang anarkiya!**

**Mabuhay ang kalayaan!**

**Mabuhay ang rebolusyong sosyal! ■**

**Simoun Magsalin**

*Read more from comrades in the Philippines here via [Bandilang Itim - Filipino for "Black Flag"](#).*

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# 大逆事件



# 大逆事件 (TAIGYAKU JIKEN)

## An Introduction to the Anarchists of Japan

An introduction to the lives of some of the leading figures in early Japanese anarchism, framed around the tragic incident that saw their execution in 1911

In 1911, 12 leftists, both anarchists and socialists, were arrested and executed in an event that would come to be known as 大逆事件 (Taigyaku Jiken), or the High Treason Incident. Their crime? Conspiring (allegedly) to assassinate the Japanese emperor Meiji, the infamous ruler who oversaw Japan's transition from a feudal, isolationist kingdom into an imperialistic, industrialised world power.

Beginning with the discovery of potential bomb making materials in the apartment of a factory worker in the Nagano Prefecture, the incident resulted in the mass arrest of 26 socialists who were then trailed for high treason charges in secret. The event was indicative of the growing authoritarianism in Japan and foreshadowed the government that the world would come to see during the Second World War. Its significance is described succinctly in Japan at War:

*The 1910s have been called the "winter years" for Japanese socialists, a period when government harassment and public indifference drove Marxists into silence. ... There is little question about the importance in this chain of the High Treason Incident, when conservatives and progressives alike expressed outrage over the activists' plot and writers of all stripes felt constrained to keep silent about censorship and secret trials.*

As we can often observe, scapegoating and fear mongering by those in power can act as a rallying cry, uniting the nation against a common enemy. For the Meiji government, this enemy was socialism in all its forms and they would do anything to drive it out; including, as has been unearthed by recent writers, the fabrication of an assassination plot as part of a wider government strategy to quell the Japanese socialist and anarchist movements.

In this piece, I will introduce the thought of Japanese anarchism and anti-imperialism through three of those

executed in the High Treason Incident: Kōtoku Shusui, a leading socialist and anarchist figure; Uchiyama Gudō, an anarcho-communist and Sōtō Zen priest; and Kanno Sugako, an anarcho-feminist journalist.

Whilst anarchism in Japan is certainly not limited to these figures, their lives and writings will introduce you to both anarchism in the Japanese context and to the political climate of the period. For more reading, I would recommend 'Anarchism in Japan' by Chushichi Tsuzuki.

### Kōtoku Shusui (幸徳 秋水)

Born on November 4th, 1871 in Kakamura and into rather humble origins, Kōtoku started his working life as a houseboy for the liberal politician Hayashi Yūzō. Obtaining an education and becoming a newspaper writer in 1893, Kōtoku's interest in politics grew. In 1899, he switched tracks, leaving the newspaper Yorozu Chūhō because of its support for the Russo-Japanese war, a paper where he once railed against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria; and later, in 1901, he published his first book: Imperialism, Monster of the Twentieth Century, a critique of imperialism that predates Hobsbawm and Lenin.

His journey into anarchism, however, would turn out to be a marathon, not a sprint, for his first major political endeavour would be helping to organise the Social Democratic Party in 1901. This party was immediately banned by the government, a decision that led Kōtoku (alongside his resignation from Yorozu Chūhō) to join forces with the socialist Sakai Toshihiko (堺 利彦) and create a newspaper: the Heimin Shimbun, or Commoner's Newspaper (which we appreciate, for obvious reasons). During this journalistic period of his life, Kōtoku, along with Sakai, became the first to translate and publish The Communist Manifesto into Japanese; an action which got them heavily fined. In 1905, the radicalism of the paper became too much for the Meiji government. Heimin Shimbun was banned and Kōtoku imprisoned.

His turn into anarchism, much like many Japanese and also Chinese anarchists at the time, can be attributed largely to the works of Kropotkin. >>

As noted by an article on Libcom:

*His political thoughts first began to turn to a more libertarian philosophy when he read Kropotkin's Fields, Factories and Workshops in prison. In his own words, he 'had gone [to jail] as a Marxian Socialist and returned as a radical Anarchist.'*

Choosing self-exile, Kōtoku travelled to America where he was greatly influenced by the various socialist and anarchist groups that organised there. Protesting on the streets with the International Workers of the World (IWW), he came to hold a pessimistic view of American society:

*The way the workers are persecuted and oppressed here makes America not the tiniest bit different from Russia or Japan. Just look, look at the scars over my shoulders! That's from the beating the police gave me.' How can liberty exist, how can popular rights exist in a place where the capitalist class exists, where the landlord class exists!*

These experiences would come to define Kōtoku's radicalism and oversee his turn towards anarchism. Participating in state politics was now not good enough, and as he wrote in 1906:

*I want myself to be idealist, revolutionary, progressive. I do not like lukewarm socialism, syrupy socialism, state socialism.*

From his experiences with American anarcho-syndicalists much like those in the IWW, Kōtoku came to see that direct action was more preferable and effective than rallying around a state party. This was a new Kōtoku Shusui. Leaving his social-democrat and Marxist days behind him, he returned to Japan with the intention of spreading radical anarchist thought, an intention reflected by the newly reestablished Heimin Shimbun, which folded in 1907 to be replaced by two new papers: Social News, for social democrats, and the Osaka Common People's Newspaper, which argued for anarchist direct action. The stones were now set for Kōtoku's new political goal, but sadly, so they were also set for his later execution. His life started as a houseboy turned social-democratic, and ended, in the High Treason Incident, as a committed anarchist,

anti-imperialist, and socialist who popularised the classic socialist texts in Japan.

Before we end our look at Kōtoku's life, however, I would like to draw your attention back to the book he authored in 1901: Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century. This work deserves, in light of its significance and its lack of representation in Western circles, to be more widely read and understood as a valuable addition to our understanding of imperialism. This significance lies in two main points; firstly, that it predates Lenin's analysis of imperialism by 16 years; and secondly, that it provides a comprehensive perspective of imperialism from a writer in the periphery, and which also accounts for the conditions from which imperialism rose in that periphery.

Unlike Lenin, who viewed imperialism as the inevitable result of capitalism's creation of surplus value and its strong industrialism, Kōtoku placed the blame primarily on social, political, and ideological factors. To take a passage from the book:

*Like the spread of plague, imperialism is truly a horrible disease that infects everything that it touches. Indeed, so-called patriotism is the microbe that causes the disease while militarism is the means by which the microbe is transmitted.*

Illustrating his point with various historical examples, such as English colonialism, the rise of the German Empire, and the indigenous massacres in the United States, he effectively argues that imperialism functions by manipulating the people's fear of the foreign "bogeyman". The expansion of the military this permits leads to violent theft of land and resources abroad, an act which in itself then grows the people's hatred for the 'other' and then permits more military expansion. Kōtoku makes sure to stress that such expansion will only ever be to the benefit of a country's ruling class. Citing the English massacre at Peterloo, where troops who had recently fought against Napoleon charged at English protesters demanding parliamentary reform, Kōtoku states that:

*The blade of the bayonet that cuts off the enemy's head serves just as well to spill the blood of one's fellow countrymen.*

To fall for patriotism and nationalism is the same as falling for the ruling class' lies. The fear and distrust the people may hold towards those outside of their community is given a structure, a state and military through which to express that fear and turn it into vile hatred. For Kōtoku, this is the crux on which imperialism lies, a belief which led various Lenin-inspired Marxists to criticise him. But, as noted by the historian Robert Tierney, the development of Japanese imperialism does not easily fit into the definitions invented by Lenin, for it 'preceded the development of a strong capitalist sector or the accumulation of surplus capital'. Lenin's hypothesis was, in essence, reversed, as Japanese industrialists only began to invest in overseas market after, and not before, military conquest and territorial expansion led by the state and a 'vanguard' of 'small and middle merchants'. Later criticisms of Kōtoku appear to adapt Japan to fit Lenin's model, rather than adapt their own thinking to match Japan. To Tierney, this is most likely due to 'the acceptance of Lenin's established authority in doctrinal matters', and not the applicability of his theories in these historical circumstances. For those who are interested in learning more about Japanese imperialism it is a must read.

Kōtoku Shusui's contributions to socialism and anarchism in Japan, alongside his contribution to our understanding of imperialism, cannot be understated. Any anarchist (and really, any socialist) should come to know who he was and what he thought. Not to hold him to any doctrinal standard, but to see anarchism from the perspective of an incredible, non-western thinker.

### **Uchiyama Gudō (内山 愚童)**

Uchiyama, who would come to die alongside Kōtoku, began his life on May 17, 1874, as one of four children in a woodworking family in Ojiya, a village in the Niigata Prefecture. Losing his father at the age of sixteen, Gudō began to turn his eyes towards Buddhism, to which he would later enter priesthood, undergoing an ordination in the Sōtō Zen sect at the Hōzōji temple on April 12, 1897.

One might, if they had in mind the typical image of Buddhists, believe that Uchiyama was stepping out of the material world and into the enlightened and separate realm of the Buddhist temple, where monks and initiates

live in peace, isolated from the people around them. This is far from the truth in both the past and for Uchiyama's presence. Buddhism had, like all segments of Japanese society, been swept up in the Meiji era's push towards an imperialistic state. As is explained in *Imperial-Way Zen: Ichikawa Hakugen's Questions for Buddhist Ethics*:

*'after undergoing severe state persecution during the early Meiji period (1868–1872), and in an effort to distance itself from the recently discredited Tokugawa government, Buddhism was reinvented as a modernizing force. This "New Buddhism" (Shin Bukkyō), as it came to be known, was seen as "socially useful." That is, it pursued a variety of social service projects, supported the Emperor through nation-building activities, and projected itself as universally appealing and compatible with a modern, scientific world. In essence, New Buddhism, alongside Confucianism, Shinto, and other nationalistic ideologies, presented itself as a positive and worthy contribution to the body of the Japanese state—the kokutai—and the glory of the Imperial-Way.'*

It is both this environment of growing Japanese militarism and imperialism, and the Buddhist establishments acceptance of it, that garnered Uchiyama's intense criticism. In his various writings, he railed against the Japanese state's treatment of tenant farmers, the arrogance and hypocrisy of its ruling class, and the negative elements of his own belief system. His approach to Buddhism was one that reflected his socialist-anarchist ideals, and so his interpretation of the Buddhist texts and practises emphasised its egalitarian and communal qualities, whilst denouncing what he saw as bigotry. For example, on the matter of reincarnation:

*Gudō regarded the Buddhist teaching according to which one's present economic and social fate is the outcome of past lives and actions as a superstition, promoted by those in power to defend against reasonable claims made by those underprivileged.*

Whilst, on the opposite end, he wrote in the *Heimin Shimbun* that:

*As a propagator of Buddhism I teach that "all sentient beings have the Buddha nature" and that "within the Dharma there is equality, with neither superior >>*

*nor inferior". Furthermore, I teach that "all sentient beings are my children". Having taken these golden words as the basis of my faith, I discovered that they are in complete agreement with the principles of socialism. It was thus that I became a believer in socialism.*

Gudō was committed not just to Buddhism, but to the people, and so his writing and work attempts a synthesis of the two: a socially-conscious and active Buddhism that does not ignore, and can actually give solutions to, the plight of the exploited. Heavily influenced by their organisational structure, for example, Uchiyama took the traditional Sangha, or communal lifestyle, of the Buddhist monks and applied it to his campaign for land reform, arguing that if 'two or three hundred persons who, living in one place at one time, shared a communal lifestyle' just as the monks did, then they would be able to construct communities of solidarity and socialism throughout all of Japan. Unlike the establishment Buddhists, who had tactically announced their support for Meiji imperialism, Gudō saw their shared religion as not just socialist in character, but a model from which to create a new society.

When not writing about Buddhism, Uchiyama developed polemics aimed at tenant farmers with the intention of convincing them of anarcho-communist principles. In one text called 'Anarcho-Communist Revolution', he writes:

*Folks, let's stop paying taxes to the stupid government, and let's ruin those hideous people as soon as we can! Then, let's take back the wealth that the government has stolen from us over a long time through force and oppression, from the time of our ancestors, and let's keep it in common!*

The brunt of this piece lays out the oppressive and exploitative nature of the state and capitalism, laying the blame for the tenant farmer's problems on the 'thief called the landlord', the 'big thief called the government', and the 'other thieves called merchants'; however, writing as he was in the time of Meiji, Uchiyama was also keen to take on the almost supernatural status in which the new emperor had afforded himself. As he writes:

*The boss of this government, the emperor, is not the son of*

*god, as the schoolteachers deceivngly tell you. The ancestors of the present emperor came from a remote corner of Kyushu; murdering and stealing.*

Gudō wishes to be clear on the matter: Meiji is a thief, and no better or more special than the landlords, the government and the merchants who steal in his name. This is greatly significant in the time of Japanese state-building, which sought to deify the emperor and unite the nation in his name.

Uchiyama would continue this staunch repudiation of the government until his execution in 1911. We can take inspiration through the voracity of his words, the way he wished to connect with the working people, and the way he stood up to the establishment voices of his religion. To end on some words that summarise his activism excellently:

*the hand that holds the rosary should also always hold a bomb*

### **Kanno Sugako (管野 須賀子)**

Born in Osaka in 1881, Kanno led a turbulent childhood as one of five children, and as a daughter to a father whose family mining business had collapsed. Sexually assaulted at 15 by a man who worked for her father (which was supposedly arranged by her stepmother), Kanno was doubly punished by both her traumatic attack and the shame forced upon her by society; much as women still are today. Finding solace in an essay by Sakai Toshihiko (the same Sakai who created Heimin Shimbun with Kōtoku) which encouraged sexual assault victims not to feel the shame society wishes them to feel, Kanno was drawn towards socialism, and later, anarchism.

After marrying a man in a merchant family in 1889 at 17 in order to escape her town and travel to Tokyo, Kanno returned to Osaka in 1902 to care for her father. In the coming years she would write various piece of long fiction, such as 'Omokage' (おもかげ), a story where a woman resents her parents for pushing a societal construction of femininity on her, as well as poems expressing an anti-war stance. Writing also for various publications and newspapers, Kanno would come to fight against the system of concubines, the

exploitation of sex workers; and, just like her now lover Kōtoku, the Russo-Japanese war. In 1906, the editor of the Wakayama Prefecture newspaper Muro Shinpō was jailed for insulting the authorities, leading Kanno, who had already contributed various articles, to become the chief editor. It is during this time that she continued to write on the topics of socialism, anarchism, feminism, and Christianity, a faith that inspired much of her political work.

All in all, Kanno was consistent in her rebellion towards Japanese society and its status quo norms and values, whether that was its misogyny, warmongering, or its march towards capitalism. In her writing she combined all of these rebellions into one, as she wrote in one paper, the Muro Shinpō:

*Our ideal is socialism, which aims at the equality of all classes. But just as a great building cannot be destroyed in a moment, the existing hierarchical class system, which has been consolidated over many years, cannot be overthrown in a day and a night ... So we [women] must first of all achieve the fundamental principle of 'self-awareness', and develop our potential, uplift our character, and then gradually work toward the realization of our ideal.*

Much like Kōtoku, however, Kanno did not start her socialist journey as a voracious proponent of direct action. That would be triggered later by the notorious Red Flag incident, a gathering of anarchists and socialists who had come to celebrate the release of the political activist and activist Koken Yamaguchi. It was at the moment that the gathering was attacked by police and multiple anarchists, including Kanno, were arrested, that she began to call more clearly for direct action. As she later notes:

*Basically even among anarchists I was among the more radical thinkers. When I was imprisoned in June 1908 in connection with the Red Flag incident I was outraged at the brutal behavior of the police. I concluded that a peaceful propagation of our principles could not be conducted under these circumstances. It was necessary to arouse the people's awareness by staging riots or a revolution or by undertaking assassinations.*

It is from this event in 1908 and up until her execution

in 1911 that Kanno reached her most radical, organising direct action with Kōtoku and other anarchists; actions that would later see her accused of a plot to assassinate the emperor. On her way to the gallows, Kanno kept a remarkable prison diary detailing the events during and leading up to her trial and execution. In one of its final pages, she delivers a threat to the Japanese government:

*It seems that the authorities are watching our comrades in the outside world with even greater vigilance. The trial's shocking and outrageous results show that the government is planning to take advantage of this incident to adopt extreme, repressive measures. Persecute us! That's right, persecute us! Don't you know that for every force there is a counterforce? Persecute us! Persecute us as much as you wish. The old way is fighting the new — imperialism versus anarchism.*

The way in which she presents that last dichotomy: 'imperialism versus anarchism', encapsulates the mood of Japanese anarchists in this period. Unlike those who lived in European imperial powers, whose critiques were levelled primarily at capitalism and the state, Kanno, along with many of her peers, saw the growing tide of imperialism as their main enemy. The uniqueness of this viewpoint, which puts the Japanese anarchists more in line with their counterparts in the European colonies than in the European core, is admirable and cannot be understated.

## Conclusion

I hope you have found this introduction to the early Japanese anarchists interesting and informative, not only as a lesser-known form of anarchism, but as an anarchism formulated outside of the European context and therefore outside of anarchism's "traditional" intellectual history. For more reading, I would wholly recommend reading the entire of Kōtoku Shusui's Imperialism, which can be found here. ■

## Samuel Clarke

*Originally published in The Commoner a non-profit platform sharing libertarian socialist perspectives.*

[www.thecommoner.org.uk/taigyaku-jiken-an-introduction-to-the-japanese-anarchists](http://www.thecommoner.org.uk/taigyaku-jiken-an-introduction-to-the-japanese-anarchists)

# INTERVIEW WITH ANARCHIST IN MINSK ABOUT THE BELARUS PROTESTS

*The fight against the capitalist system and the authoritarian nation states driving the destruction of the planet must be an international one if it has any hope of succeeding. That's why we decided to reach out to anarchists in Belarus to learn about the current wave of protests confronting the regime of Lukashenka. We did it by contacting the Anarchist Black Cross Belarus, but this interview represents the opinion of a single anarchist in Minsk and doesn't reflect the position of any particular organisation or group.*

*From GAF we want to send our solidarity to everyone in Belarus fighting against state oppression. Specially to our anarchist and anti-fascists comrades, we hope all of you stay safe. We are encouraged by the acts of defiance we are seeing every day coming from Belarus and angered by the horrible violence of the state. We hope this interview spreads awareness of the situation in Belarus and inspires acts of solidarity all over the world.*

**What is the historical background that explains the opposition towards the current government? What circumstances precipitated the current wave of protests?**

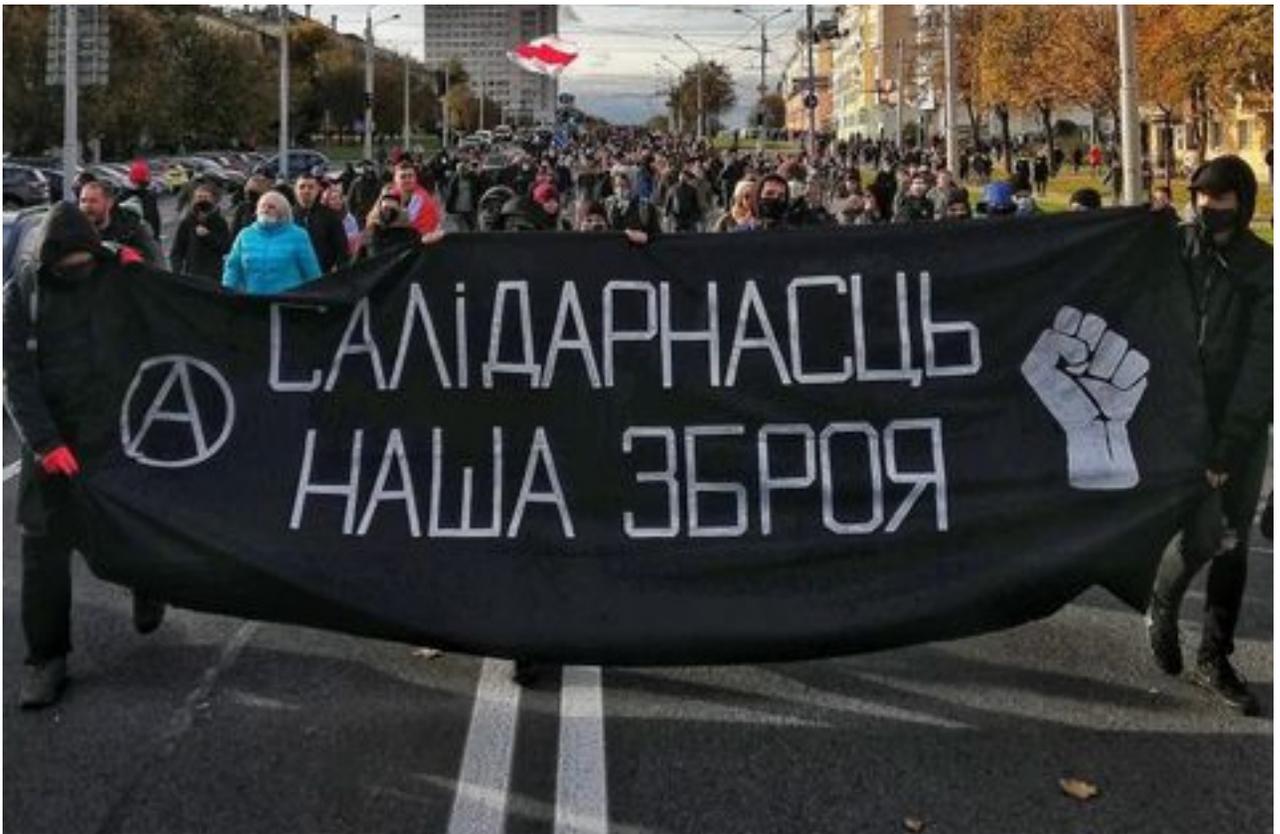
Aliaksandr Lukashenka occupies the presidential chair since 1994. In 1996 he organised a kind of coup d'état (through a referendum with falsified results), and since then the country is a dictatorship with more and more repressive legislation and less and less space for political movement. Nevertheless, at the start of his rule, Lukashenka enjoyed some support from portions of the population. His assumption of an office coincided with relative economic stability after stark economic crisis of the early 1990s (and some people tended to falsely attribute this relative stability to Lukashenka's rule).

Lukashenka in many ways continued to pursue the policy of his predecessor, prime minister Viachaslau Kebich (there was no presidential chair in Belarus before 1994). For instance, economic and political ties with Russia continued to be very strong. Another political bet of both Kebich and Lukashenka was

to proceed with privatisation extremely slowly and cautiously. In contrast with neighbouring Russia, Poland and Lithuania, Belarus have not privatised many of its biggest industrial enterprises until now. It was made in order to reduce number of working places in industry slowly and hence to avoid social explosion. In case of fast privatisation, massive dismissals would be unavoidable. Social support for families with children continued to exist (especially with three, four and more children). Public health system is still free of charge for all Belarusian citizens (but not for citizens of other countries, even if they live in Belarus many years and pay all their taxes here).

But at the same time dismantling of social guarantees took place. For instance, in late 1990s short-term labour contracts (usually one year long) started to be introduced universally instead of previous system of contracts not limited in time. At the end of a contract year, an employer can dismiss an employee without a need to provide any justification. This measure was highly unpopular. But the regime managed to keep salaries rising, and the working population slowly accepted the new system. The short-term contracts are widely used not only to dismiss labour activist (e. g. unionists), but political activists (e. g. activist of political parties or social movements) as well.

There are almost no social guarantees for jobless people. Unemployment payments are as low as an equivalent to 10 euro per month, and conditions are applied (e. g. an obligation to perform public works couple of days per month), so most unemployed simply do not lose their time to fill papers in an unemployment office. Moreover, in 2017 Lukashenka tried to introduce something similar to general poll tax. Even unemployed had to pay a fixed minimal tax per year. Due to massive tide of protests, the presidential decree was rolled back. But this attempt was seen by the people as a serious breach of an unspoken social contract, and influenced current protests.



For a long time, political opposition was relatively unpopular, as some of its most vocal speakers are either economic liberals and advocate privatisation, or political conservatives who advocate e. g. ban of abortion (so far abortion is legal and free of charge in Belarus). At the same time, there are many currents within the opposition, including social democrats, left party (former communists) and greens who do not advocate neither privatisation, nor ban of abortion.

But this year the situation changed profoundly. During the first wave of coronavirus, authorities made many political mistakes and outraged citizens. First, they did not provide adequate information and in many times resorted to outward lies (e. g. statistics of deaths related to epidemics was falsified from the very start). Second, Lukashenka scorned and ridiculed ill and dead people, blaming them (not the policy of his government) in their illness. Such behaviour caused massive outrage even in-between former supporters of Lukashenka. Third, no social support was offered to people who lost their jobs or significant part of salaries. In Belarus, no services or industries were closed by governmental decree, but

many industries suffered from the crisis anyway, e. g. tourism, transport, restaurants, export-oriented industries (as the demand declined). Fourth, many medics who had worked overtime under stressful and risky conditions, were not paid properly.

As a result, when presidential campaign was announced late spring, people immediately lined to give their signature to all oppositional candidates, but not to Lukashenka. The authorities answered with repressions: several candidates and some of their supporters were jailed. This tactics only enraged even more people, and already in July there were protest rallies during which some protesters fought back riot police (I have to underline, protesters did not attack riot police). However, authorities allowed one oppositional candidate, Sviatlana Cikhanouskaja, to run in the elections. Cikhanouskaja substituted her jailed husband, Siarhiej Cikhanouski. Election campaign rallies of Cikhanouskaja gathered crowds of supporters, even in tiny and deeply provincial towns. The authorities started to be so afraid that they banned all Cikhanouskaja's rallies in the last week before elections.>>

The election results were falsified, as it happens always since 1996, but there is general feeling that in reality Cikhankouskaja overwhelmingly won. Her campaign mobilised those people who usually do not participate in elections, and Lukashenka's ratings are close to historic minimum (24% in Minsk in March-April 2020, with obvious later decline).

**What role are anarchists and anti-fascists taking in the protests? What are their main objectives when intervening in the protests? How are they seen by the rest of protestors? – What tactics are being used by protestors when confronting the state forces in Belarus? Have they been influenced by recent uprisings around the world, such as Hong Kong, Chile, Lebanon or Portland?**

Anarchists are on the streets, however, anarchists rarely mark themselves specifically as anarchists to avoid being busted (or worse). Therefore, the general public has little idea that anarchists are present. Anarchists come to demonstrations with banners and posters and spread leaflets to pursue anarchist agenda (e. g. anti-police, feminist, anti-nuclear).

Tactics of protestors in Belarus is hardly influenced by other uprisings. Belarusians are very provincial, participants of the protests rarely have an idea that in Hong Kong anything happens at all, not to speak about Chile.

So far the protests are largely peaceful. But when police attacks protestors, sometimes protestors fight back and e. g. do not let to bust fellow protestors. In early August, there were several occasions of symbolic improvised barricades made from garbage bins and construction fences.

**What tactics of counter-insurgency are being used by the state to stop the protests? Are anarchist and antifascists being targeted in a particular way? How are they defending themselves?**

On 9-12 August police used everything: tear gas, flash-bang grenades, rubber, plastic and steel bullets, water cannons, armoured vehicles to break barricades, tortures (including beating some protestors to death).

There are several people dead (some shot, some tortured to death), couple of dozen missing, several hundred were severely wounded by grenades and bullets and several thousand were tortured in police stations these days. From 13-14 August, police violence was reduced. Police continues to beat and detain people, but there is only one report of a murder which happened in the second half of August.

Since 14 August, couple of thousand protestors faced arrests or fines. There are more than 70 political prisoners who face criminal charges, several thousand more protestors face criminal charges (in the status of defendant or suspect), but are not under arrest. Many of them have left the country. The most widespread accusation is "organisation of mass disorder and/or participation in it".

In Minsk, anarchists are rarely targeted in a particular way, due to our invisibility. Otherwise, we expect arrests. Some anarchists were arrested for their active participation in women marches or for their involvement in human rights organisations. But in these cases, not anarchists, but feminists and human rights defenders were targeted by police.

In Hrodna and Baranavichy, anarchists were arrested when they formed anarchist blocks during demonstrations.

Three anarchists are under arrest and face criminal charges, two of them because already before the elections they were on the police list of 'especially dangerous' anarchists.

**In the recent uprising in USA, sectors within the very own protest movement played a role in quenching the insurrections by calling for peace, civility and reform. Is something similar happening in Belarus or are militant tactics widely supported?**

In Belarus, the whole protest started from the unfair elections. It was further propelled by extreme police violence in the early August. Protestors demand, inter alia, to hold "fair" elections and to punish police officers who killed and tortured. It is strange to assume that these same people who demand legality would call for

an insurrection.

The protest is largely bourgeois (not totally, but largely), well-paid specialists and owners of small and medium-sized businesses march on the streets. They are demanding exactly peace, civility and reform. Why would they change their demands?

Militant tactics do not enjoy wide support, but militant slogans do. Protesters shout outward abuse at Lukashenka and his police, same slogans are repeated in graffiti, and the whole protest is very much carnivalesque (in all senses, including e. g. subversion of hierarchies).

Many people are ready to fight back the police to prevent arrests. This is not seen as violence. Most police officers are masked to hide their identity, and it became highly popular to demask them, to tear masks off.

Information is gathered and published on police officers who practiced violence, sometimes with their phone numbers and home addresses.

Some time ago three or four private cars of local police officers were burned down in a small provincial town of Drahichyn.

**Has there been attempts by opposition political parties or forces to take control over the movement and co-opt it for their own political objectives? If so, what has been the response from the protestors?**

Again, it is electoral protest. Most protesters want oppositional political parties or forces to take control of the country. The movement (or at least its largest part) wants to be co-opted.

**What opportunities do the current protests present for anarchists and anti-fascists in Belarus and what would it mean for them the fall of the current regime?**

The protest give anarchists a forum to speak and a space to practice ideas. In the last three years, almost all web-sites of Belarusian anarchist were declared 'extremist' by the Belarusian state, and all internet providers block

them (it is possible to access these sites through proxy, VPN or Tor Browser). Almost all printed anarchist propaganda was declared "extremist" as soon as it was found and confiscated. It is punishable by law to share articles from anarchist web-sites or anarchist leaflets e. g. at one's facebook page (big fines are applied). So it is hard to underestimate possibilities for propaganda which current protests have opened. However, one has to spread propaganda with caution. Some weeks ago, two anarchists had been detained in the centre of Minsk and subsequently were arrested for spreading leaflets.

The fall of current regime most probably will bring some liberalisation of the legislation. First, anarchists would like to depenalise expression of anarchist ideas (to abolish "anti-extremist" legislation). Second, there is whole range of social, environmental, legal changes which anarchists are anticipating and struggling for. A list of some of such changes was published by anarchist group *Pramień* ([www.pramen.io](http://www.pramen.io)).

How can anarchists, antifascists and other anti-authoritarian sympathisers offer solidarity from abroad?

You can make solidarity actions, e. g. in front of Belarusian embassies and consulates (or simply at the central square of your town). You can organise benefits and donate money e. g. to Anarchist Black Cross Belarus ([www.abc-belarus.org](http://www.abc-belarus.org)) or to *Pramień*. You can help Belarusian refugees, several thousand people have left the country, including some anarchists and anti-fascists (sorry, no ready recipes, please search for information and contacts yourself e. g. through Belarusian anarchist web-sites). And, obviously, you can spread the word. ■

**Green Anti-capitalist Front  
Belarus ABC**

# MYSTIFICATION OF CLOTHES AS THE CAUSE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

2018, in one narrow aisle in Bekasi Timur street, Jatinegara, Jakarta, Indonesia, RA met a girl, continuing with sexual assault after hitting her head. He claimed to conduct it spontaneously due to her revealing clothes. The latest was in July 2020 when a video shows Starbucks' male employees who peeped the women's customers' breasts through their CCTV in one of the outlets in Jakarta, Indonesia, making most people on their social media comment on the women's clothes, seemingly to be 'inviting' the perpetrators to do so.

Furthermore, there is a tendency that women with unrevealing clothes are seen to have a strong potential object for sexual harassment and rape. This statement directly implies that the ones with more covering clothes are safer. According to one of protection institutions for women, Rifka Annisa through their spokesperson, Defientia Muharomah, in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, the above statement is according to one of their researches underlying that the actors do the actions because they deserve to be "the righteous" to see women with such clothes, and even they never feel guilty to conduct them

Everywhere, women are vulnerable for sexual harassment and violence with the skyrocketing number across the world.

No matter how many international covenants about human rights and equal rights for women as well as some improvement of applicable laws to support and to prevent them from those above-mentioned misconduct have been signed, they cannot prevent them to be still easily exposed with various undermining actions, while the societies and authorized officials tend to blame them as well. Main victimization definitely leads to what they are wearing when the events emerge. Clothes are one of the visible yet easiest causes to re-accuse women for encountering sexual misconducts. Furthermore, it is still effortful to raise public awareness to see the reality that sexual harassment and violence occur to women merely on account of perpetrators' pure crime and negative mindsets, not because of the victims.

This circumstance stirs most people to dismiss the victims' perspectives despite their condemnations against their experience.

## **Clothes as moral standard time to time : Indonesian religion-bhased perspective**

Clothes usually symbolize certain parts of traditions, or even stories, and have maintained ancient stories of rituals, values of the countries, identity of people. At first in general, identities are constructed through uses of building materials, starting from history, geography, biology, productive and reproductive institutions, collective memories, personal fantasies, power apparatuses, and religious revelations (Castells,2010).

Time develops and clothes improve as fashion ideology. Clothes and fashion appear to be simultaneously inter-exchanged in terminology, however in sociology terms, clothes mutates to broader definition to fashion as the non-cumulative change of cultural features, originating from a basic tension specifically to the condition of the human being which underlies the tendency to imitate somebody else or to distinguish ourselves from others (Simmel, 1904).

Simmel's statement about fashion assists to identify clothes as a part of cultural traits, one of them is religion. Specifically, most of institutionalized religions provide their values as codes for societies for defining morality standard, even towards the existence of clothes which are supposed to be worn by societies. By following their conducts, the societies have an imperative role to maintain their religions' traditions as well as to control them symbolically. Gradually, the value alters to be the obligation which must be accepted everywhere, and soon it will be a new justification for people to blame those improperly dressed according to it.

Clothes implies main religions' conducts described through the religion principles, for example here Islam (Arthur, Linda.B). When it comes to Islam,

whose followers are referred to as Muslims, and according to The Koran as their holy book, Muslim women are required to dress modestly, in this case to cover their body, which actually encompasses the principle of restricting their behaviors as well as to anticipate disrespectful actions sexually. Islam itself is segregated to moderate and conservative groups, which affect the code of clothing for the women in particular. The conservative requires them to comply with the tradition, as a way to combat the cultural assimilation from westernization through Islam societies since the end of World War II.

In Indonesia, the idea of assimilating religion principle, in this case Islam, as moral standard for people's life emerges as an accepted value when later to be an imposed norm through some of formal provincial and regional regulations. In contrast, for example, while women in the country might enjoy openness based on fair gender perspective to make them equal to men, yet they have currently been facing conservatism in Islam to shift some values, one of which relies on how to rule women's clothes in public. The tendency to adhere Islamic value gets to be certain when recently it has been the likely story to see women in veil in various terms of jobs, mostly in government instances and other public institutions. For example, on 26 June 2020, The Regent of Central Lombok, Moh.Suhaili Fadhil Thohir, instructed all Moslem women civil servants to wear chador instead of health masks to combat COVID pandemic. All of them, for the first time on 3 July 2020, participated in the Friday's routine sport wearing their chador. The regent himself checked them one by one based on the chador requirement on behalf of the Islamic value, and started to criticize the ones who were still wearing long trousers instead of long dress as a part of chador requirements. Throwing back in 2012, the similar regulation was applied in the regency area of Bone Bolango in the province of Gorontalo, explaining that all women civil servants had to wear formal moslem attire as instructed by the Regent through his deputy, Hamim Pou. He underlined that it was a must in a purpose to support the regional principle of Bone Bolango Bermartabat (the dignified Bone Bolango) as well as to provide the polite impression in front of public.

The circumstance eventually segregates Islamic women and non-Islamic ones despite the country's obligation to respect both of their rights with no exceptions. As well, it directs women to comply with the principle when dressing appropriately. Unfortunately, the conduct tends to be forced to non-Islamic women, particularly students of high schools where the regions adopt the conduct, for example in Aceh, where the Syariah principle is applied onto the regional law completely, in Padang, West Sumatera, and some regions in Central Java as well as other 21 provinces in Indonesia.

### **“Inappropriate “ clothes equals justification for sexual violence and harassments?”**

In accordance with the above-mentioned religion value, clothes become another new moral standard which particularly applies to women. They thrive to be a parameter when seeing most cases of sexual violence and harassment. The principle of women's wearing any they prefer for their own comfort is found against the applicable value in public (whether it is accepted by collaborative consent or forced on behalf of the society's will), and it is very usual when religion value is promoted to support moral standardization through the tools, such as clothes.

It is taken as a must, which actually for some women it is the optional matter because it is a personal thing other people cannot interfere despite carrying the religion behind.

What is taken 'inappropriate' in terms of clothes? Inevitably, religions inspire their followers to act, to behave, and lately, seldom do they treat them as personal conducts, but more than that, they exactly prefer their peers or other parts of public to conduct the same principle. This process somehow gains a politicization, supported by politicians and religious leaders, as a result, not only can it be another law product, but also a guidance which allows the justification to victimize women through their clothes when encountering sexual violence and harassments. In order to contrast the existence of westernization in daily attire, >>

clothes usually are directed to follow the religion values, imposed to more women to do so.

The tendency to justify the reason most women are assaulted and harassed sexually as well as to victimize them due to their clothes shows lack of human right and victim perspectives since they keep being blamed no matter how bad the experience they have gained. Most of people ignore the circumstance of religious environment where the people are openly prone to sexual violence and harassment, as said by Fathkhurozi, a director of Legal Resources Centre for Gender and Human Rights that around the period of 2009-2012 approximately 85 girls and children were assaulted sexually in the environment of Islamic boarding schools in Central Java. Not only the assaults such as sodomy, rape, but also other forms of violence, such as underage and forced marriage took place at most of the places.

The perspective of attention towards victims of sexual violence and harassment is on the need to be acknowledged without focusing on their clothes and it should be properly introduced to all people, not only the ones who are relevant to anticipate such cases. No women or men should be facing any undermining practice. The thought to see anyone to get such experience on account of their inappropriateness of their clothes should be eliminated distantly from everybody's mind.

Are we still going to blame the victims on what they are wearing? Or are we going to start to listen to their perspectives? ■

### **Fanny Syarifful Alam**

*Regional coordinator-Program Director of Bandung School of Peace Indonesia, a safe place for the youth to acknowledge social and human rights issues as well as to express themselves freely for peace and social justice*

*[www.bsopindonesia.org](http://www.bsopindonesia.org)*

## **ANOTHER FINE MESS**

As we approach 9 months since the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in the UK and a little over 7 months since the government started to take it seriously, most of Europe is gripped by the predicted resurgence of cases, hospital admissions and fatalities. The Conservative government acted late and dropped restrictions quickly in favour of getting 'back to work', now that has been reversed it is predominately working class people who are paying the price. With an economy greatly built on services and consumerism, a lot of which has stalled, those of us with jobs in hospitality, entertainment or shops who cannot work from home have relied on the Furlough Scheme, Self-Employment Support Scheme grants and other measures to keep money coming in. Of the companies that are still running, many are doing so with some workers on furlough, or have already made lay-offs. As a result, some workers are on lower pay, unemployment is rising overall and many households are feeling the pinch.

The neo-liberal ideology that is rife within the Conservatives has been challenged by capitalism's need for a propped-up real economy, while the Party cannot bring itself to give more to local councils many of which are Opposition controlled, especially in the cities. This has been disastrous for the tackling of the pandemic; with a highly inefficient test-and-trace in the hands of a centralised system run by a mishmash of private companies and most recently we have witnessed the Government's brutal approach to 'negotiating' council financial support within the Tier system.

Even while a laissez-faire attitude exists, the state is having to accept that many more people are at risk of poverty, including core voters and some that the Tories wooed in the last General Election, including those areas that had suffered under Thatcher and then became disillusioned with Labour. The Government has temporarily increased Universal Credit entitlement by £1000 until April 2021 and removed the minimum income floor until next month (13th November). Housing benefit has also been changed to reflect current rents which have increased hugely in London over the past decade. This said, UK welfare support for

workers is still low compared to many rich countries and even if all this was made permanent it would not reverse the cuts in benefits over the last 5 years, and the ending of temporary increases will cut incomes by 13% if and when the measures end, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

The more neo-liberal end of the Tories are clearly squirming from all of the public spending and this must be part of the reason for so much media time being spent on the ludicrous 'let it rip' idea for the pandemic, propagated most recently by a right-wing libertarian-sponsored 'Great Barrington Declaration'. If allowed to happen for a magical goal of herd immunity in young workers, the virus would more likely infect thousands more vulnerable people through community transmission and leave others, including younger people, with the health effects of Long Covid and could even lead to more dangerous strains of the virus developing before a vaccine is found.

The next few months are full of uncertainty which is not surprising as the virus is getting more out of control, not only in UK but across the world. In **Europe** and the Mediterranean, overnight curfews of the like not experienced since WWII, have been introduced or extended in France, Greece (including islands and Crete), Italy, Sicily, Cyprus and most recently, Spain.

The AF has been meeting with our comrades in the International of Anarchist Federations to analyse what anarchists can say and do about the situation. There are good examples of mutual aid which have been talked about elsewhere, including in the UK with examples including Green Anti-capitalist Front's squatted social centre in London, GRASS, that adapted as a mutual aid centre, and Bristol's 'BASE and Roses' initiative that is delivering over a hundred each of food boxes and cooked meals to people in need in working class communities, this only highlighting the wealth inequalities mentioned above.

It is clear that much of room to make a difference depends on the State you've Got as we wrote in Organise! at the start of the pandemic. For example, Slovenia has seen waves of public protest during the pandemic and the Federation for Anarchist Organising

has been influential in challenging the lock down by means of physically-distanced cycle protests earlier this year, and then getting feet on the streets in mass demos, helping to ensure that any anti-quarantine position is not given over to the 'anti masker' right-wing or conspiracy-mongers. Another important question for anarchists is one of borders, internal as well as nation state ones. Who would have thought we'd have border controls between England and Wales in addition to the mess Brexit is creating between the North and South in Ireland? Similar regional border controls were evident in Italy in the early parts of the pandemic. Countering the threat of internal borders is in addition to the need for solidarity with migrants from further afield. Keeping 'No Borders' thinking alive is important to counter the rhetoric of the right which tries to embed the idea of migrants spreading diseases and appeals to a patriotism where assumptions are made about who is in and who is not welcome amongst its intended audience.

In **Latin America** our IFA comrades are reporting on continued state-sanctioned grabs of indigenous people's land, which are seen as a way out of poverty by farmers in rural areas, especially in **Brazil** but also due to mining operations in Argentina. There are some gains too though. In **Mexico**, Zapatista communities have been tackling Covid with Autonomous Clinics. Anarchists in self-organised community groups are distributing masks, food and medication in São Paulo favela areas. Elsewhere in Argentina agricultural and workers' co-operatives which formed during class struggle in the 2000s are finding a place in supporting local communities during the pandemic.

We know the rich have hunkered down with their assets and cash waiting for the new 'opportunities' afforded by the crisis, while some such as the online giants are doing well out of the pandemic. While we look forward to what lies ahead with a lot of uncertainty, we do so with the knowledge that any new normal should not be capitalist business as usual. ■

## INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

### A brief run down of resistance around the world



#### **Santiago, Chile**

A year on from protests which saw 30 dead and thousands injured, and with little let up from the state since, tens of thousands hit the streets come 18 October for large scale riots. By the early evening protestors had broken into the Parish of La Asunción, the institutional church of the Carabineros (police).

They burnt it down.



#### **Bangkok, Thailand**

Tired of dealing with the cycle of coups and the monarchy, student lead protests which have been building all year took an unexpected turn when thousands took the street and fought off the police. Their demand? “let it end with our generation”.



#### **Lagos, Nigeria**

Protests against police brutality, with a special focus on tyhe Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) turn a horrific turn when the army which had been deployed at the Lekki tollgate opened fire to disperse peaceful protestors in an act that sent shock waves through the country.

In response several banks and a police station were torched.

## Mexico City, Mexico

On 6 September, as part of huge ongoing actions against the state feminists broke into the office of the director of the national commission of human rights in Mexico City to highlight that the state to prevent the killing and rape of women. The building was turned into an autonomous shelter for survivors of abuse.

This was followed a couple of weeks later on the 27th when Members of the Bloque Negro feminist collective along with victims of abuse departed and headed on a march in support of abortion rights.

The police rocked up in their hundreds and attacked them exhibiting their usual brutal methods. In return feminists sent eight cops to the hospital.

## Philadelphia, USA

Cops responding to calls over an man armed with a knife found they had a mental health crisis on their hands. Making no attempt to de-escalate they then murdered Walter Wallace in front of his mother for not obeying commands.

The local community has responded accordingly for two nights (at time of writing) with solidarity action in other cities such as New York.



# DIGITAL SECURITY AGAINST THE STATE

## Current methods/tools against States' Internet-blocking and slowdowns for censorship (2020-07-01)

There is a resurgence of draconian state blocking/slowdowns of Internet in Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and elsewhere, with Iraq at the time of writing passing the 104th hour of blackout due to ongoing protests against government corruption, Egypt having over 500 news/rights/etc websites known blocked and Turkey e.g. habitually ordering hundreds of State-takedowns monthly with major knowledge and culture treasures of humankind such as Wikipedia being completely banned for almost 900 days now.

These free of cost options have been verified with people IN current state censorship/blocking areas as working recently:

- **ProtonVPN** has a free of cost mode that should be more than enough for any average user and is motivated by anti-censorship. Works on Linux/Windows/Android/Routers/MacOS/iPhone/iPad.
- **RiseupVPN**, the newish Bitmask-based VPN which was previously named Riseup Black.
- **CalyxVPN** is similar to RiseupVPN, with same technologies but different addresses, so may be useful if Riseup has already been blocked.
- **Tor Browser** is also other Tor-based solutions like Tails and Whonix of course, but Tor Browser is a good cross-platform start. Tor is however a bit slow and triggers so many CAPTCHAs that use may even become practically impossible.
- **WARP**, the new VPN from CloudFlare. May be difficult for dictatorships to block, as CloudFlare is (unfortunately) a core component of extremely many major commercial/government web-based services nowadays.

For local messaging when/if Internet Service Providers (ISPs) shut down networking completely:

- **Briar** has been shown to work.

- **FireChat** claims to fill a similar function, but I have not had it verified as working there, now.

Instant-messaging tools with high level of general trust, but which require centralized infrastructure to work:

- **Signal** works on most computers and phones, but uses mobile phone numbers as user identifiers, which are easily traceable by any State and relies on centralized servers for message delivery. Open source.
- **Wire**, like above, based on same protocol, but uses e-mail addresses as user identifiers and therefore is much more difficult to trace, as temporary/dedicated e-mail accounts can be used. Open source.
- **Wickr** is similar to above. Very limited open source.
- **Silence** is completely SMS-based encryption, as Signal was, developed from Signal's old source code. Useful when there is no mobile data-traffic, but only SMS. Open source.

Other blocking/slowdown circumvention tools that I haven't verified to be working right now, but may be good to keep in mind if the previous stop working (Not an endorsement. Make sure to check anonymization, logging, State-collaboration, etc as needed before use):

- **Mada19 Outline** [in Arabic]
- **VPNBook**
- The “**cryptofree**” or “**cryptofree WireGuard**” by the generally well regarded cryptostorm.
- **Lantern**
- **Psiphon**
- **Hola**

As the State combines the blockings/slowdowns with arbitrary physical searches of people in the streets and in homes, wherein finding one of the above mentioned tools leads to arrest, it is probably a good idea to hide their presence.

For Android, the two first methods here for example may work well.

Documents, videos, software installers, etc can be hidden in encrypted container-files and then placing those files in some obscure place that would not likely be inspected during a regular search, such as in a different program's data-directories and similar.

Encrypted container-files can be created and opened using **VeraCrypt** (almost all desktop/laptop computers) or EDS (Android).

Using well known functions like "Samsung Secure Folder" or similar from other major manufacturers is probably NOT a good idea, as they are well known enough to have had passwords demanded during arbitrary searches.

As a probably last resort, there is an analog modem number still up in Sweden, which I have not verified myself due to lack of hardware, but a modem answers and using it did work last I heard.

Sweden modem phone number:  
+46708671911 (username/password "toto")

Two more analog modem phone numbers that I have not verified at all if they still work are:

The Netherlands modem phone number:  
+31205350535 (username/Password "xs4all")

France modem phone number:  
+33172890150 (username/password "toto")

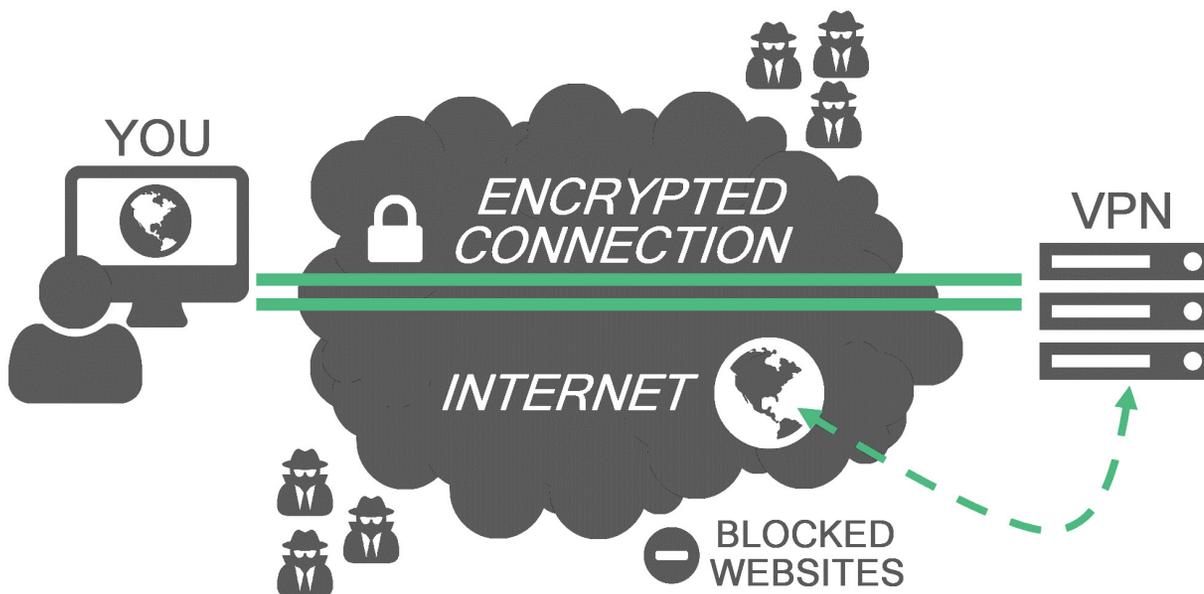
Last, to state the obvious:

Absolutely **DO NOT** rely on Facebook (which is also e.g. WhatsApp and Instagram) for dictatorship-banned communications, as they have cooperated with dictatorships' "lawful court orders" in the past leading to capture, torture and/or executions, at least in Syria therefore presumably also elsewhere and furthermore publicly admitted to being co-responsible for genocide and enabling imprisonment of people for being homosexual through silent automated "interests" categorization being used as court evidence.

Better platforms to consider are for example **Riseup's Crabgrass, Mastodon and PeerTube.** ■

### B9ace

*[www.b9ace.noblogs.org/post/2019/10/07/current-methods-tools-against-states-internet-blocking-slowdowns-for-censorship](http://www.b9ace.noblogs.org/post/2019/10/07/current-methods-tools-against-states-internet-blocking-slowdowns-for-censorship)*

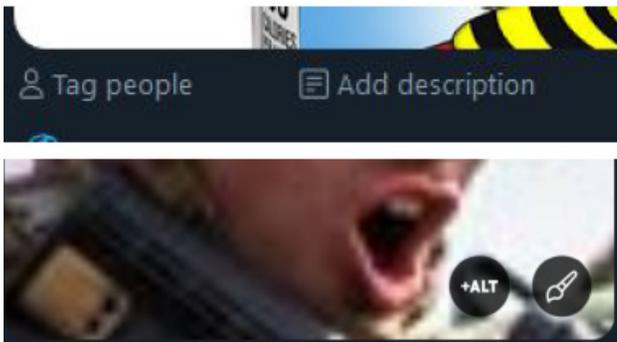


# MAKE YOUR MEDIA ACCESSIBLE!

## A guide to alt text and image description for Twitter and beyond From your

**Howdy!** This article will help you make your images and videos more accessible for blind and visually impaired folks. The focus will be on Twitter, but the tips here can be applied to the greater internet beyond too!

What are image descriptions and alt text? Why do we write them? Something that surprises a lot of sighted folks is that blind people use Twitter! With the use of a screen reader, people can have Tweets read to them aloud from their computer or phone. When the software reaches images, however, if the image(s) lacks a description or alt text, the reader will simply say “image.” That blows! We want to make our content as accessible as possible, which brings us to the use of alt text. On Twitter, when drafting a tweet with one or more images, before sending it out, you might notice one of these little buttons at or near the bottom of the image itself:



On a computer, you'll see the “Add description” link, and on mobile you'll see a small black circle in the corner of the image with “+Alt” in the center. By clicking or tapping on these, you'll be brought to a new screen that allows you to write a description of the image(s), with a limit of 1,000 characters. By adding these in, when a screen reader comes upon an image, it'll be able to dictate the text you've written, and give a description of the image for folks who can't otherwise see it!

Something we do as AccessiBloc is add descriptions for images/ videos posted by journalists or comrades covering protests or other direct actions here in Portland. While Twitter (for now) prevents us from adding alt text to images that have already been posted, we can provide descriptions by posting reply tweets. This holds us to the

usual tweet character limit, but it's better than nothing! When writing a description as a reply tweet, always preface your description with “Image Description:” or “ID:” so folks know what you're writing about.

### How do I write an image description?

Writing a description of an image for the first time can be daunting, and that's okay! I promise that after your first few descriptions, it'll be second nature. The biggest guideline I always keep in mind when writing a description are these three things: Subject, Action, Context.

When writing for Twitter in particular, we often need to keep descriptions brief to fit them within one or two tweets. Always ask yourself: What is this a picture of? Why did this person post it? What, specifically, did they want to convey or communicate with this picture?



### Let's start with a basic example:

I would describe this image as: A photo of police officers sitting around a van parked on a street corner at night, while others stand on the adjacent sidewalk. There are other details in the image, such as the “One Way” street sign, and the parking garage in the background, but they aren't vital to what the image is trying to convey, so we can omit them. Often, this can feel like you're not describing enough of the image, and that's okay! If you have the room to describe more, feel free, we just just have to keep our character limits in mind when working on Twitter.



**Another example, this one using a lot of text:**

ID: A photo of a hand holding a spent tear gas canister with a hole in its side up to the camera. Text on the canister reads: “... used by trained law enforcement professional or military personnel... successfully completed a training program for the deployment of chemical agents and smoke. Do not use for operations after... from date of manufacture. 1: Designed for indoor use. 2: Personnel deploying this device... trained in decontamination and... procedures. The Safariland Group.”

Here, we have a rather straightforward image containing a lot of text. Again, there are details we can omit (which hand is holding the canister, the plastic plug at the top) as they are unnecessary to convey what the image is trying to show. Images of text can be particularly difficult to describe at times, but fear not, as we’ve included some handy tools at the end of this article to make the process less painful!

**Other key points for description:**

Unless you can confirm someone’s race or gender and it’s relevant to the media you are describing, omit it. It’s always safer to describe someone as a person, rather than run the risk of getting a descriptor like that wrong.

Frivolous details, like the color of one’s clothing, are often

omitted, but can be relevant if you’re describing a series of images. For example, if someone is writing a twitter thread that includes several images of an unidentified person in a distinctive red shirt, include the shirt’s color in your descriptions to make it easier for the reader to follow along.

Personally, I try to keep my descriptions in the present tense: A person is doing something, rather than A person did something.

If you’re adding a personal note to your description, like admitting that you maybe don’t know what exactly an object or symbol is or means, write that in [brackets] and remark that it’s a note. For example: [note: describer cannot make out the make and model of the car in question].

When possible, avoid writing text in all capital letters. Some screen readers will interpret, for example, “COPS” as “C-O-P-S” rather than the word itself.

Don’t forget to include what type of image you are describing (a photo, a graphic, a screenshot, a video, a painting, etc) Handy tools to help with descriptions.

Your phone’s screen reader! Most smartphones nowadays have a screen reader built in. Check your phone’s accessibility options to see if you have one. This can help you learn what screen readers sound like when dictating text and descriptions, and allows you to check if an image already has alt text added to it, so you’re not writing a description for an image that’s already been described.

**Onlineocr.net** - This website allows you to upload an image, and export text from the image as plain text, which you can then copy/paste into alt text or descriptions.

**Google Translate/ Google Lens.** - These apps on mobile devices can also be used to extract text from images, so you don’t have to write it all out by hand. ■

**AccessiBloc**

*Text by @brianorwhatever and @lilsp387  
All photos Jasper Florence, @JFlorencePDX. © 2020*

# HOWTO DROP A BANNER

**Banner drops have been around since day dot.** They are one of the more powerful ways to passively get your message out, journos love them and they make for great social media if that's your thing. Further to this they act as a focal point for your crews creatives and they get people talking about your issue getting your point across loud and clear. So simple rules for the make, go for a rectangle, avoid lots of writing, remember that it's going to be small to the viewer. You're looking for something at least 5m+ long with a width of 3m+. This would be a small banner drop but honestly this is trial and error.

You'll want to brace it at the top and bottom with a pole that goes the entire length and is fastened into place. A good DIY solution is 3/6 tent poles gaffer taped together, better yet something like a curtain rail. You might also want to bottles fastened securely to the bottom and filled with sand to help provide some stability. So what are you making it out off?

Insect mesh or scaffolding mesh can be a good solution as it lets the air through and you can use using rip stock fabric to cut out your letters and either spray mount them on with the odd stitch or sew them on proper. This will be light weight for your carry but has a tendency to ripple in the wind, so best for drops alongside a building.

A heavier option would be cotton fabric and use paint or spray to write your message/stencil your art. You'll have a lot more options for design with fabric but it get's heavy real quick and it's a bad idea if you're gunna be bombing it up 30 flights of stairs. Another solution is appropriating a plastic banner from so advertising promo. These will be waterproof and have eyelets but are very heavy and a pain in the ass to paint.

Get yourself a nice open space for the job of making it, it's a hassle to keep rolling it up as you go and ideally you're going to want to draw out the whole thing in chalk first (super important that bit, especially with text!) Asking a friendly pub or social centre is usually a good bet.

Regarding the design, the most important things are to keep it simple, leave a nice thick border and remember that someone's going to have to be able to work it out

from hundreds of meters away. You are ideally looking for somewhere nice and high up, without anything blocking the line of sight between the drop and the passing traffic, protest route, Tory luncheon, or whatever.

If in doubt about visibility/ distance take your banner to your backies and have a gander at it from various ranges, decide what your "optimal" distance is and then narrow down your location with that in mind.

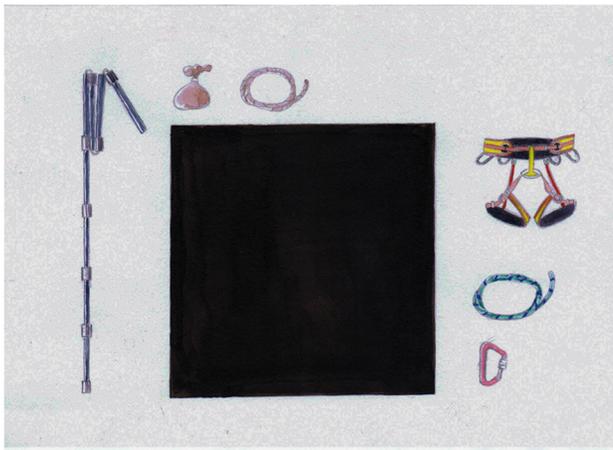
Now unless it's a local issue, one with the motorway or something relevant to highway traffic, don't bother heading over to your nearest flyover with a few strips of meter long fabric to dangle over the railings, so you can stand about in the piss pouring rain all day like some UKIPPERS. Do your research and know what to expect, cranes and stuff can be great visually but seriously sketch. Choose your target wisely and with safety in mind.

If you are going to span windows, tie a few metres of rope extra to the side with a ball or something attached to the end, use this to throw to your mate so they can pull the banner across. Practice this and it helps to have a leftie on the squad trust me! You'll be there for ages otherwise.

If you're scaling something for the drop, take precautions. Don't go scrambling up scaffolding in your Vans like a dickhead. Boots with a good hard sole are something you'll be thanking me for as you scale a fuck off ladder. Dress for the job, expect wind and a chill but also use rope and harnesses if you need to. Make sure to pee before you go and take a spare rope and bag so someone can send you up some sarnies. You might be intended to hit and run but sometimes things go sideways. Pre-roll your smokes,.

The day of the drop, work in pairs, if you are planning a timed drop, it might be an idea to to get in position early if appropriate. Whether or not the plan is to stick around, have a ground crew. They can dog for you and run interference if need be. Your adrenaline will be going but you need to stay calm and collected. Film that shit, get some photos. Use it for prop. Remember to hydrate!

It's a great bonding experience for a crew tbh, don't wait for the special "big" occasion to do one. ■

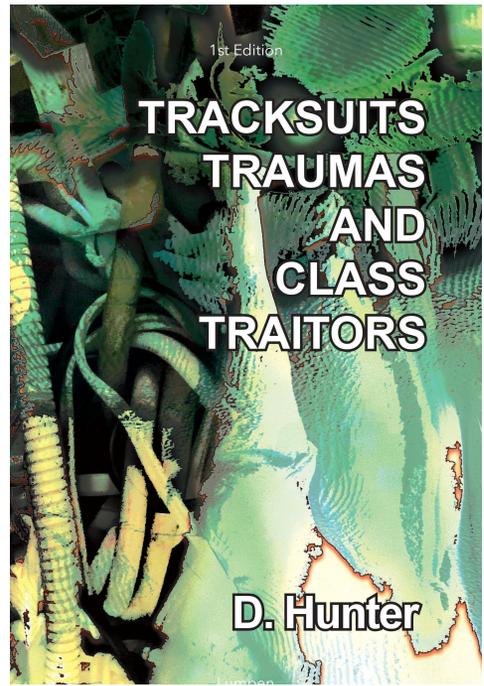


Illustrations by :  
Anti-body Politic



# BURN AFTER READING

REVIEWING THE BOOKS AND TUNES THEY WOULD RATHER YOU FORGOT ABOUT



**Tracksuits, Trauma, and Class Traitors**  
*D. Hunter (2020)*

An essay collection united around an examination of class, justice, and social perception, D. Hunter's *Tracksuits, Trauma, and Class Traitors* a powerful set of arguments delivered in a tone that switches from the personal to the academic with ease. Blending scholarship with experience, Hunter adopts the methodological framework of the auto/ethnography, and attempts to situate his often harrowing life experience within a framework that embraces class politics, restorative justice, and social understanding over the course of ten essays of varying length. As the author tells us in the introduction to the collection, "one of the aims of this book was to emphasise not only the humanity, but also the insight, intellect, and determination of those living in poverty."

Following the author's previous book *Chav Solidarity*, the thematic through-line is obvious, and *Tracksuits* follows through on many of the themes that were established previously. Despite this, there is no need to have read the prior work to understand the new one; this is perhaps one of the largest strengths of *Tracksuits*, as Hunter's writing is clear and accessible even when dealing with some of the more academic subjects. Marrying the unornamented and raw background of their life experiences with the theoretical allows a

window of insight that should make even those without much background in theory to dive in without any issue. This conversational and almost casual tone combined with the brevity of many of the essays makes it excellent introductory reading, and would be easy to pick up and dive into for anybody at any level of academic experience.

Hunter's essay collection begins with a content warning, and although this review will not touch on everything mentioned by the author, it is my responsibility to warn any prospective readers to take the content warning serious; discussions of mental health issues, violence, drug usage, and sexual abuse are frequent throughout the book and there are visceral moments in the reading which may be difficult.

A question that is commonly asked is the role of theory and analysis on the left: for many, it is an interesting curiosity, but there is a lot of discussion of how central it should be. There are some who suggest that it is, in fact, obnoxious to insist on analysis; further, there are those who claim that theory is a barrier to the 'real working class', getting in the way of Real Politics. While there is some truth to that – others have written before on the class barriers built into education, as well as the difficulty of certain authors – there are also many (of whom I am a representative, in a small way) who believe that theory is often powerful and liberatory, and that there is an inbuilt classism and derision in insisting that people who are working class or from traumatic backgrounds are unable to grasp 'advanced' concepts.

Hunter provides a powerful example of the way theory should be used, or at least one vision for how it could be. Utilising the framework of personal experience, lived encounters with the harsh realities of life under the myriad oppressive structures of modern capitalist society, Hunter leans over the boundary between the 'real' class conflict and the analysis. Here, theory is a way to consider experience, to step back and think about it, rather than to dissociate from it, and Hunter's writing moves from the merely demonstrative to the functional when it funnels trauma into, for example, ideas of restorative justice.

In the first major essay of the collection, 'Naming

Football Teams', the question ultimately arises of how one is supposed to deal with having been wronged. Without going into the specifics, there is essentially a scenario in which somebody has harmed another in a way that seems to, under the current shape of society, scream out for punishment; for vengeance, even. There is a punitive urge that underlies our current cultural logic, but Hunter calls instead for 'a form of justice that does not require cages, keys, police, courts, and a violent class system', but rather a process designed to 'deconstruct abusive interpersonal relationships, and generate responses to them which do not merely reproduce the same dynamics'. Essentially, it is a call for a justice based on empathy, but Hunter is not simply engaging in wishful thinking here: referencing various cultures which have engaged (and continue to engage) in justice that differs greatly from the carceral, as well as philosophers and activist groups, the outlines that reconciliatory justice may take are eminently practical, and yet are informed by the theory.

Another great strength of Hunter's writing must be highlighted here; it is all too easy for somebody who is distanced from, say, Indigenous American culture to simply point to the Other from the comfort of whiteness and decide to pick and choose which elements of this culture are fit to adopt. Avoiding this trap, however, Hunter tries to clarify that they are "careful not to stake a claim to ownership of these ideas". Vital to avoid a kind of mythologising of the Other, Hunter acknowledges these other justice systems as ideas from which to draw inspiration, to prompt the thought that there are other ways to do things, rather than simply claiming that any one none-white, none-European tradition is the true path to peace.

Careful consideration of race at the intersection of class returns more prominently in another later essay, 'You're Just a White Boy'. While the title of this essay from other authors could be worrying – we're not going to get another self-serving narrative about the problems of being dismissed as white in progressive spaces, are we? – Hunter quickly does away with that, opening with a quote from Jackie Wang's incisive book *Carceral Capitalism*, which describes whiteness as "a category [that] is, in part, maintained by ritualized violence against black people", >>

and the discussion does not get any more conciliatory from there. Hunter details his relationship with MD, someone who they have known for a long period of time and who is currently in prison, and whose blackness contrasts heavily with Hunter's whiteness despite their shared experiences and background, and who is not afraid to confront Hunter with this; "He tells me he doesn't know how much of my willingness to make the worst possible decision in every situation was generated by the assumption that being white I would get away with stuff. [...] I reply by telling him that as a white person some of those repercussions don't apply. He nods, but looks far off over my shoulder and says, "I reckon you don't think they should, either"."

Hunter's willingness to be challenged in these circumstances and to discuss the nature of that challenge is admirable, though it must be noted that admiration is clearly not the intention here. Moving from this personal connection and contemplation in a way that has become trademark of the author by this point in the book, Hunter crashes from anecdote to theory: "whiteness becomes a stigma that can nevertheless be inhabited as long as it is reflexively acknowledged as stigma.", as the quote is given. Reminiscent of Slavoj Žižek's conception of the "liberal communist", who simultaneously disavows capitalism and inhabits it fully, allowing the disavowal to absolve him of his behaviour, Hunter outlines a perspective on race wherein as long as whiteness is performatively acknowledged and apologised for, it can be effectively surpassed. This perspective is rejected in part, in favour of a critique of whiteness that becomes more granular and sees the varieties of whiteness spread through the intersection of class and gender and sexuality and which acts in concrete ways to change everyday life. Yet we are reminded as the essay closes that this kind of examination, while important, is also one that is in part facilitated by the privilege whiteness grants: "black people don't make these cages, we just live in them. We just die in them. White people make them.", MD reminds us.

'You're Just a White Boy' may be one of the most contentious pieces in the collection, if only for the difficulty in discussing such a monumental issue from a perspective that is necessarily cut off from that reality. Hunter takes great pains to be careful with the subject

of race, acknowledging and expressing understanding of his own racial background and the differences in material conditions and experiences that people from other racial backgrounds have had to live with, but it is a difficult balance to strike. For some, it may not be entirely successful, but it does seem to be honest and frank, which mitigates some of the worst tendencies that this kind of writing can often inhabit: if it is not successful, it is at least not in bad faith, which is far from the worst misstep one could make when writing something of this kind.

While it would be very easy for me to continue in this fashion, recounting and detailing particular essays, that would be missing the point; the examples and discussions above serve to demonstrate some of the particulars to a reader and to examine that style of the analysis *Tracksuits* contains, but it would be inappropriate for me to continue removing pieces from context and breaking them down; instead, it is important to discuss the conclusions. After detailing and discussing various aspects of their own life and the lives of others, Hunter concludes with the following lines that echo Michel Foucault's call in his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, which instructed us to kill the fascist inside our heads;

"We need to abolish the White supremacist in us, the ableist, the patriarch, the transphobe, the parts of ourselves that still think, feel, act and organise as if some humans are worth more than others, that some bodies matter more. This is collective work, this is done in vulnerability with one another, and with an openness to making mistakes, speaking the worst of ourselves and trusting in "our" class that we can find new answers to old questions."

This is the fundamental takeaway from *Tracksuits*, *Trauma*, and *Class Traitors*; the idea that it is only through collective and communal work that recognises that the flaws in most people are not the result of their personal unpleasantness (although that can be a factor) but are in fact expressions of their lives, their circumstances, and the culture in which they have lived and survived. We have patriarchy inside us because it is impossible to escape the world, and the world is patriarchal; this is the same for white supremacy or ableism, or homophobia and transphobia, which are so



## We Live Here EP

Bob Vylan

Frankly this is the most potent collection of noise I've heard in fucking years, unapologetic in its politics, it doesn't ask forgiveness, it doesn't creep in all polite like, begging for a seat at the table. Nah this album kicks down the fucking door and screams "listen up cunt". It's audio adrenaline, eighteen minutes and forty six seconds of absolutely belting unrelenting, pissed off punk education. Not a moment wasted, not even the last and frankly it's absolutely essential listening.

commonplace as to be banal if not for their insidiousness. The way through this is not to personally disavow these things, as if stubborn refusal could change the world, but to work together, to communicate, to provide material aid wherever possible, and to challenge the world on our own terms and with the staunch acknowledgement that everyday life can and must be different.

While it is certainly possible to quibble with elements of Tracksuits – some people will certainly find the more graphic passages uncomfortable or even impossible to read, depending on their own experiences, and it is true that the tonal shifts can be abrupt and somewhat rough here and there – the final result of the collection is one that expresses solidarity and makes a demand for a new world that is made together. Ultimately, while Tracksuits fails to be a silver bullet for the world of social ills, and definitely will not be for everyone's tastes, it does present a detailed portrait of a life lived in extreme difficulty but with a sense of awareness and sensitivity that is often left out of these kinds of narratives. Weaving back and forth through critical writing and biography, it is an experience that isn't easily forgotten and which points arrows at many of the right places. ■

### Jay Fraser

*Jay is an anarchist, poet, amateur philosopher, and basketball fan. He can be found on Twitter, or anywhere that has good coffee.*

*Tracksuits, Trauma, and Class Traitors by D. Hunter is available for all good distros.*

The themes revolve around racist Britain, class inequality and the fucking cops. I say it's punk, but it's equally grime, anxiety, anger and council estates. The majority of the EP is driven by heavy bass rhythms and distorted guitars. The lyrics are an audio attack of crisp clear political venom, there is no room for flowery rhetoric here, it's all straight up, crystal clear. Each track seems to draw from a different well but the combination of elements work beautifully together, oozing of the underground.

Like I say, there is nothing open to interpretation here, no flowery lyrics to mishear and misunderstand. This isn't an album that's going to present you with a easily digestible out-takes either, there is nothing radio friendly here. If you are white, you are going to be uncomfortable, which is the point isn't it? I don't give a fuck how street you think you are, you're going to have the ugly facade of broken Britain torn up and you're going to have to deal with that. Fuck you going to do about it?

Every track is a belter but the two that stand out for me are the Intro, a brutal denouncement of our society come biopic manifesto that sets the tone and Pulled Pork which would of played well in the metal club I lost my early twenties too. What's it about? "Save a life and skin a pig"

If you're a fan of vinyl, good luck. They sold out all four presses in no time at all. You can still grab a digital copy or CD at their Bandcamp and a few other places. Don't even bother trying to stick this on in the background, get the volume up and give it the twenty. ■

[www.bobvylan.bandcamp.com](http://www.bobvylan.bandcamp.com)

[www.twitter.com/BobbyVylan](http://www.twitter.com/BobbyVylan)

# ERRICO MALATESTA

## ANARCHY AND VIOLENCE



*The following work first appeared Liberty (London), Part 1 in no. 9 (Sept. 1894) and Part 2 in no. 10 (Oct. 1894).*

### ANARCHY AND VIOLENCE

*Malatesta, Errico (1894)*

From their first manifestations Anarchists have [been] nearly unanimous as to the necessity of recourse to physical force in order to transform existing society; and while the other self-styled revolutionary parties have gone floundering into the parliamentary slough, the anarchist idea has in some sort identified itself with that of armed insurrection and violent revolution.

But, perhaps, there has been no sufficient explanation as to the kind and the degree of violence to be employed; and here as in many other questions very dissimilar ideas and sentiments lurk under our common name.

As a fact, the numerous outrages which have lately been perpetrated by Anarchists and in the name of Anarchy, have brought to the light of day profound differences which had formerly been ignored, or scarcely foreseen. Some comrades, disgusted at the atrocity and uselessness of certain of these acts, have declared themselves opposed to all violence whatever, except in cases of personal defence against direct and immediate attack. Which, in my opinion, would mean the renunciation of all revolutionary initiative, and the reserving of our blows for the petty, and often involuntary agents of the government, while leaving in peace the organizers of, and those chiefly benefited by, government and capitalist exploitation.

Other comrades, on the contrary, carried away by the excitement of the struggle, embittered by the infamies of the ruling class, and assuredly influenced by what has remained of the old Jacobin ideas permeating the political education of the present generation, have hastily accepted any and every kind of violence, provided only that it be committed in the name of Anarchy; and they have claimed hardly less than the right of life and death over those who are not Anarchists, or who are not Anarchists exactly according to their pattern.

And the mass of the public, ignoring these polemics, and deceived by the capitalist press, see in Anarchy nothing but bombs and daggers, and habitually regard Anarchists as wild beasts thirsting for blood and ruin.

It is therefore needful that we explain ourselves very clearly as regards this question of violence, and that each one of us should take a position accordingly: needful both in the interests of the relations of practical co-operation which may exist among all those who profess Anarchism, as well as in the interests of the general propaganda, and of our relations with the public.

In my opinion, there can be no doubt that the Anarchist Idea, denying government, is by its very nature opposed to violence, which is the essence of every authoritarian system - the mode of action of every government.

Anarchy is freedom in solidarity. It is only through the harmonizing of interests, through voluntary co-operation, through love, respect, and reciprocal

tolerance, by persuasion, by example, and by the contagion of benevolence, that it can and ought to triumph.

We are Anarchists, because we believe that we can never achieve the combined well-being of all - which is the aim of all our efforts - except through a free understanding among men, and without forcibly imposing the will of any upon any others.

In other parties there are certainly men who are as sincere and as devoted to the interests of the people as the best of us may be. But that which characterizes us Anarchists and distinguishes us from all others is that we do not believe ourselves in possession of absolute truth; we do not believe ourselves either infallible, or omniscient, - which is the implicit pretension of all legislators and political candidates whatever; and consequently we do not believe ourselves called for the direction and tutelage of the people.

We are, par excellence, the party of freedom, the party of free development, the party of social experimentation.

But against this very freedom which we claim for all, against the possibility of this experimental search after better forms of society, there are erected barriers of iron. Legions of soldiers and police are ready to massacre and imprison anyone who will not meekly submit to the laws which a handful of privileged persons have made in their own interests. And even if soldiers and police did not exist, yet so long as the economic constitution of society remains what it is, freedom would still be impossible; because, since all the means of life are under the control of a minority, the great mass of mankind is obliged to labour for the others, and themselves wallow in poverty and degradation.

The first thing to do, therefore, is to get rid of the armed force which defends existing institutions, and by means of the expropriation of the present holders, to place the land and the other means of production at the disposal of everybody. And this cannot possibly be done - in our opinion - without the employment of physical force. Moreover, the natural development of economic antagonisms, the waking consciousness of an important fraction of the proletariat, the constantly

increasing number of unemployed, the blind resistance of the ruling classes, in short contemporary evolution as a whole, is conducting us inevitably towards the outbreak of a great revolution, which will overthrow everything by its violence, and the fore-running signs of which are already visible. This revolution will happen, with us or without us; and the existence of a revolutionary party, conscious of the end to be attained, will serve to give a useful direction to the violence, and to moderate its excesses by the influence of a lofty ideal.

Thus it is that we are revolutionists. In this sense, and within these limits, violence is not a contradiction with Anarchist principles, since it is not the result of our free choice, but is imposed upon us by necessity in the defence of unrecognized human rights which are thwarted by brute force.

I repeat here: as Anarchists, we cannot and we do not desire to employ violence, except in the defence of ourselves and others against oppression. But we claim this right of defence - entire, real, and efficacious. That is, we wish to be able to go behind the material instrument which wounds us, and to attack the hand which wields the instrument, and the head which directs it. And we wish to choose our own hour and field of battle, so as to attack the enemy under conditions as favourable as possible: whether it be when he is actually attacking and provoking us, or at times when he slumbers, and relaxes his hand, counting on popular submission. For as a fact, the bourgeoisie is in a permanent state of war against the proletariat, since it never for one moment ceases to exploit the latter, and grind it down.

Unfortunately, among the acts which have been committed in the name of Anarchy, there have been some, which, though wholly lacking in Anarchist characteristics, have been wrongly confounded with other acts of obviously Anarchist inspiration.

For my part, I protest against this confusion between acts wholly different in moral value, as well as in practical effects. >>

Despite the excommunication and insults of certain people, I consider it an essential point to discriminate between the heroic act of a man who consciously sacrifices his life for that which he believes will do good, and the almost involuntary act of some unhappy man whom society has reduced to despair, or the savage act of a man who has been driven astray by suffering, and has caught the contagion of this civilised savagery which surrounds us all; between the intelligent act of a man who, before acting, weighs the probable good or evil that may result for his cause, and the thoughtless act of the man who strikes at random; between the generous act of one who exposes himself to danger in order to spare suffering to his fellows, and the bourgeois act of one who brings suffering upon others for his own advantage; between the anarchist act of one who desires to destroy the obstacles that stand in the way of the reconstitution of society on a basis of free agreement of all, and the authoritarian act of the man who intends to punish the crowd for its stupidity, to terrorise it (which makes it still more stupid) and to impose his own ideas upon it.

Most assuredly the bourgeoisie has no right to complain of the violence of its foes, since its whole history, as a class, is a history of bloodshed, and since the system of exploitation, which is the law of its life, daily produces hecatombs of innocents. Assuredly, too, it is not political parties who should complain of violence, for these are, on and all, red-handed with blood spilt unnecessarily, and wholly in their own interest; these, who have brought up the young generation after generation, in the cult of force triumphant; these, who when they are not actual apologists of the Inquisition, are yet enthusiastic admirers of that Red Terror, which checked the splendid revolutionary impulse at the end of the last century, and prepared the way for the Empire, for the Restoration, and the White Terror.

The fit of mildness which has come over certain of the bourgeois, now that their lives and their purses are menaced, is, in our opinion, extremely untrustworthy. But it is not for us to regulate our conduct by the amount of pleasure or vexation which it may occasion the bourgeoisie. We have to conduct ourselves according to our principles; and the interest of our cause, which in our view is the cause of all humanity.

Since historical antecedents have driven us to the necessity of violence, let us employ violence; but let us never forget that it is a case of hard necessity, and in its essence contrary to our aspirations. Let us not forget that all history witnesses to the distressing fact - whenever resistance to oppression has been victorious it has always engendered new oppression, and it warns us that it must ever be so until the bloody tradition of the past be for ever broken with, and violence be limited to the strictest necessity.

Violence begets violence; and authoritarianism begets oppression and slavery. The good intentions of individuals can in no way affect this sequence. The fanatic who tells himself that he will save people by force, and in his own manner, is always a sincere man, but a terrible agent of oppression and reaction. Robespierre, with horrible good faith and his conscience pure and cruel, was just as fatal for the Revolution as the personal ambition of Bonaparte. The ardent zeal of Torquemada for the salvation of souls did much more harm to freedom of thought and to the progress of the human mind than the scepticism and corruption of Leo X and his court.

Theories, declarations of principle, or magnanimous words can do nothing against the natural filiation of facts. Many martyrs have died for freedom, many battles have been fought and won in the name of the welfare of all mankind, and yet the freedom has turned out after all to mean nothing but the unlimited oppression and exploitation of the poor by the rich.

The Anarchist idea is no more secured from corruption than the Liberal idea has proved to be, yet the beginnings of corruption may be already observed if we note the contempt for the masses which is exhibited by certain Anarchists, their intolerance, and their desire to spread terror around them.

Anarchists! let us save Anarchy! Our doctrine is a doctrine of love. We cannot, and we ought not to be either avengers, nor dispensers of justice. Our task, our ambition, our ideal is to be deliverers. ■

# MEMORIA

## Rest In Power comrades

### STUART CHRISTIE

*The death of Stuart Christie* on August 15th 2020 has already led to an outpouring of touching tributes and obituaries. With his untimely departure, the international anarchist movement has lost one of its most committed and dedicated activists. Indeed, the ‘measure of the man’ has been encapsulated by how many of us, from brief, often remote encounters, felt in some way attached to him by the warmth, intensity and generosity of his character. Stuart was an anarchist of the highest calibre; iron-willed, yet self-critical, fiercely independent in mind, but always motivated by



My own personal correspondence with Stuart began during the final year of my degree in 2015. It was during this time when I wrote to Stuart with (in hindsight) poorly formulated questions for my dissertation, catchily titled ‘The Angry Brigade: Student Radicals, ‘The Society of the Spectacle’ and Media Representations of ‘Red Terror’, 1968-1972’). I half-expected Stuart to direct me to his collection of memoirs, or snub me as an ‘academic chancer’, rather than respond to each question in kind. But to my surprise he took the time to share his present-day thoughts on every detail of my enquiry. After my initial haphazard encounter, Stuart and I would correspond with one another for the next five years regarding new publications, archival exchanges, elusive primary sources, Spanish anarchists, and experiences in prison.

Indeed, in a more personal sense, Stuart’s death represents the loss of an irreplaceable guide and mentor. Historians constantly mull over the partiality of the ‘narrator-as-witness’. Rarer perhaps are those occasions when we reflect on how a narrator informs and motivates our own retelling of the past. I encountered Stuart’s memoirs when I was twenty years old. At this time I was already jaded by the petty intrigues of ‘radical’ student politics, riddled with class-born anxiety, and all too accepting of a precarious future. With Stuart, I was confronted with a person who, from an early age, was both assured of his own place in history, while also willing to take a leap into the unknown.

This ‘unknown’ was the Iberian anarchist movement in Franco’s Spain. As an undergrad History student in 2015, this territory was unfamiliar to me too. Yet three years after I became personally acquainted with Stuart, I would end up undertaking a PhD on the topic. Unlike more conventional trajectories, my fascination with Spain was not stoked by Orwell’s ‘Homage to Catalonia’, or Ken Loach’s ‘Land and Freedom’, but the unlikely and extraordinary tale ‘of a west of Scotland “baby boomer”’. >>

Stuart had spent most of his teenage years with his mother and Grandparents in Blantyre, a small isolated pit town, located to the West of Glasgow. Familial ties crossed with class politics in Stuart's political formation. Along with the influence of his grandmother, the values of whom, Stuart later recalled, 'married almost exactly with that of libertarian socialism and anarchism', Blantyre was home in the 1950s to a confident working class. Centred around the NUM and the local Miners Welfare Institute, politics in the local area was synonymous with the Labour Party and the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the age of sixteen, as an apprentice working for a dental laboratory in Glasgow, Stuart had become politically active in the Young Socialists (the youth section of the Labour party). But it wasn't long before Stuart became disillusioned with the procedural nature of Party life. Once exposed to 'the machinations and power struggles within the Glasgow Labour Party', Stuart's idealistic and reflexive attachment to Party socialism was crushed by its culture of 'office-grabbing', 'local political power plays' and 'contending sectarian power agendas'.

After exiting the Party, Stuart became involved in the Glasgow Federation of Anarchists and the anti-nuclear Committee of 100. A split from the 'celebrity-and-politician dominated' CND, the Committee of 100 mobilised against nuclear armament and militarism with direct action. Yet Stuart was drawn to questions bigger than those immediately posed by single issue campaigns. If war, imperialism, and violence came with the territory of the modern State, then perhaps it was the State that was the problem. As Stuart recalled in an interview in 2004, 'I began to see a lot more clearly that it wasn't the weapons themselves that were the problem, it was the states that possessed them'.

Throughout Stuart's teenage years, and indeed for the rest of his life, he returned to the same question: Spain, Spain, and yet again Spain. As with the rest of the industrial belt of Glasgow, Blantyre was laced with a proud anti-fascist history. The small pit town was home to Thomas Brannan, Thomas Flecks, and William Fox, all three of whom fell on the battlefield in Spain as members of the International Brigades. This local connection to Spain evoked Albert Camus' famed representation of the 'Spanish drama' as a kind

of 'personal tragedy'. Between the age of fifteen and seventeen, Stuart would bear witness to fierce debates outside the local Miners Welfare institute on the 'politically sore' topic of war and 'social revolution' in 1930s Spain. It was here where he would learn about 'libertarian Barcelona', the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, the days of rebellion and street-fighting during the 1937 'May Day' episode, and the brutal military defeat of the Republic in 1939. Yet Stuart would not look back on Spain with a wistful, melancholic gaze. Indeed, he refused to accept it was a lost battle. When he read that two young Spanish anarchists had been executed by the Franco regime for oppositional activities in 1963, he was overwhelmed by the same sense of duty that had impelled anti-fascists to arrive in Spain in 1936.

On Saturday 1 August 1964, Stuart bought a single ticket for the morning boat train from London to Calais and from there headed to Paris: the 'emigre capital' of Spain's Republican and anarchist diaspora. Arriving late in the afternoon at the Rue de Lancry, Stuart met with exiled members of the Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias (Iberian Federation of the Libertarian Youth). He was to take part in a clandestine mission to Spain organised by the anarchist and CNT-backed 'Defensa Interior' committee. Far beyond the more customary exile activity of delivering banned publications, newspapers and leaflets, Stuart was entrusted with transporting two hundred grams of plastique (plastic explosives). If successful, Stuart's courier mission would have led to the political assassination of General Franco.

'As things turned out, It was fortunate I planned to be away some time and didn't buy a return ticket', Stuart later recalled, as he was consequently apprehended by the Brigada Político-Social on 11 August (BPS, Franco's political police) and taken into custody. After spending four days beaten and interrogated in the dingy basement cells of Madrid's police headquarters, Christie was sent to Carabanchel prison where he would stay on remand, while the *consejos de guerra* (Franco's military tribunals) decided on their verdict. On 5 September, Christie received a note through his cell door stating the details of his sentence: 'twenty years for military rebellion and terrorism'.

Stuart's detention reaffirmed his anarchism. In Carabanchel, he found almost instant political fraternity with the hounded, post-civil war generation of anarchists in Spain. But the world of prison challenged his idealism:

'Before I went to prison my world-view was simple and clear-cut – black and white, a moral battlefield in which everyone was either a goody or a baddy. But the ambiguities in people I came across in prison made me uneasy and I began to question my assumptions about the nature of good and evil. I came to recognise that apparently kind people sometimes had a duplicitous side to them that was amoral, treacherous, self seeking or brutal, while those with a reputation for cruelty sometimes showed themselves capable of great selflessness and generosity of spirit. This didn't make me cynical, but it did make me less judgemental about my fellow human beings. Also, it was hard to fan the flames of righteous anger in the face of the sheer ordinariness of people'.

The 'sheer ordinariness of people' in Franco's prisons crossed with Stuart's steadfast rejection of scholarly and popular representations of Iberian anarchism as 'Manichean', 'primitive', or 'fanatical'. As Stuart would go on to write, 'these men and women were not fanatics. They were ordinary rational and dignified people who lived deliberately and passionately, with a vision and a tremendous capacity for self sacrifice; they had been abandoned by the Allies in the "post-fascist" world of the Cold War and deprived of diplomatic or democratic means of resisting Franco's state terror'.

Stuart returned to England in 1967, following a successful international campaign for his release and some awkward diplomatic pressure. But he never lost sight of those he met in prison. Shortly after his return, he refounded the Anarchist Black Cross (the ABC) with Albert Meltzer. With its initial premises set up in Coptic Street in London, the ABC provided a support network for Franco's anarchist prisoners while also operating a 'Spanish Liberation fund' to subsidise activist groups throughout the country. Its activity was divided into two tasks; first to provide material support, in the form of 'food parcels and medical supplies', and latterly to aid the Spanish Resistance movement with

'everything it needs, including '[print] duplicators, typewriters and guns'.

In the years following his release, Stuart would continue to pay heavy penalties for his close affinities with Spanish anarchists. In February 1968, after a series of bombs exploded outside embassies in London, Stuart was raided by the British Special Branch and, thereafter, subject to round-the-clock surveillance outside his London flat. Four years later, Stuart would be indicted on conspiracy charges and was accused of being a member of the so-called 'Angry Brigade' (a group responsible for a series of bomb attacks in Britain in the early 1970s). Along with banks, boutiques, a British army reserve centre, and the 1970 Miss World Contest, the 'Angry Brigade' had claimed the machine gunning of the Spanish Embassy and the bombing of a Iberia Airlines office. The reason for Stuart's arrest in 1972 was because of the string of explosive incidents focused on Spanish targets. From the moment of Stuart's re-entry into Britain, he was viewed by the Special Branch as the main Anglophone conduit of the Spanish resistance', and thus guilty by association.

Stuart would be held on remand in Brixton prison, while the trial of the 'Stoke Newington 8' evolved into one of the longest criminal trials in English history (lasting from 30 May to 6 December 1972). As Stuart awaited trial, his mind returned to Spain. With the invaluable moral and material support of his wife Brenda, his collaborator Albert Meltzer, and his Black Cross colleague and ex-prisoner Miguel García, Stuart translated into English Antonio Tellez's 'Sabaté: Guerrilla urbana en España, 1945-1960'.

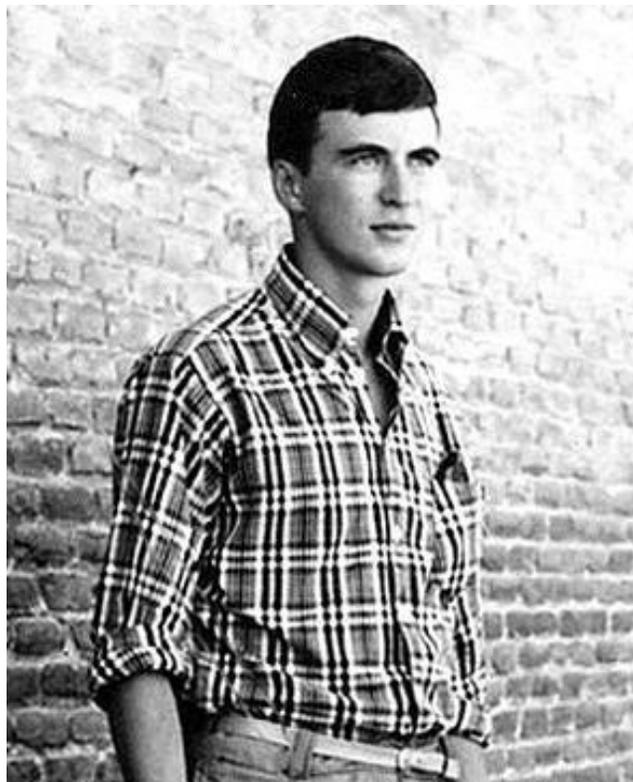
After Stuart was acquitted by jury in 1972, he made the decision, following a 'tip off' from a special branch officer, to leave London. In 1974, Stuart and Brenda headed to Orkney, where their daughter, Branwen, was born. Here, with the help of Brenda, Meltzer and others, he set up the 'Cienfuegos' Publishing House, where he translated and published a number of elusive Spanish texts. Prisoner solidarity work with the Black Cross would also continue. By the mid-1970s, the Anarchist Black Cross had taken on a much broader internationalist remit, aiding political prisoners with parcels, letters and donations not only in Spain, >>

but in France, West Germany, Italy, and Northern Ireland.

Even when the tumult of the 1970s came to a close, Stuart maintained his revolutionary zeal. In 1980, a year after Thatcher's election, he published a controversial (and still probably illegal) A4 brochure entitled, 'Towards a Citizens' Militia: Anarchist Alternatives to NATO and the Warsaw Pact' (1980). This resulted in an apoplectic response from the national press, who ran with the headlines 'TERROR BOOKS UPROAR', 'SCOTS BOOK OF DO-IT-YOURSELF GUERRILLA WAR', and 'ISLAND OF ANARCHY'.

In later life, as well as being an assiduous archivist, writer, and publisher, Stuart became a vital scholarly authority on Spanish anarchism. For professional historians of twentieth century Spain, 'We, The Anarchists! A Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation 1927-1937' (2008), was received as a welcome Anglophone addition on many undergraduate reading lists.

Stuart was not content with writing the political history of the CNT-FAI with a narrowly conceived concept of the 'political'. His method of writing history was always empirical, but never crudely positivist or detached. This



was testament to his open mindedness. He understood that the radical character of Spanish labour movement during the first half of the century was not a result of "ideological brainwashing" or arcane vanguards. Instead, Stuart understood the politics of the CNT-FAI as being rooted in the experience of the Spanish working class.

In 2019, I was contacted by the MayDay rooms regarding a collection of Spanish materials Stuart had recently donated to the archive. I knew I would be familiar with many of the texts in the collection. And sure, I was. But I was taken aback by the number of handwritten inscriptions on his books, messages of deep and profound gratitude, by famed members of the CNT-FAI. I knew the extent to which Spain had left an indelible mark on Stuart; now I was confronted with the mark Stuart had left on the lives of those in Spain.

To the end, Stuart cut through the inertia of our times with a perpetual desire for engagement. Whenever I presented Stuart with finds from the archives, he would inevitably give them life and, in one of his own expressions, provide me with 'another link in the chain!'. But he always saw his own contribution to History as 'small'. What I would describe in my work as 'transnational networks of anarchists', he would simply call 'friendships'. He did not consider himself a specimen for study. He lived his politics. He brought people together, many of whom were separated by national and linguistic boundaries. His generosity and loyalty dissolved the remoteness of our encounters. Moreover, despite being half a century older than me, our conversations were rarely unidirectional or top-down. He listened, and if I doubted myself, he built me up, urged me forward.

Above all, Stuart left me with the feeling that even when the odds are stacked against you, you only really need a handful of people to make the impossible happen. Stuart was certainly one of those people.

### **Jessica Thorne**

*This obituary first appeared at Mayday Rooms and was kindly shared with us by Freedom News.*

*[www.freedomnews.org.uk/stuart-christie-obituaries](http://www.freedomnews.org.uk/stuart-christie-obituaries)*

## DONALD ROOUM

It shouldn't really be me writing this obituary of Donald Rooum the anarchist and his time with Freedom Press, as I knew him for a mere 17 years, a relative drop in the ocean of his experiences. But the truth is that those of his friends and comrades who would have known him best, the likes of Phillip Sansom, Colin Ward and of course Vernon Richards, all passed away before him.

With Donald passes the only remaining direct link to the anarchist movement of the 1940s, when he began to involve himself just weeks before Sansom, John Hewetson, Richards and Marie Louise Berneri were arrested for their anti-war writing in *War Commentary*, as Tom Brown and the syndicalists planned a takeover of the stricken publication, where splits that would rock the movement for decades to come began.

Born on April 20th, 1928, he was among the last to remember a Britain at war with fascism, although too young to be called up a principled horror of war and bombs would infuse his work ever after.

Though he was known first as a Bradfordian and then for 65 years as a Londoner, Donald Rooum's first steps as an anarchist were actually taken via a Kent hop-picking project in the autumn of 1944. The son of a left-leaning mother and trade unionist father in a red city which had produced the very first splash headline of the Communist *Daily Worker*, the 16-year-old already had links to the Communist Party, briefly held, when he was sent to the fields as part of a Ministry of Food placement scheme.

But he was starting to become disillusioned with the Party's positions, and on his day off he took a trip to Hyde Park, where he came across an anarchist speaker and was immediately impressed, taking out a subscription to their paper *War Commentary* (which would revert to the name *Freedom* from August 1945) in short order. Speaking on a long interview with *The Final Straw* shortly before his death, he recalled:

*"Everyone was talking about something unusual. One bloke said he was God from the Old Testament and was putting us right on some of the book. Philip Sansom was selling War Commentary outside the park gate, it was a very good*



*time and I was very interested. I had until then been, along with my mother, a member of a Communist Party front, the Society for Cultural Relations, and what interested me about the party was the socialism.*

*When I heard the anarchists speaking the general idea that you couldn't have a socialist society by ordering it, that's not how the world works. I can't order you to be free or send you to prison. I got the anarchist message from then. The speaker, Fred Law, identified himself as a Christian anarchist and talked of the individual, saying what you need to feel fulfilled is the freedom to do what you want and not be told what to do by governments."*

After heading back from the fields to Bradford his introduction however was quickly cut short, as no issue appeared that November — the anarchist press had been raided and its entire editorial team arrested for sedition. Writing to enquire over his missing papers, he received a note from the administrator Lillian Wolfe explaining that along with all the staff, *War Commentary's* subscriber lists had been taken as evidence in what would become the infamous *War Commentary Trial*. >>

A month later, unbeknownst to young subscribers at the other end of the country, a takeover attempt by anarcho-syndicalist backers of the paper was also made against the editors, which though it failed would set the tone for much of the next few decades of splits and arguments which he would have to navigate. Vernon Richards, a major figure in Donald's political life, would emerge from the scrap as proprietor of Freedom Press, and Freedom newspaper. As he got more involved with Freedom, Donald would find himself caught in feuds between the press and first the Syndicalist Workers Federation, then Albert Meltzer and Black Flag.

But the young man was not yet at the heart of these events as he was, aged 19, conscripted into the army for two years. Following his own inclinations he had initially, as with many other radicals at the time, registered as a conscientious objector but a domineering aunt had pressured his mother until he gave in. Speaking to Spitalfields Life in 2012 he noted: "The truth is I was more frightened of my aunt than I was of the army. Because I was known to be an anarchist, I was spared from posting abroad."

Leaving the army in 1949, Donald was awarded a resettlement grant and, following a longstanding interest in illustration, spent the next four years studying commercial design at Bradford Regional Art School where he learned many of the artistic skills that he would employ in his work and politics for the next 70 years. His interest in anarchism continued however and he was an active participant in the 1949 anarchist summer school in Liverpool, as well as beginning a stint of public speaking on the subject in his spare time. Talking to The Comic Journal in 2002 he recalled:

*"In Bradford there were all kinds of open-air speakers. I got on quite well at first, but I had to give it up eventually. I was physically attacked by elements in the crowd, by a group of Roman Catholic students. I managed just fine at the beginning when I told them that there were Catholic anarchists, but eventually, they were determined to stop me from speaking. I also spoke on anarchism on street corners in Liverpool."*

His connections to the group around Freedom also grew as he submitted his first cartoon strips to the Philip Sansom-edited Syndicalist, 'Scissor Bill', and towards the end of his time at the school he was involved, with two others, in organising a meeting on behalf of the London Anarchist Group, campaigning against the death penalty. He told Final Straw:

*"This was advertised as a LAG meeting and all kinds of people showed up. Parliamentarians and whatnot turned up. So they organised another meeting as The Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment. And they got a load of people who, eventually, they had the last push up and they got rid of it."*

The experience of campaigning against the death penalty taught him a valuable lesson which would show up as a major theme from the 1960s onwards. His view: "Pick on the things where society is weak."

### **London bound**

Qualifying as a commercial artist would mark the last days of Donald's time in Bradford. Looking for work and keen to put his talents at the service of the movement, he moved to London in 1953-4 and finding lodgings with a fellow anarchist in Holborn, near to what was then the Freedom Bookshop premises so he could help out with bundling the papers every other week.

The 1950s and early 1960s swiftly became a whirlwind of activity for Donald and his growing family. He was initially active in speaking at Hyde Park, and was involved in setting up the Malatesta Club — the first such project to have been launched in some time and the only one of its kind in London bar a small place linked to the CNT in exile. Opening on Mayday 1954 at 155 High Holborn, the club was hired on the advice of Nigerian Marxist Manny Obahiagbon with Phillip Sansom as its prime mover.

Open seven nights a week, purely via volunteer labour, the club had its own resident jazz band and was named after the classic Italian anarchist ostensibly because he was the only person who the collection of communists and individualists (Donald being among the latter) could all agree was a good guy. The

club was a rarity in bringing together old survivors from the Spanish Civil War, African national liberationists, elements from across the spectrum of anarchist thought and a wide variety of humanists and the socially liberated who could be assured of a warm reception from the forward-thinking crowd.

The club lasted for four years ending in 1958, being pushed out by rising rental prices, but from 1961 began hosting at his home monthly “off centre” discussion meetings, advertised regularly in Freedom which lasted until the latter part of the decade.

### **Challenor and the 60s**

From the 1960s Donald’s career as an illustrator began to take off. Drawing his first cartoon for the Daily Sketch in 1960, he began getting work in the Mirror, Private Eye and Spectator through the rest of the decade, as well as beginning what would be a long-running association with Peace News. Talking to The Comics Journal he described some of his career influences stemming from that period:

*“The cartoonists I most admire are the British cartoonists who worked in comics from about 1900 to 1960 or so. These cartoonists are the most amazing artists, who worked anonymously and illustrating extremely feeble jokes in children’s comics. They are really magnificent graphic artists — Reg Parlett is one of them, Roy Nixon is another. I’m also a big admirer of Leo Baxendale. Of Baxendale’s generation, I also very much like Ken Reid. He was a neurotic and a slow worker — he only did one page a week and it took him 50 hours. Of course, he was paid by the page, not by the hours he worked. Baxendale was capable of doing ten pages a week. He was fantastic.”*

He also wrote for Freedom Press, including in its Anarchy series of pamphlets, interrogating the philosophy through an individualist lens.

Of particular note in the early part of the 60s however was the Challenor Affair, which took place on July 11th 1963. The famous case, in which Donald outwitted a senior police officer who was attempting to frame him for carrying an offensive weapon (to wit, a brick), made legal history and spawned its own police jargon — “doing a Challenor”, or avoiding

justice by pleading mental health issues.

That year Greece’s Queen Frederika, an international lightning rod for left activism due to her hard-right views and involvement in promoting a strategy of tension against the Greek left, had already come to London once, in April, and been humiliated, being chased down the street by protestors.

A month later, Greek peace activist and MP Grigoris Lambrakis was assassinated, meaning that when she returned to London from July 9th-12th demos were well mobilised at Claridge’s hotel in Mayfair, where she was staying. The Met, having been unprepared for the reaction to her last visit, went mob-handed the second time around, led by the notorious Harold Challenor. Donald, in the wrong place at the wrong time, was targeted for a lesson. Donald wrote extensively about the case at the time, and sketched his impressions of what happened in a panel series which appeared in the July 2013 issue of Freedom.

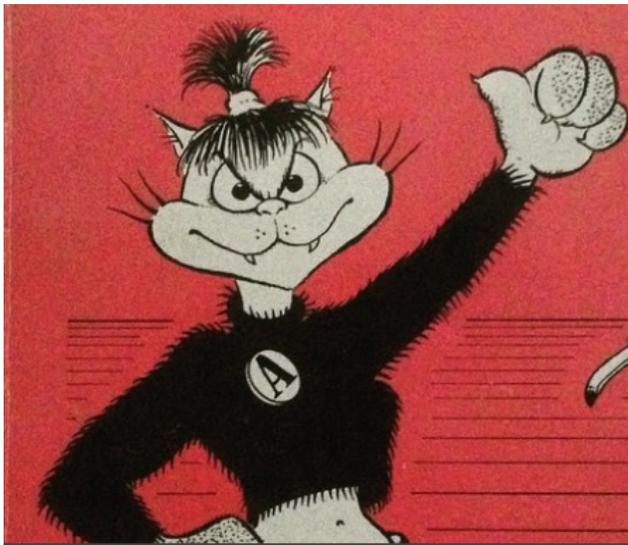
Thanks to a small oversight by Challenge when planting the brick, Donald had a trick up his sleeve. Realising Challenor had never actually placed the evidence on him, upon being bailed he and his barrister proceeded directly to the office of a commercial scientist who proved that not a speck of brick dust could be found in his pockets, or anywhere else.

At trial, it was a legal massacre. Rather than Donald it was the officer who looked to be the defendant, and the cartoonist was acquitted. Challenor was himself sent to trial the following year charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and made an, astonishingly, successful bid to escape justice for his crime by having himself diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Three of his fellow detectives went to jail.

Eventually a full Parliamentary inquiry was held over the case, the first held under the 1964 Police Act, which also found Challenor innocent. The result was widely decried as a whitewash of blatant corruption. >>

Despite winning a famous victory, Donald was not keen on being picked out for future reprisals, and amid the uptick in his professional work quit the protesting game, preferring to “stay at home and mind the shop”. Picking up work as a lecturer on typography at the London College of printing, he remained intermittently active with *Vero* at Freedom and, upon *Vero*’s retirement in 1968, John Rety. His involvement with Freedom more or less dropped off from this point as many of the original members of the collective, including Philip Sansom, moved on.

He also sketched for *Peace News* and *Skeptic* until the early 1970s, stopping when he began to study for a degree at the Open University from 1973-79. When his regular work for *Peace News* ended he took on a strip in 1974 for Philip Sansom, entitled *Wildcat*. Though the magazine itself only lasted a year, it featured the first iteration of what was to become his most famous character.



While studying and watching his children grow, Donald also took a foray in the 1970s into book illustration, with his first commission being *Classics of Humour*, edited by Michael O’Mara. He worked on several books in the 70s and later in life, including a number of *Wildcat* related titles and his last commercial project, *Don’t You Believe It!* by John Radford, which came out in 2007.

Having been awarded a first-class degree for his studies, Donald would return to *Wildcat* from 1980 when, amid a changing cast of editors, Phillip Sansom came back from his own break with Freedom and

persuaded Donald to restart the column. It was to start a remarkable run — 34 years of one artist, every month, pitting his satirical wit against the issues of the day. Hundreds upon hundreds of them. Speaking on his general thinking when creating the lead pairing of *Wildcat* and free-range *Egghead*, he told *The Final Straw*:

“There had to be some kind of female, and thinking about that, I decided to make the wildcat female, then I thought about the contrast between the anarchists that I knew. Some of them were, like Colin Ward, very anxious for anarchism to become intellectually respectable. Some were just the opposite and wanted to go around throwing things. I thought the cat could be the wild anarchist, and the free-range egghead could be the intellectual. So that’s how it started.

*“Then everything had to be to do with anarchism or the news. The characters would, except for the cat, remain the same. The cat could depart from character if we had a particular story needed telling. Other characters included the flat-capped man, who was based on the idiots who would insist on interrupting me when I spoke at Hyde Park.”*

Many other supporting characters would emerge over time, ranging from the thick-limbed walking bombs of the war industry, to blunt PC pigs, caricatures of political bigwigs and gently mocking figures representing faces and tropes of the anarchist movement. Some of these latter are summarised in a sketch he put together for the 1986 book *Freedom / A Hundred Years* (see later).

In 1983 Donald was able to retire from his lecturing work aged 55, though he kept his hand in by running a humour class at the London Cartoon Centre. He moved briefly to Taunton which coincided with a crisis at Freedom, and on his return to London in 1985 it was to find that the paper, which had briefly rejuvenated itself in the early 1980s, was in utter crisis. Run by just two editors, Dave Peers and Stu Stuart, it was barely coming out on a monthly basis and the latter editor was in the process of alienating many readers with an approach which would eventually see Stuart get escorted from the premises for his own safety in 1985.

## Back at Freedom

Donald got stuck in helping and upon Stuart's "retirement" was named, along with Charlie Crute, Francis Wright and Dave Peers as part of a new editorial collective, run by Vernon Richards who had for the first time in many years intervened with the intention of guiding Freedom back to some semblance of order. In the event, Donald was one of a very few people who kept the faith, and kept Freedom Press going — a keystone role he would hold in one way or another for the next three decades.

As a protege of Vero from the latter days of War Commentary, Donald was fully trusted to help run the paper and was rejoined in that period by longstanding writers such as Colin Ward and Harold Sculthorpe, as well as by faces old and new like Peter Marshall and Michael Duane, many of who got involved in the publishing of some of Freedom Press's best-known books around that time.

Vero's re-involvement also saw him task Donald with putting together a special summary book of the first century of Freedom's history, in cahoots with a number of the Press's old writers and indeed some less predictable new ones, including Class War, Alan Albon (latterly of Green Anarchist), Nicolas Walter and Heiner Becker among many others. Donald found the production of Freedom / A Hundred Years, which had a tight turnaround, to be hard work and typically, let his artwork do the talking on how he felt about the whole ordeal.

Even so, retirement from his day job seemed to give Donald something of a productive second wind and even while producing the 88-page centenary book he was involving himself in both Freedom Press's everyday activities and, in 1987, started a second new cartoon strip, this time for the Sceptic. The comic strip, 'Sprite', featured the cartoonist himself pondering some of life's comings and goings. It would run now and again into the early 2000s.

The 80s and 90s also saw the first selection of what would eventually become a series of seven books charting Donald's long series of cartoons and their consideration of anarchism and society. In 1985, Wildcat Anarchist

Comics was published, followed by Wildcat Strikes Again (1989), ABC of Bosses (1991), Health Service Wildcat (1994) and Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat (1999).

His joint editorship of Freedom lasted another three years until, in October 1989, Vero decided to take the paper back to being a fortnightly and while Donald continued contributing, he thought running the paper at that frequency was altogether too much. He stepped back into a more auxiliary role, but continued with other projects, including his excellent illustrated introduction to anarchism, What is Anarchism which was first published in 1992. A politically precise man, Donald runs through many of the classic thinkers in clear terms — the book was a popular read and republished by PM Press in 2016.

In the 90s Donald continued to help out with the newspaper and in publishing, but found himself towards the end of the decade having to take on more responsibilities as the Press struggled to connect with a new wave of anarchism that was increasingly leaving it behind. As the turn of the century approached, the Press and its building in Aldgate was increasingly run by just four comrades, directed by Vero via letter — Donald, Sylvie Edwards, Charlie Crute as editor and Kevin MacFaul as bookshop manager. Of these, two were receiving small stipends from Vero, Kevin and Charlie. It was Donald who alerted Vero to the fact that Charlie wasn't earning while bearing the brunt of editorial production, and persuaded them both to work out a scheme of payments. Among the many jobs Donald ended up doing over his long association with the press, he finished up as its de facto book keeper and stalwart bookshop volunteer, keeping the place open every Saturday.

Vero died in 2001, leaving the Press in disarray. In a conversation many years later, Donald described the situation at that time:

*"I was still doing the books and the shop on Saturdays. I thought it was a bad day and learned later that it was the best day of the week! But it was so slow that I was able to do the accounts, keep the money coming in, keep up with the subscriptions, send out notices to >>*

*people who needed to renew, made a note of donations and everything like that, so I was doing a lot of the office work.*

“After Vero’s death we kept going and I was not too happy about the attitude of the other comrades who were running the thing because Vero, as you know, had quarrelled with Albert Meltzer, Albert had managed to get most of the London movement on his side and opposed to Vero and Freedom Press. Vero had counteracted that, writing “instead of an obituary” which was very rude. I had been to Albert’s funeral and wrote an account which was rejected by Charlie as representing Albert as having too many followers. So I wrote another obituary. Richard Boston, writing of the death said that Vero had used the bludgeon and I had used the rapier!

*“I would have then liked to make overtures to the rest of the movement but Charlie especially was very much anti the rest of the anarchists which I thought was inappropriate. So we were very much plodding along. Then Toby Crowe arrived. He had no right to be there, just moved in and started telling us what to do and whatnot.”*

Toby, a former activist with the Socialist Party of Great Britain, represented much of what Donald felt Freedom Press needed. Younger, connected to the class struggle wing of the movement and unburdened of infighting or sectarianism, the tall new-minted anarchist had energy where Freedom seemed to be lacking it. Despite quarrels which led to Charlie and Kevin leaving, Donald felt there was, at last, a chance for him to step back and in 2003, on the occasion of his 75th birthday, he stopped doing the books and announced his retirement from Freedom Press, though he continued to pen his comic strip for many years to come.

### **Meeting Donald**

As was the case for so many over the years, my first encounter with Donald Rooum came through his pomposity-pricking Wildcat strip. That particular skit skewered government, opposition, church, business — and poked a little fun at anarchists. It was a perfect introduction to the work and thought of Freedom Press’s longest-serving member.

A keen sense of the absurdity of political life was as integral to Donald’s work and thought, as was a self-

deprecatory humour which he laced through his art, aimed at both himself and the anarchist movement he inhabited. Through his two most iconic characters, the Cat and the Egghead (who if it was not in the end Donald himself in another guise certainly comes close) he maintained a wry oversight of the movement.

I arrived after his retirement, as he left in April and I came on board in September — just in time to see Toby leave. That combined with my infrequent presence at the Press meant that for many months we didn’t cross paths, and it was only through long-time Freedom sub-editor Jayne Clementson that we interacted. His work and legacy however were well respected by the Press’s readers and in the aftermath of Toby’s tenure, which had ruffled a great many feathers for good or ill, he was seen as something of a pillar of stability and the living memory of the Press. Every editor from 2003 onwards, regardless of their personal political position, made a point to continue the tradition of giving him space in the paper, right through to its closure as a monthly in 2014.

Stopping activity didn’t entirely suit Donald even in his late 70s, and by 2005 he was back, occasionally helping out and coming to meetings to offer a bit of background and kindly advice, as a sort of twinkly grandfather figure. It says a lot about Donald that in the face of more crises than can reasonably be counted across the following decade, he remained a peaceable and principled presence who could be relied on to remind everyone which way they were supposed to be aiming their rhetorical guns. Looking through some of our correspondence over the last few years, a particular note jumps out from an email which says much about this reluctance to entirely retire from volunteering:

*“I have worked for Freedom Press since I came to London in 1954, in various capacities including editor, subscriptions manager, and shopkeeper, but never needed to be paid because I had a job, or more recently a pension. I suppose I follow a working-class tradition. My family, and most people I know, have always spent much of their free time doing voluntary work for chapels, charities, political groups, or sports clubs.”* In 2008, in time for his 80th birthday, a retrospective of his work was shown at Conway Hall. Donald was delighted by the showing, which brought his work to a new audience

and gave him a platform to pass on some of the ideals and practical lessons he'd learned throughout his life. He was gladdened to see recognition of his work in later life both then and, later, through an art video piece, *Wildcat* by Adam Lewis Jacob which he regarded as an "original, entertaining documentary of anarchist propaganda."

By 2012 he was again a regular at meetings, often interjecting with tidbits of advice and support, volunteering to edit the history section of the paper on the grounds that he lived through much of it. He continued to contribute articles with intelligent, elegant writing through to 2014 when it closed as a monthly, supported the Press both practically and financially through one more financial crisis which came to a head around that time, and in 2016 retired from the Collective for the "last time".

I place last time in quote marks because even then, aged 88, he was not quite finished with Freedom. Instead, he joined the Friends of Freedom, a group convened in 1985 to hold the building at 84b Angel Alley in trust for the anarchist press. He continued in that role into 2018, where his immense energy and passion for the project he, Vero, Marie Louise Berneri, Lilian Wolfe, and so many others had dedicated their lives to, ran up against an increasing need for more naps. He finally retired from involvement for the last time – though even so, living now in sheltered accommodation at the other end of Whitechapel High Street, he continued to regularly keep in touch with old comrades to see how things were going. Despite increasing health problems he could often be found at the cafe at the corner of his street, chatting to the early morning crowd, and would make short trips to say hello and catch up on movement gossip.

After a bout of flu the last I saw of him was just a week or two before his death, on probably his last walk down the obscure, forbidding little alley leading to the building where he had left such an indelible impression with his wit, stoic hard work and patience. He was, I am glad to say, able to sit in a bright, welcoming space filled with thousands of books dedicated to the cause of liberty that he had spent his life defending — no few owing their very existence to him – and surrounded by young comrades who were happy to make time for a

widely loved grandee of the movement. He professed himself well pleased with what had been achieved, and the last I saw of him was as he ambled slowly into the light of the outside world, whistling gently. ■

## Rob Ray

*This obituary was kindly shared with us by Freedom News. The main picture was kindly given by Donald's family for Freedom's obituary. They have also been kind enough to give us us permission to start publishing Wildcast as part of Organise! Which we will be doing regularly from here on both in Print and on the website.*

[www.freedomnews.org.uk/wildcat-and-the-egghead-the-life-of-donald-room](http://www.freedomnews.org.uk/wildcat-and-the-egghead-the-life-of-donald-room)



# WILDCAT

THE ANARCHIST  
REVOLUTION IS NOW

END THE SLAVE TRADE

DEATH TO  
MUSSOLINI

DOWN WITH MOSLEY

OPEN 2ND FRONT NOW  
MARPLES MUST GO

ABOLISH HANGING

CONSENTING ADULTS IN PRIVATE  
SHOULD NOT BE A CRIME

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN  
TEACHERS

STOP CENSORSHIP

FREE THE PERSONS  
UNKNOWN DEFENDANTS

WILSON OUT

STOP SCHOOL LAMING

Please clean this wall  
It is getting obsolete

NO MORE IDENTITY CARDS  
DEMO HYDE PARK 1 MAY 1946

anarchist comics by Donald Rook  
Presented by Organise!

People who write  
on walls are  
not always real  
anarchists.

Right, and people  
who write  
are not always  
real fascists.

But still I prefer  
the ones who write



## A FEW OF THE CHARACTERS WHO APPEAR IN THE "WILDCAT" STRIP

A TYPE OF ANARCHIST

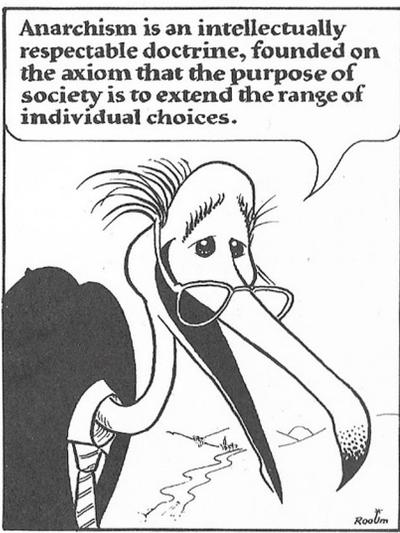
**THE FREE-RANGE EGGHEAD**

ANOTHER TYPE OF ANARCHIST

**THE REVOLTING PUSSYCAT**

A FICTITIOUS TYPE

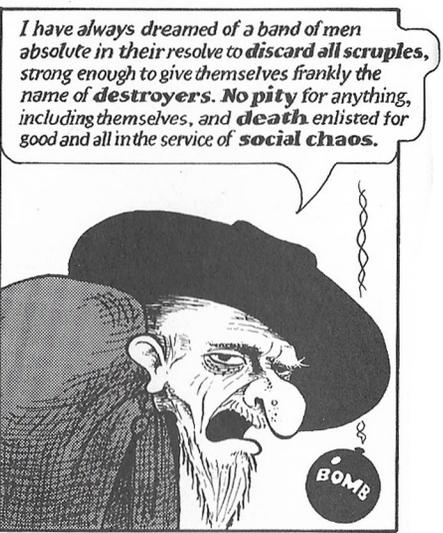
**KARL YUNDT**



Anarchism is an intellectually respectable doctrine, founded on the axiom that the purpose of society is to extend the range of individual choices.



Thrrrrsp!



I have always dreamed of a band of men absolute in their resolve to discard all scruples, strong enough to give themselves frankly the name of destroyers. No pity for anything, including themselves, and death enlisted for good and all in the service of social chaos.

NOTE. The Egghead appears in a supporting role, because a cartoon is no place for intellectual respectability.

ADDITIONAL NOTE. Karl Yundt does not appear at all, because his attitude is not remotely connected with anarchism, despite his influence on ideas of "anarchism" among the ill-informed. (He began as a character in *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad.)



Anarchists eh?  
HarHar!! Where  
do you keep your  
bombs then??  
HarHarHarHar!!

We don't keep bombs.  
Governments keep bombs,  
enough among them all  
to melt down the planet.  
And thirty million people  
are dying of hunger, largely  
to pay for government bombs.



A country's got to defend itself,  
and you say that's a justification  
for your anarchist bombs!!!  
HarHarHarHarHarHar!!

Yip Yip  
Yip Yip Yip  
Yip Yip!!



There are no anarchist bombs.  
Anarchists are striving for a  
society in which coercion is  
impossible, and ...

And you hope  
to achieve it  
with bombs!  
HarHarHar!!

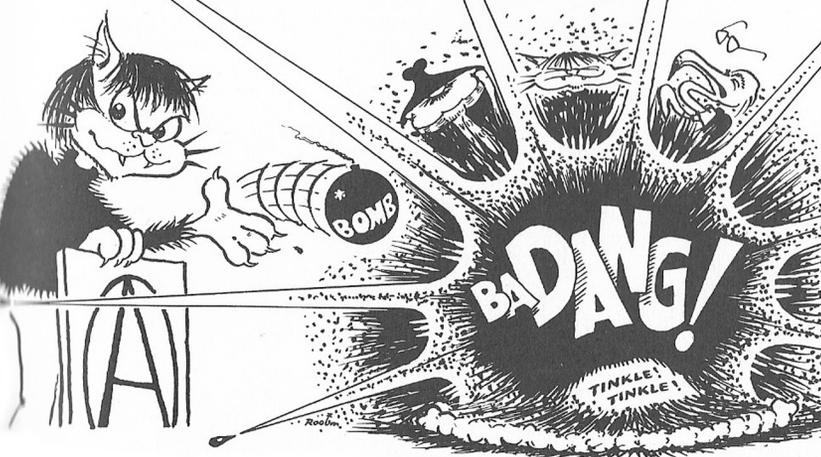
I was about to say, bombs  
would be useless for  
anarchist purposes.

Yip  
Yip  
Yip!!

In that case,  
why do anarchists  
throw bombs??  
HarHarHarHarHar!!

Very few people are  
listening, comrade.  
Let me on the platform.  
I'll demonstrate how  
to attract attention.

Yip  
Yip  
Yip Yip  
Yip!!

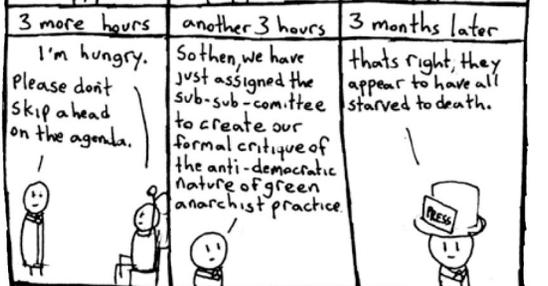
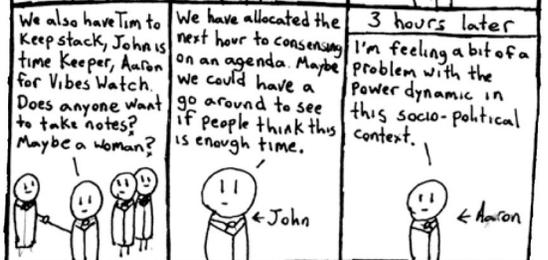
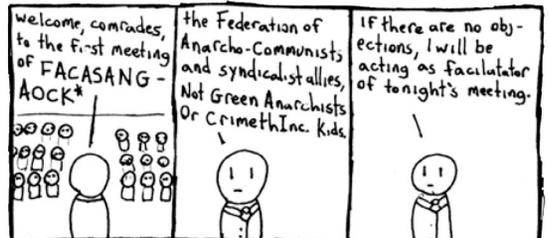
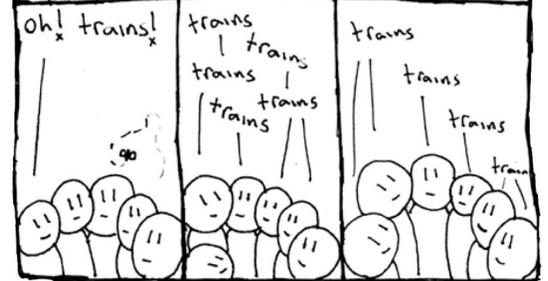
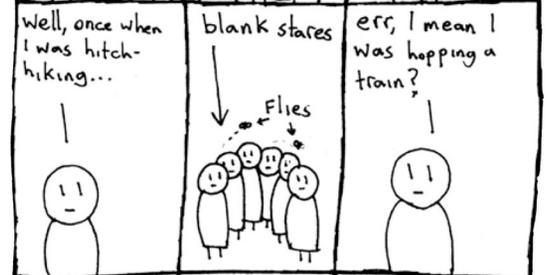
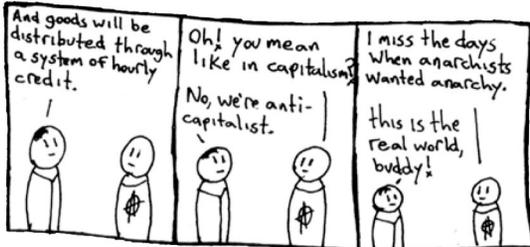
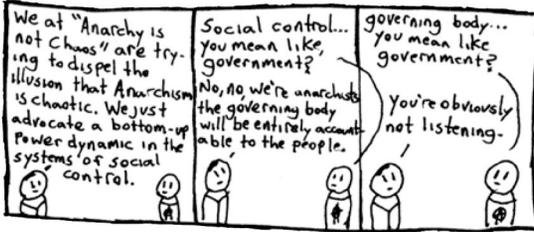


You daft moggy!!  
Now nobody at all  
is listening!!

Who said anything about  
anybody listening??  
All I said was, I would  
attract attention.



# THE SUPER-HAPPY ANARCHIST FUN PAGES!



\* Pronounced Fah-Kas-an-Gock



## RED AND BLACK GAMING Tabletop and video gaming for Anarchists

### AMONG US

*Innersloth (2018)*

Just over nine years ago I was walking down Princess Street in Manchester surrounded by a few hundred rioters. The two closest to me had just found out that they were from rival gangs and that “Any other night I’d knife you, but tonight we’re united against the fed innit”, said feds had secured the intersection with Portland Street as the crowd reached the one with Whitworth Street, full of zeal and adrenaline.

Unconsciously everyone starts to linger rather than simply blowing through, to carry on means to leave central and call it a night, no one seem keen.

“Where to now?” someone shouts, to which someone replies “Let’s go Deansgate and smash up the toff shops”, a few hundred cheers go up tho as they die down “Nah, listen, I’ve got court tomorrow, let’s go do the court first!” someone shouts and everyone bursts out laughing, with no further a do, everyone’s heading to the court.

It was the fastest most efficient consensus decision making process I had ever seen. I’ve only ever see it improved upon two times, the first would be while out hunt sabbing. Hunt sabs organise in tight knit squads who generally know and trust each other, the provides for ideal decision making. Second? Well that’s while playing Among Us, the crudely drawn party game that everyone has been rining for a few weeks now and which has seen everything from Hbomberguy kill AOC

to the Tankies declaring it an illustration of Fascism.

Ok, so hear me out here before you call me barmy. All three instances share some common traits, which are IMO vital for rapid fire decision making:

- The time factor meant that there was a no nonsense attitude to just getting it done.
- The arguments are presented clearly and their popularity gauged on the fly.
- Decisions are taken by those to act first with the support of the unanimous and once they are put into effect people go with it, generally while being ready to switch up at any given moment.
- No one cared to be “overly political” nor end up get lost in bureaucracy and admin.

The results are, even when shit goes wrong, an efficient method of making decisions, whether it’s a case of where gets looted next, catching up to the scummers or whether or not Orange gets ejected.

So Among Us, let’s talk about it for a moment. It’s essentially the game Werewolf (also known as Mafia) where one player can kill off the others during phase one of play and in phase two everyone has to guess who it was. That’s the basics of it, tho there are a great many variations. >>



It's a game of deception, debate and consensus decision making, all of which, much like any skill require constant practice, and it's here where Among us excels.

Maybe you just seen Black kill, you now have to convey that information to the others in a clear and convincing manner, probably while Black lays the same accusation on you. It could be worse, you are trying to convey a series of out of sight events which have led to you deducing that Pink is the imposter and you have 45 seconds in which to make the case. These are in reality exactly the kinds of skills street activists need, whether of not there is a imposter to highlight. The ability to centre focus, convey informations, take in options and then make a decision, often we have a handful of seconds, minutes at best to make these calls and alongside them skill sets are partitioning information and tactics such as buddying up and blocking up when required quickly become standard. We should all aim to be so efficient.

I reckon Among Us is more that just a fun little game, it's training. So here is my suggested set up for gaming/training with your comrades.

The Skeld, 2 imposters, Confirm Ejects off, Emergency Meetings 3, Discussion Time 45, Voting time 45, Player Speed and vision x1, Kill cool down 45, Kill

distance short, Visual tasks on with all tasks set to 2.

Keep an off game tally of wins and losses to give it some external importance and play the game. These settings will mean that after a few rounds of fuff, you'll start to play serious, play the long game and have to keep track of the various accusations and who was with who in Navigation earlier?

If video games aren't your thing, go back to the classic game, play one of the simple versions which is heavy on the decision making and deduction. How ever you play, make such to have some audio comms, ie Mic up, with the rule being that only the living can speak, and only during votes.

While text can have good results, being able to talk and convey information changes the voting dynamic massively and will improve both your ability to deliver information but also think on your feet and keep a straight face as you lie to the face of the cops, or your fellow crew, whatever. ■

*Among Us is available on steam for £3.99 or on various App stores for free.*

# SOLIDARITY

CK Jong (TBA)

I've flown across the galaxy in rusty freighters, rode into battle on the back of dragons, built vast metropolises and explored an abandoned mansion repeating to myself "I am a big strong vampire, why am I afraid of the little ghost child", games have given me more stories and experiences than I'll ever be able to count, but I've never helped unionise my fellow workers and took on the bosses. Not really. Now with Solidarity, I've at least had a taste of this and bloody hell it certain wetted my appetite for a bit of organised labour.

Solidarity is game about unionising a potion factory by pixel artist Carolyn Jong, illustrated in an absolutely lush pixel art that took me instantly back to Secrets of Mana and Chrono Trigger, the game is more that just a pretty face. Far from complete the small slither of the early game I was given is packed with promise. You are Saffron and for your 5 copper pay check you are in the

service of Purple Isle Potions picking berries all day long, just another cog in the capitalist machine.

The company is working you and your fellow workers to exhaustion daily. Now they want to increase the quote by a third? It's time to organise!

The game has a lot of promise to it, with elements of "energy" economics, spirituality, racial division and misogyny being woven into the narrative which has you making ethical decisions as you work to empower your comrades and work out who is on side before you eventually confront the bosses.

The version I have is a year old, and only two days oh in game play long, but it's something I've occasionally looked back on and it's something I truly hope Carolyn takes forward. We need more games that provide such valuable lessons! Please devs. More of this stuff! Thank you!

Carolyn has a small portfolio at [ckjong.artstation.com](http://ckjong.artstation.com) and you can find them on twitter @ckjong ■



# 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](http://i-f-a.org)  
Twitter / IntFedAnarchist  
FB / InternationalOfAnarchistFederations

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Föderation deutschsprachiger Anarchistinnen (FdA)**  
[fda-ifa.org](http://fda-ifa.org)

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

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

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

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

**Federazione Anarchica Siciliana (FAS)**  
[fasiciliana.noblogs.org](http://fasiciliana.noblogs.org) (membership pending)



Five Demands  
Not One Less  
沒有暴徒祇有暴政!

解散警隊 梁不登

守護孩子  
是佢哋  
和平遊  
是沒得  
香港人反抗!

San Yau Ling Holding Center  
新屋嶺  
扣留中心

Er... Er...

願榮光歸香港

鄉

自由のた

香港と共い

721

警

民間記者會

黑記!

我可以為你  
上前線播子彈  
你願意罷工  
表達訴求嗎?

101

早白!

你有乜地位呀!

你咁樣唔會令我驚架!

Fight For Freedom

Stand With HK

火龍法

線卡...

和你羅十

ARABIA

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