

FREEDOM

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BY DONATION



WE NEED A BIGGER BOAT

BUILDING A MASS MOVEMENT BEYOND EXTINCTION REBELLION

Pic: Martin Hearn/Flickr CC



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EDITORIAL

Freedom is the oldest anarchist publication in the English language. Produced by Freedom Press, it was founded in 1886 and continues today as a bi-annual journal with an associated daily news site, publishing service and bookshop. Based in Whitechapel, the Freedom Press collective runs on a non-profit and largely volunteer basis.

To find out more you can check out the history and archives on our news site at freedomnews.org.uk, buy our books online at freedompress.org.uk and visit our shop at 84b Angel Alley, London E1 7QX.

The last few months have been rather good for Freedom Press's media arm. Online our reach has been steadily growing with a monthly average of around 21,000 unique users, and a growing number of writers have been submitting excellent texts, so the future seems exciting.

We have covered activist happenings in Britain and worldwide, broken news stories before anyone else, published some good analyses, and have had some articles going (mildly) viral.

We also managed to distribute the entire print runs of the last couple of issues of this journal: partly from our

own efforts and partly with help from the homeless folk of Whitechapel.

Seeing how both the Freedom News website and Freedom journal are growing, we have some ambitious plans for the near future. Firstly, we will be seeking to expand the Freedom News collective. Currently, the website is run by two — occasionally three — volunteers.

We manage pretty well we daresay, but if we are to keep growing we will need more people on board. We need more people willing to commit to the running of the website on a long-term, and daily, basis. We need more reporters delivering news from actions and such. We need more reviews, more culture, and sports news: you name it.

Secondly, we will be seeking to get some funds. Currently we are exploring the idea to set up some sort of monthly contribution option going.

Sadly, we still don't live in a post-revolutionary anarchist utopia and the prospects of this happening soon are small. So if we are to grow, we will need some cash; not too much, but we could still do with some.

Some of this will be spent on the anticipated rise in website hosting costs

due to our increased readership. We are also thinking about starting to commission texts and offering a monetary donation of some sort in exchange: going either to the author, or to the group of their choice.

We think that this could make it easier for some folk to write a text for us, and especially people from demographics who otherwise may not be able to afford taking an afternoon off work to do so. This plan is only in its budding stages, and one of the issues to consider is how to avoid creating a hierarchical structure occurring when money is at stake. Hopefully we will confirm our system for this soon.

Anybody* who would like to contribute to either the website or the journal, or wants to get involved in the more permanent upkeep of both, is more than welcome to drop us an email at the below address. We would also really like to hear from you, whether you have an idea for a story, a suggestion for what we should cover, tell us off for something, or generally want to get involved.

The editor

editor@freedompress.org.uk

* Well, except for Leninists, fascists and bigots — eg. Terfs (see p16).

WHAT'S ALL THIS 'ANARCHISM' ABOUT?

There are many misconceptions about what anarchism is and what anarchists want in the media. Some of the myths are accidental, some spread deliberately — but the most famous is that we're all about chaos.

Little could be further from the truth, the famous circled A for example is historically a symbolic acronym. Anarchy is Order.

While we have our share of chaotic adherents and experiences, and sometimes comrades' methods are very direct, we have no desire to simply break the system. We also want to replace it with something better, known as the beautiful idea.

What that idea represents in its specifics differs from person to person, as with every broad creed (capitalism

included), but for the last 150 years, from individualism to mutualism, to anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism and libertarian municipalism, the irony is that we are often obsessed with organisation.

Which will happen when you're trying to frame a whole other alternative society to the one we have now.

This paper is itself produced by an organised non-hierarchical collective and covers some of the broad range of topics where you will find anarchists fighting for a better future.

Every member has an equal say in how Freedom Press runs, and no-one is unaccountable for their actions.



For people interested in this sort of thing, the main typefaces are Langdon, Alfa Slab One and Centabel Book. Dingbat symbols are taken from 1910 issues of Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* magazine.

Kindly printed by Aldgate Press



BRING DOWN THE BAILIFFS

'Tis an era of division, however if there is one place for the working class to find common ground it should be a universal hatred of bailiffs, and the ever-more-privatised enforcement industry. From squatters facing surprise evictions by thugs with sledgehammers, to the families being harassed endlessly via phone, letter, and house-visits over trivial amounts of debt, it would be hard to find many people speaking kindly of bailiffs.

Bailiffs exist to enforce legislation that is geared towards protecting capitalism. And in today's neoliberal world they are increasingly outsourced to private companies.

Time and time again there are reports of bailiffs who step well outside regulations — and often the law — in pursuing profit. Squatters are attacked on the regular when bailiffs break down doors, and often are not given a chance to remove their belongings. Debt bailiffs often make no attempt to distinguish whose possessions they are confiscating, leaving others to go through a painstaking process of claiming back property unlawfully taken.

Bailiffs are anti-working class, regardless of which class they themselves belong to. They are scabs and sell-outs. Ever the source of frustration and despair, County Enforcement, a private security company which supplies bailiffs when authorised by the courts, are proud of their union-busting history and participation in breaking the miner's strike. They are renowned for their aggressiveness, and have been front and centre in many a controversy, most recently the eviction of Tidemill Garden, a site of community resistance against the council tearing down a local green space in a deal with property developers. They are of course but one of so many bailiff companies making life hell for people.

The government did attempt to introduce reforms in 2014 to curtail the behaviour of debt-collecting bailiffs at the behest of charities and debt advice organisations, but that did not prevent Jerome Rogers (subject of documentary *Killed by my Debt*) from killing himself in 2016, hounded to death by bailiffs over a couple of unpaid traffic fines that spiralled into thousands of pounds through debt enforcement fees. The government can



pretend reforms will bring relief for some. But it would be foolish to assume they would make changes that would threaten the stability of the system, namely a significant overhaul of the idea of debt enforcement, let alone its abolition. In the words of the Ministry of Justice “the collection of debt is necessary for both the economy and the justice system, and bailiffs must be able to carry out their job safely and effectively.”

As we struggle to effect the impending collapse of capitalism, we must also fight for small victories, while acknowledging that reforms will always fall short. The Civil Procedure Rule Committee (of the Ministry of Justice) recently held a consultation to look at discrepancies in County Court and High Court rules, and the effect this has on both bailiffs and their targets. The CPRC is aiming to “strike a balance” — this has the potential to afford more protections to people who hold the short end of capitalism's stick, but also could result in disaster, and should be on the radar of all housing activism groups.

To combat the security and enforcement lobbyists' input, the Advisory Service for Squatters, along with housing campaigns Shelter and Generation Rent, among others, responded to the consultation by

illustrating the physical and psychological abuse that so many have suffered, in the hope of at least maintaining the current regulations, and perhaps aiming to gain some new protections.

But let us not simply rely on the hope of such reforms. When people end up in the sights of bailiffs, may the bailiffs end up in our sights. This is a call to fight back, to unite, squatters, tenants, the impoverished, the working class, to protect each other and not let these dogs of the upper-class push their every advantage.

We need to know our rights, organise with neighbours to protect ourselves and our friends, communicate our current situations and rely on each other to resist. We should not make it easy for those complicit in ruining lives. A bailiff involved in the Jerome Rogers documentary tells his side of the story, attempting to elicit sympathy — he has bills to pay, and can't afford to waste time being nice. Colleagues of his have committed suicide over their own costs he tells us. He demonstrates his knowledge of the gig economy, of the way he is exploited by his bosses. Yet in his job he remains.

Maybe with the right support he could be convinced to quit. But until then let us know that he is no friend of ours, he knows no sympathy, and deserves none. Nor do any of them.



The author also writes a regular Squatter's Digest column at freedomnews.org.uk

GRASSROOTS IN ESSEX

In an age of rampant neoliberalism, society is ever more fractured and polarised. Precarious employment conditions are dumping more people on zero-hours and short term contracts. Solidarity in the workplace is under attack. An increase in buy to let and homes of multiple occupation means community solidarity in our neighbourhoods is crumbling as people move in and out on short term lets, not staying long enough to generate a sense of belonging.

People are focused on just surviving in a dog eat dog world, becoming ever more individualistic, less inclined to favour collective solutions and unwittingly doing the bidding of the neoliberal elite. People on the estates feel they've been thrown under the bus and have lost faith in the political system. This is reflected in low voter registration and turnouts at local and national elections. This creates a political vacuum which the far right are only too happy to fill. Our presence at the grassroots on the estates is part of the strategy to fend off the far right.

Radical change needs the willing participation of the working class. There has to be a base at the grassroots in our neighbourhoods as well as our workplaces and colleges. The challenge of re-building solidarity in the workplace is being met by the rise of militant, new wave unions such as the United Voices of the World union to whom we offer our unconditional solidarity. As community activists, our focus of operation is the neighbourhoods we live in.

Working at the level of the estates, our task is to do whatever is needed to empower people. Our ultimate aim is to give life to an old slogan from the Independent Working Class Association: "Working class rule in working class areas". This is easy to say — putting it into practice is a hard slog where we're constantly learning lessons from our experiences and refining our approach. We can't afford to stick to a rigid dogma — we have to be flexible and pragmatic.

Our ultimate goal is political, social and economic revolution, initiated by an empowered, progressive working class. It's a case of nurturing different strands, bringing them together and picking up



A community clean-up project in Vange Hill, South Basildon

momentum along the way. This means starting off with easily attainable goals and moving on from there. The process involves a range of tactics from facilitating residents in lobbying the council to practical actions that improve conditions on the estates.

In facilitating the lobbying of councils, purist anarchists may see little more than a neighbourhood pressure group. We're not and here's why. The key is the word "facilitating". We facilitate the Vange Hill Community Group, based in Basildon, by offering support, advice and logistical backing when necessary. When lobbying pays off, it empowers those involved to not just carry on but also to become more ambitious in their demands.

Then there's direct action. In the case of the Vange Hill estate, it's a combination of community clean ups and guerilla gardening. With the community clean ups there's some degree of co-operation with Basildon Council in that we'll tell them we're having one, there will be sacks of rubbish and other bulkier items for them to collect when we've done. When it comes to the guerilla gardening on the estate, we just get on with it and don't even think about asking for permission.

As this proceeds and the barriers to what can be squeezed out of a council are hit, we use our propaganda to place in context what most people instinctively understand about the limits of the state in an age of permanent austerity.

If we want to change the world, we have to move out of our comfort zones and work with those who don't agree with us. We need to be able to convince people that radical change is not only desirable but possible. Just working with and writing for those who agree with us won't help. We need to be there as part of the solution to problems on the estates and in the workplace, whether this is dealing with fly-tipping or supporting a group of workers in a struggle for union recognition.

Empowering people to become more ambitious is a step by step process. We're in it for the long haul. The hope is that what we do on the estates where we have a presence a) inspires more people to get involved and b) inspires people on other estates to start doing the same.

There will come a point when barriers will be hit as the authorities refuse to relinquish any more power. The hope is that when this point is reached, people are politicised enough to push things forward in taking on the powers that be and start fighting for real change.

Dave Amis



CLIMATE IS CLASS WAR



An alliance of non-hierarchical groups formed over the last few months, the **Green Anticapitalist Front** is attempting to provide a link between the extensive anarchist experience of green direct action and the latest wave of climate change activism. Below, the group outlines its background and ideas for future activity.

The ideas behind the Green Anticapitalist Front have been brewing in the background for some time, as many anti-capitalists have already been involved in direct action groups like Earth First! and Reclaim the Power.

When the Extinction Rebellion (XR) protests phenomenon came along we were faced with a choice: either engage with an inherently reformist project which worked with the police or try to create a new front which could bring together different strands of anti-capitalism for actions which were directly antagonistic to capital. We recognised action was needed, and quickly, so standing on the sidelines or simply critiquing XR was not an option.

We started as four people in the London Anarchist Federation's ecology working group and although we were confident of our critique of capitalism's role in causing climate change and the State's role in facilitating this, we felt that there was a lot to be learned from other political currents about what a future ecotopia might look like and how we might achieve this.

A broad front could offer a space for cross-fertilisation of ideas, to learn from projects such as the Internationalist Commune in Rojava, and build solidarity networks across existing groups. With this as our starting point we have aimed to build a network of activists from across the anti-authoritarian left that offers an alternative to the liberal politics of XR.

We start from the premise that any environmental movement must acknowledge that under the current capitalist system it is the working class who will bear the brunt of both the effects of climate change and the costs to mitigate these. This is the unspoken truth which

underlies all green capitalism solutions; the costs of adaption will be socialised whilst the profits will be kept private. We are heading into dangerous territory if we do not challenge this idea, or the 'strong borders' rhetoric coming from both major political parties in the UK which will most likely be used to keep climate refugees out.

This same logic will be used to ensure our living standards are maintained while those in less economically developed countries will face greater and greater threats to their livelihoods. As climate change begins to bite we are more likely to see war and militarism stoked by the tensions between countries for resources and this too must be fought.

We must state that while we are critical of some of XR's politics and tactics we can not but be impressed by the scale of the action they achieved in the Rebellion Week of Spring 2019, particularly as it moved away from static occupations pre-arranged with the police. In solidarity with their actions we arranged our own demonstration where we took to the City of London to bring some Rebellion Week disruption to the heart of the global financial network. Although we were sadly unable to take over the stock exchange (next time, we promise) we held a lively procession through the City with demonstrations outside financial institutions and banks. As a first action we felt this was incredibly successful as with a fraction of the numbers of XR we were

able to cause significant disruption by not working with the police and allowing a diversity of tactics to unfold. As our movement grows we hope to achieve greater actions that are confrontational to capital as well as develop our ideas of what the future could look like post-capitalism.

We were heartened that as Rebellion Week progressed XR's tactics and targets began to mirror our own as they stopped announcing their actions to the police and began to pick financial targets to highlight the link between capitalism and climate change. We feel we've engaged positively with many members of XR and were even invited to speak at their open assembly.

We hope our groups can continue to work in tandem and that our ideas and tactics will be more generally accepted by the movement; particularly now the leadership of XR have decided that entering the state apparatus through elections is their next plan.

Over the Summer we hope to meet and broaden the Green Anticapitalist Front further and gain inspiration and strength from other political tendencies and groups. The world 50 years from now will look very different from the one we are currently in — the question is what actions can we take to make sure the global working class thrives in balance with other natures and avert climate catastrophe. For us the answer is destroying capitalism: if you feel the same, join us.

Climate struggle is class struggle!



An XR-related mural produced by Banksy. The full Vaneigem quote is: "Let ten men meet who are resolved on the lightning of violence rather than the long agony of survival; from this moment, despair ends and tactics begin."

SEX WORK: A GUIDE

Anarchists through history have often been at the margins of society, associated with criminality and other unacceptable categories. So, it should be no surprise to know some anarchists are also sex workers, or have been close to sex workers. We fought Mussolini and Franco, we continue fighting today.

Emma Goldman wrote in 1910 about trafficking hysteria, then called “white slavery,” which hasn’t changed much in over a century. Her approach to the causes of sex work is just as valid today as it was then:

“Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favors. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men. Whether our reformers admit it or not, the economic and social inferiority of woman is responsible for prostitution*.”

While some otherwise privileged women have been able to “break the glass ceiling” in the last century, many of us continue to be underpaid, overworked or considered unsuitable for the capitalist interests. Ironically, sex worker activists are often accused of being the privileged ones when we speak up for ourselves. What is really privileged is to believe it is acceptable to force someone to give up their livelihood because it is offensive to you and instead condemn them to a life of low-waged work, unemployment and extreme poverty.

Many sex workers are unable to access “normal” jobs because of disabilities, unpaid care commitments, being too queer — or just appreciate having some more time for other things in life, like activism, studies or art. In the current neoliberal state of zero-hours contracts and benefit cuts, sex work provides a respite for many people who were otherwise be unable to access any income.

The reactionary forces against us, who would have us scrubbing their floors for a pittance, are the same that wish to silence trans people. This was made very clear at the London Porn Film Festival, which was attacked by so-called feminists “against the sex trade, surrogacy and transgenderism.”

In fact, the London festival is the most DIY, queer, feminist, body-positive one around. These attempts to silence sex worker and queer voices is part of a wider reactionary attack, funded by the extreme right, to divide feminist and working-class movements. This is not our feminism. I pity the people who have been seduced into this hateful ideology.

On a more positive note, sex workers led this year’s Women’s Strike** on March 8th in many places across the world, from Buenos Aires to London. This year we marched in the rain around central London with around 5,000 people on our side.

Sex workers in Britain are also unionising! We have the wonderfully radical United Voices of the World trade union representing us in England and a new attempt at a branch with union GMB Scotland. So far, we have made a lot of progress unionising strip clubs, being legal workplaces, where dancers are forced to pay house fees to work a shift, amongst other things. In case they didn’t have enough problems with club bosses, strippers have also had to deal with the Women’s Equality Party (WEP) sending men to covertly film them at work without their consent. This is another way carceral feminists*** try to attack our livelihoods, by inciting councils to remove licensing and close down workplaces. We don’t need “concerned” rich women trying to take our work away, we need unions to fight for ourselves.

For many of us, sex work is a criminalised enterprise. The current laws in Britain allow selling sex, but working together is illegal. As an anarchist, I would love to be able to set up a co-operative worker-run brothel, thus curbing ridiculous London property

prices as well as taking care of each other against dodgy clients and bosses.

When I work in a brothel now, the house takes a third of my earnings per client, and we’re under the constant threat of police and immigration raids. In addition to laws which prevent us from working together safely, “anti-trafficking” legislation is often used as an excuse to detain and deport migrant sex workers trying to make ends meet. That’s why we campaign under Decrim Now!

In conclusion, if you are against borders, against police, against prisons, against bosses, against state surveillance, you must also be for sex worker rights. We don’t need you to be comfortable with what we do, just don’t make our lives more difficult.

If you are a sex worker reading this and you haven’t joined the union yet, go sign up to UVW now!

Anarchalot

**Some of Emma Goldman’s words would be considered old-fashioned, if not offensive, to many sex workers today. We have done a lot of work to shift the language used, but many of those who would have us die in the gutter still use harmful words to deny our relative agency in the face of our economic conditions. Don’t be one of those people.*

*** An annual refusal of work held on international Women’s Day, highlighting the enormous amounts of labour undertaken by women both paid and unpaid.*

**** Carceral feminism argues that State intervention — criminalisation of sex work, more prisons, heavier policing — should be the primary method used to reduce violence against women.*

Further info

bit.ly/Trafficwomen — on sex trafficking
bit.ly/DissIsland — on the Women’s Strike
bit.ly/pornfest — London Porn Film Festival interview
bit.ly/sexworkstrike — sexworker strike
bit.ly/covertfilming — on WEP covertly filming strippers
bit.ly/mussolinichallenge — sex workers jailed for challenging Mussolini
decrimnow.org.uk/the-facts — info on decriminalisation



3... 2... 1... ANTIFA ARE GO

The London Anti-Fascist Assembly (Lafa) launched this year as a pan-city grassroots anti-fascist coalition made up of groups from across the left. Below, a member of far-right monitoring podcast 12 Rules For WHAT (@12rulesforwhat) considers the challenges ahead.

In February more than 150 anti-fascists packed into a social centre in Dalston to discuss and plan a new anti-fascist movement. The successes of 2018, and a resurgent threat from the far-right across the world, had once again made anti-fascism into a vital and pressing activity for a broad swathe of Londoners. And despite Lafa being originally conceived as a way for existing groups on the radical left to coordinate, the assembly has gone well beyond anti-fascism's usual constituency of committed activists.

This is extremely promising, and makes it a particularly hopeful time to be an anti-fascist. However, some of the problems Lafa was created to solve remain. It aimed to increase participation in street-based anti-fascism, but anti-fascist demonstrations called at short notice or during the week still have low turnouts. Politically, Lafa hasn't yet produced an answer to the ongoing collapse of the distinction between the fascist and non-fascist right, making its target at some points unclear. From an organisational perspective, although Lafa has drawn new people into doing anti-fascist work, the movement still largely relies on the same fairly small set of organisers to spur action.

As it's not been around for very long, there's still plenty of opportunity to develop the group further. Lafa could address some or all of these ongoing issues by: 1) continuing its already very promising successes in building a mass movement capable of opposing fascists on the street; 2) organising training for new anti-fascist organisers; and 3) helping to produce counternarratives to the pernicious but effective propaganda produced by the far right.

Movement Building

If Lafa is going to grow, and ultimately be successful, it will be by emphasising its function as an assembly. It is essential to bring together groups and individuals to coordinate the left response to fascism.



It's clear anti-fascism can't just react to the activities of the far right, but must build a movement ready to meet the next threat, and ultimately be robust and wide-spread enough to stop the threat arising at all. Just as we need direct action, or "militant" anti-fascism to break up fascist organising, we also need a mass movement to make anti-fascism a reflexive and sustained practice of the left. Assemblies can do this.

Anti-Fascist Night School

To be effective in the long run, anti-fascists will need to produce and reproduce their own organisers. This means giving people the ability and confidence to fulfil functions within the movement. The importance of an emphasis on reproduction and care in our movements, which the Feminist Anti-Fascist Assembly in particular has already highlighted, needs to also look to the long term sustainability of these movements, and that means training.

There are clear deficiencies to be filled. On previous demonstrations there has been little capacity for stewarding, for example, and more generally a lack of energy for doing sustained research into fascist groups. More broadly, despite far-right figures being increasingly excluded from major social media platforms, anti-migrant and other proto-fascist sentiments are still rife on social media. To counter this, we need to develop skills systematically in a structured programme.

Culture not Subculture

The third area Lafa should develop is its cultural work. Bringing new people into anti-fascism means expanding the ways in which anti-fascism is practiced and contesting fascists in the cultural spheres where they agitate.

There has been much talk in recent months of bringing back Rock Against Racism, an important cultural project from a previous cycle of anti-fascist activity. But this would miss the reality that dominant forms of culture have moved on. Unlike in the 1970s and '80s, fascist and reactionary movements are not prioritising music as a way to capture new recruits. Instead, we should look the work being done by projects such as the anti-fascist Clapton CFC (along with its sister esports team) and the emerging "Breadtube" movement of leftist YouTubers challenging the hegemony the far-right has held on the platform. Lafa should be actively producing anti-fascist culture, linking these projects together as a single coherent project, and creating access points for new people get involved in anti-fascist activities.

12 Rules for WHAT is on [soundcloud](#), [itunes](#) and other podcast apps.



AS THE SHINE RUBS OFF

The Autumn of 2015 and the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader was as much of an earthquake for the anarchists as it was for what is now known as the “centrist tinge” of party politics.

As a movement, we had benefited somewhat from the years of Blair, Brown and Miliband. Our street activity made big strides forward in the '90s and early 2000s before falling back, but even after that we were able to make an easy argument that Labour was merely shades of Tory in the way it thought, acted and produced policy.

With the ascent of an actual capital-L Leftist to the top job of Labour leader however this line was, at least temporarily, stripped away. We were back to more complex and difficult arguments around the ultimate limitations of reformist politics, and how the logics of representative democracy warp and shorten our horizons over time.

For those of us following party affairs the situation seemed cosmically unlikely from the start, and Corbyn’s success blindsided most of us.

The MP for Islington North is, from the anarchist vantage point, very much a known and limited quantity. Mostly a good egg, but the quintessential grandee of “cobweb leftism” who dreams of reinstating the glory days of a Keynesian social-democratic Britain that a) never quite happened in the form he’d prefer to portray and b) rested on a foundation that no longer exists.*

Beyond that, the mix of Trots, Tankies and frequently problematic “anti-imperialists” who had spent previous decades backing such “socialist titans” as Bashir Assad or Colonel Gaddafi that he frequently rode with were a massive liability.**

His Parliamentary mates were similar. John McDonnell was smarter, but harsher and not as likeable. Diane Abbott was all over the place, from private-schooling her kids to public lauding of Chairman Mao. Dennis Skinner was an entertaining but sidelined



Corbyn at a 2015 rally against nuclear weapons — Labour has since committed to renewing Trident under his leadership

grouch. They’d been taking turns for years to “put up a left voice” for leadership and been crushed on every occasion.

At best Corbyn represented a return to the ungainly plod of a back-to-basics Labour, but terminally stretched by internal divisions, with no workers’ power to underline policymaking and placed within a fully-entrenched form of aggressive neoliberal capitalism.

So what made things different this time?

There were some electoral factors, such as Ed Miliband’s voting rule changes, but in short, “time” was the biggest influence of all. Broadly, the working class had been on the back foot for more than four decades. Labour had been post-Kinnock

centre-right for most or all of that period. The left’s last serious victory had been the Poll Tax, and things had gotten so bad that even welfare-baiting warmonger Tony Blair was initially heralded as a turn towards progressive politics.

Every “far” left tendency had been in decline for years, most notably the Leninists, while anarchist ideas, despite several surges in popularity, hadn’t resulted in a stable power base capable of offering a serious grassroots alternative.

For millions of socialists and vague/old leftists who had been relentlessly sidelined, a possibility of rebuilding the Labour Party left thus represented the only shaft of light in what had been a gloomy few decades. Many, if not most, of the

* Exploiting the tail end of empire is no longer an option open to Britain, and its government no longer has enough economic or military heft to really stand up to the agendas of national and corporate superpowers. The trade unions and organised communities that once forced progressive policies were smashed in the 1980s and '90s, while the neoliberal shift which accompanied that change affected the very logic of how society is collectively understood on a global level.

** It was this set’s extremely variable background on Palestine solidarity that later became weaponised as “Labour’s anti-Semitism problem”. While much of the related media campaign was overblown (and deeply hypocritical), unaddressed anti-Semitism embedded in the pro-Palestine left sometimes was, and still is, a troubling reality.

LABOUR. WHAT NEXT?



people who shifted over, from Communist Party types to former Trots and reactivated old Labour activists, not to mention a number of anarchists, were speaking in terms of TINA — there is no alternative.

The most familiar refrain being offered to anarchists who stayed out of the new Corbynism was that people knew it was a sticking plaster approach, but even limited change was better than another decade of retreat. And maybe it would shift the tone of the national conversation. It was all about Momentum, so to speak.

Added to this was the nature of Corbynism itself, an appeal to socialism that through its initial stages revelled in malleable vagueness. Anarchist entrants, later unkindly referred to as “anarcho-Corbynistas” were offered a platform that gave them a nod and a wink on a host of issues from nuclear disarmament to mass migration and the environment.

And for the first year or two, it seemed as though the left might be onto something. Corbyn had a pretty blameless record as the

only leadership contender to have led Stop The War and had years of pro working class, anti-bigotry activism on his CV. He was lent further street cred as the Tories and their allies went absolutely ballistic, accusing him of everything from IRA conspiracies to having Soviet gold in his pocket.

Leftists, particularly those young enough to have never known a time when Labour wasn't run by the sort of scumbag who'd throw claimants under a bus to look “tough” on the non-issue of welfare cheating, were able to project almost anything on this besieged, part-formed entity. Through Momentum and gatherings such as The World Transformed many people were introduced to the hothouse of party political intrigue for the first time, and that surge in energy felt like change.

The result for anarchism was a notable draining of activists into reinvigorated Constituency Labour Parties, local organs of the organisation that had for years been little more than powerless cheerleading squads for the Parliamentary Labour Party.

In our chatrooms, social media and pub conversations this caused a mix of consternation, debate and sometimes, nasty arguments. Exactly how anarchists should respond to Corbyn was unclear and the spectrum of opinion went from outright hostility to him, through interest and engagement (more or less distant) with “where the class is”, to the opposite extreme of people denouncing their old viewpoints entirely and adopting the aggression of the recently converted.

What happens to fresh milk

Since that process in the 2015-17 period however, even with the added draw of defeating coups and the endless fascination of internecine battles to rely on, an iron rule of Parliamentary politics has come into play. Eventually the milk always turns sour.

With Corbyn this has been a faster process than perhaps could have been predicted, but it has nevertheless left plenty of room to accommodate that cliché of party political activism, the acceptance of policies which would once have been anathema in the name of a “larger goal”.

Certain elements of this decline from the heady heights of rebellious Corbynist

principle were present almost from the start. Corbyn's quiet acceptance of NATO after a lifetime of opposition to it took place as early as 2015, when he downgraded to an (easily buried) call for “debate”. Since then he has let slide on a wide range of former “red line” positions, from migration and Trident to taxation and Europe. Most of Labour's policies today aren't far removed from the party's centre-left orthodoxy under Ed Miliband.

The logic, of course, is that it is better to jettison what you cannot win to make progress where you can. If Labour has to appease the public sphere's migrant obsession by promising it won't let them be used to “undermine working conditions”, well, any hurt caused will only be to non-voters. The important thing is that its overall electoral prospects aren't dented, so eventually a (fiscally responsible) nationalisation or a (sensibly budgeted) tax rise can be pushed through here or there. Even if Corbyn himself is not personally in favour of such maths, they're part of how the party must act in order to function.

It is the same logic which has driven every social democratic party since the 19th century, and which has in the 119 years since Labour was founded seen it progress from a call to overturn laws which were strangling trade unions while promoting massive nationalisation of industry to ... a bit less than the same today.

Except now the TUC unions are increasingly zombie organisations, nationalisation can no longer be pretended to as a cure-all, and despite recent setbacks the agenda of the party right is still hugely influential. Blair-era staffers still hold the reins across much of the administrative machinery, and the grinding battle to replace them has put off many enthusiastic new faces. Labour's famed Clause IV calling for the common ownership of industry for example, torched during the Blair years, seems unlikely to make a full reappearance.

And this settling into day-to-day realpolitik simply isn't as sexy as “we're taking over”, nor is it such a shiny prize for the far left when important principles are sloughing off the docket before a majority has even been secured.

> Turn to page 10

... AFTER LABOUR (CONT. FROM P9)

What instead?

For anarchists, an important trend we may be starting to see is the beginnings of political drift. Anecdotally, more people are showing an interest in anarchism again, particularly in the absence of a Leninist left which has leapt in with both feet to try and Win for Corbyn and is weak on its own account.

The anarchist movement itself however is not in great shape. We've been poorly served by the last decade as we've only partially progressed in reconciling relatively new, influential ideals about fighting intersecting social oppressions with our far older base politics.

The collapse of our biggest annual gathering the London Anarchist Bookfair in 2017 highlighted deeply-felt disagreements which have been worsened by generational differences in how we engage with our politics. We have minimal resources to work with and a modern cohort seemingly primed to squabble rather than coalesce.

But the need for a grassroots resurgence is stronger than it has ever been. The single greatest failure of the Corbyn project in fact has been in the promises made during its initial recruitment drive — that throwing in for Labour and rebuilding community and worker power could be one and the same fight.

This was always a claim to side-eye, and the last four years have broadly seen, rather than a resurgence, a further decline in regular trade union activity and community rebellion. Some former activists have picked up council roles and found themselves administering cuts, waiting for the Promised Land of change at Westminster to arrive while mirroring the actions of the very people they used to oppose.

With a government which is the weakest-positioned in modern history, a ransacking of cities, public services and people's working conditions by the rich continues. Buried has been homelessness, poverty, torn up safety nets, declining estates, healthcare crises.

Corbyn may ask his questions at PMQs, or even become Prime Minister himself, but what actually forces Westminster's priorities is what happens out here, in the world beyond London SW1. Which is where anarchist thought shines.

Standing for independent activity which doesn't rely on politicians, for direct action to make things happen, and for ways of organising which don't continually produce an elite of know-alls telling us to let them sort it out.

There are two key factors in our engagement with today's political mess. First is that clearly popular engagement with Labour does not produce the sort of independent activism needed to directly challenge Tory misrule or bosses' greed. Momentum was supposedly founded expressly to produce these outcomes and has mobilised nothing but door-knocking on election days.

Second is that there have been multiple examples of groups springing up and being effective which have happened despite Labour, rather than because of it. Base unions such as the UVW, IWGB, and IWW, aimed at protecting precarious workers left behind by the mainstream TUC, have been growing at a remarkable pace, and winning regardless of who occupies Number 10. Community and green action groups have made headlines and pushed policy change with little practical help from party brass.

There are green shoots of extra-Parliamentary activity to point to, and for all that we have limited resources there is a wealth of experience and history we can call on to inform and improve the next phases of a revival. The potential is here. The key will be in how we deal with the messy realities of mass rebellion.

The greatest waves of post-war anarchistic activity in Britain were the 1960s and around the Millennium. In the former, there was an attempt to focus anarchist ideas into federations, which often foundered through a lack of strategy and discipline. In the 1990s and 2000s the State, which had learned much about how to disrupt political movements in previous decades, intervened effectively to break up, repress and misdirect movements as they grew.

The lessons of those periods will be vital to learn and remember over the next phase of Britain's political journey.

Rob Ray

WE LIVE

"Do you remember a few months ago when the government losing a vote was a really big deal?"

That's what a close friend said to me after the latest "unprecedented" parliamentary shenanigans. Since last summer we've become so used to cabinet resignations and the government losing votes that the word unprecedented is a little over-used.

The other word that the 24-hour news channels trot out frequently is "febrile". Our politics has a febrile atmosphere that has had viewers flocking to the BBC Parliament channel. In countries far away the Speaker of the Commons, John Bercow, is a household name. This year BBC Parliament's viewing figures briefly rivalled those of MTV. Add to that news channels, politics shows and bulletins and we can safely say Brexit is a smash viewing hit.

With the second series of Brexit in swing British politics has gone a little bit Netflix. Just as people clamour for the latest dramas to binge, we now have politics to match. This is the spectacle to end all spectacles with the promise of an explosive season finale: general election? Theresa May resigning? Theresa May being re-programmed by robotics experts? A Corbyn government? A second coming (sorry I mean referendum). It literally feels like anything could happen. The public are hooked in exactly the same way that modern TV streaming services rely on for success.

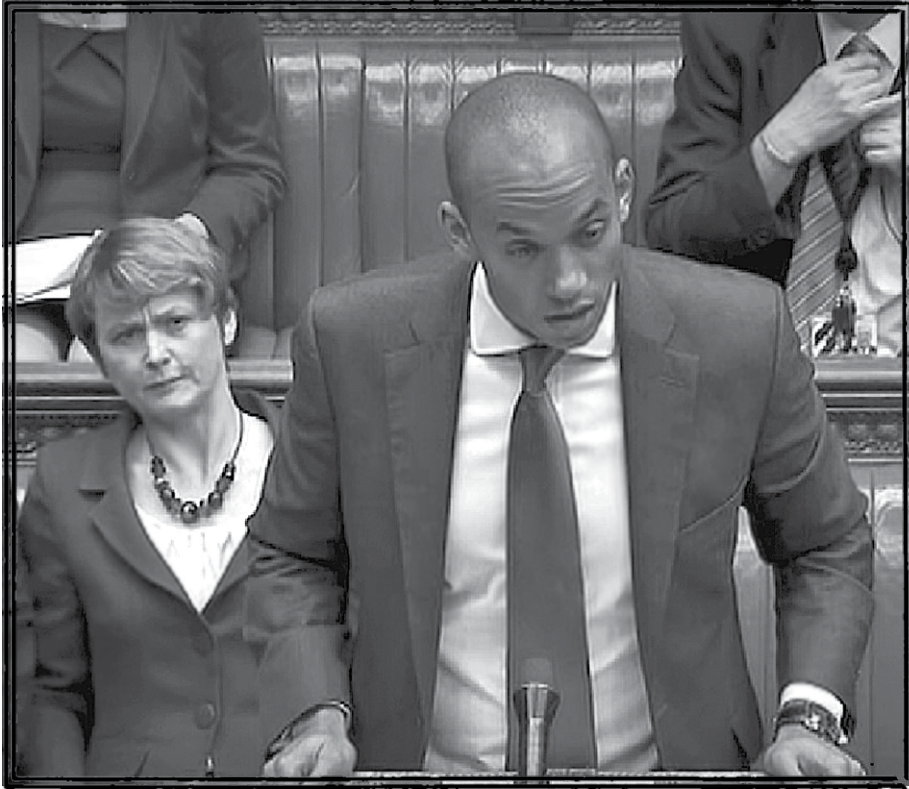
This has all come about because of three factors. The first is the 2017 general election result; the second is the way Brexit divides opinion within political parties; and the third is the stubbornness of the Prime Minister and her cohort.

The 2017 general election was a disaster for May in terms of her wanting a thumping majority but ending up with relying on the DUP for support. Without this election it is highly likely her deal would be through Parliament by now. The election result, following a catastrophic campaign, should have been enough to seal May's fate but she wasn't having any of that.

Brexit gives us many nuanced characters, just like any popular drama. We see how they line up in Parliament by party colours only to find out later that they've been working with people from



UNDER A BOX SET REGIME



More boring times: CUK spokesperson Chuka Umunna back in 2012, before his ill-fated leap out of Labour

other parties. Change UK is made up of the ones that have gone so far in sleeping with the enemy that they've formed their own little group. The two main parties remain riddled with factions.

Theresa May has proven an old adage that Prime Ministers tend to try to cling to power. She has taken it to a new level. In normal times resignation would have been expected after an appalling general election result but not with May. Since then there have been over 40 ministerial resignations. She must be running out of people to be able to appoint, it is that unprecedented. She carries on, even though many of her colleagues refuse to work for her. In the summer of 2018 her Chequers Plan was announced to great fanfare and cabinet approval only to result in ministerial resignations within 48 hours, including Boris Johnson — but not her.

May has survived a vote of confidence from her own party MPs and her government has survived a vote of confidence in the Commons. There have even been plans to change the Conservative Party rules to ensure that she is forced to quit. In order to stay she has agreed to stand down if her deal is voted through the Commons. We have entered the bizarre dimension where success is now rewarded with the sack; failure results in getting to keep your job. This is a fine way to sell the capitalist principle of meritocracy. It is also an extra plot point in the Brexit Shit Show. We all get to see her demise if she gets what she wants. That's compelling viewing.

This attitude has rubbed off. Cabinet collective responsibility used to mean that in order to be a minister you had to vote with the government. If a minister didn't

vote with the government (by convention) they had to resign. With conventions out of the window, ministers are doing what they like. At one key cabinet meeting May feared leaks to the press so ministers were forced to hand over their mobile devices and unable to leave the room until she had done a press conference to confirm what had been agreed. That is how much she can trust her closest colleagues.

Parliament used to be real life. It was dull. We binged on box sets to escape the real world. Now politics is beyond real, and we indulge in all the latest votes as though we're escaping humdrum existence.

Obviously, whilst Parliament is now a fantasy world where anything can happen, and probably will, Brexit has real implications for all of us living in the UK.

The way reality and this Box Set Parliament intertwine makes the spectacle all the more disturbing. The risk of Brexit to jobs, supply flows and free movement is terrifying. The real life stuff of getting the right medication, affording food or simply being able to stay in a country you've made your home is being tampered with. The chances of escaping the negative impact of Brexit are small but get better the more wealthy you are.

At some point the Brexit Shit Show will end. I do worry that we may have entered a world where Theresa May is immortal and intends to sit out eternity saying "my deal is the best deal; it is the only deal" but logically it will all end and a new normal will develop. Chances are the spectacle of parliamentary politics goes back to what it was like before.

Do you remember? Parliament used to just be a terrible place where legislation was voted on by rich, over-privileged bastards who genuinely thought they had the wisdom to decide what was best for the rest of us. It will go back to that one day. Life will go on and no doubt a Netflix series of Brexit and Parliament will be made. People will binge it, hardly believing that it could possibly be based on anything that actually happened. We will be back to normal; passively observing a boring set of current affairs but lapping up the most amazing story ever told, re-sold to us by clever Brexit-proof TV executives.

Jon Bigger



MUTU: RETHINKING

ANALYSING FRANCE'S SUCCESS STORY

The seriousness of our times hardly needs restating. In contrast to the temporary “tightening of belts” we were promised, we’re now over a decade into what is increasingly being understood as a permanent austerity that the ruling class wanted all along, while Britain’s biggest far-right demonstrations since the 1930s combine with Tory overtures towards overt white nationalists.

Yet on the other side, while the rise of Corbyn channelled energy away from the post-crisis student and anti-austerity movements into reanimating the corpse of social democracy, increasing dissatisfaction with Corbynism — and its promise of better-funded borders, increased police numbers, etc. — means that a return to extra-parliamentary working-class politics seems not just necessary, but inevitable.

The issue, then, will be how to create the infrastructure which can bring together these existing pockets of grassroots organising into a movement really capable of changing the world.

Notes from a dying media

Even in these difficult times for libertarian radicals, there are numerous examples of local groups waging class struggle. But these struggles are often poorly promoted, relying on already overstretched groups to publicise them via an array of blogs and social media platforms. In bigger towns and cities, protests and actions fail to attract the numbers they could, partly because people don’t know about them. And there exists an over-reliance on social media to promote our activities, rendering pages redundant (and therefore also the archive of content on them) as social media usage shifts from one platform to another.

All this has taken place in the vacuum created by the collapse of numerous anarchist publications. Arguably however the disappearance which had the biggest material effect on grassroots activism in Britain was the collapse of an online outlet, *Indymedia*.



For all its faults, *Indymedia*, with its slogan “Don’t hate the media, be the media,” functioned as a crucial hub which held various activist movements together from 1999 to the mid-2010s with sites across the country. As the anti-globalisation movement from which it had emerged started to ebb away however *Indymedia* went into free fall. The open publishing nature which had allowed anybody to take part, write up action reports and publicise events, proved also to be its weakness as conspiracy theorists and anti-Semites began posting whatever they liked.

It was partly in reaction to these drawbacks that we launched what eventually became *libcom.org*. We felt there was a need to have an editorial collective able to stop reactionary content being posted to activist websites and maintain a clearer commitment to everyday class struggle within anti-authoritarian politics.

Ultimately, while our theory and history archives succeeded in this goal, our news coverage (with the exception of specific struggles like France’s anti-CPE movement or the Visteon occupation) remained patchy.

OUR RADICAL MEDIA

Our aim of covering every working-class struggle everywhere in the world was, in the end, a tad too broad for our small collective. Though we had lots of good individual articles, we failed at producing a news resource which consistently covered — and was used by — collective social movements.

The task, then, for building radical media infrastructure is in finding a way to marry these diverging elements: open publishing with editorial checks; a specific remit within which individual articles can reflect and feed into wider movements.

Mutu's model: transforming radical media

In May 2018, we attended a conference of the Mutu network in France, a network of local radical media websites which operate much like *Indymedia* did, but with a completely transparent editorial process.

We were blown away to discover how each of these sites, many we hadn't even heard of, were acting as hubs for the various social movements taking place in cities and regions across France, focusing on local struggles and issues. With this focus, they became places where people went to find out about social conflicts when they broke out. But as we listened to descriptions of these sites connecting with groups of striking workers or occupying students, we also realised they function to draw together the various struggles within a given locality into a multi-faceted working-class movement.

Each Mutu website (there are 15 at the time of writing) is run by an editorial collective aiming to be representative of anti-authoritarian tendencies in their areas. In France this typically involves a mixture of Tiqqunists, anarcho-communists, green anarchists and insurrectionaries and varied from place to place.

When we argued that nothing so multi-tendency would work in the UK we were told the same thing was said about Paris: "Everyone in Paris hates each other." Today *Paris Luttes* is the most popular site in the network with 10,000-25,000 readers a day.

The network is committed to participatory publishing: like *Indymedia*, anybody can submit an article or add an event to listings, but everything has to go through an editorial process before it goes live on the site, with typically two or three editors' approval needed before something can appear. But this editorial process is completely transparent and visible to all logged in users. If an article is rejected or changes need to be made, users can see why.

By using this approach, Mutu has essentially fixed what was *Indymedia*'s problem with reactionary content, while remaining true to the ethos of open publishing. Moreover, it has turned radical media from something produced by overworked media collectives into a resource which can be used by radical groups and social movements.

Being our own media

A Mutu-style network in the UK would be a massive boost for anti-authoritarian politics at a time when we really need one. Website collectives in every major town and city could act as vital infrastructure for local struggles while also serving as an entry point to radical politics which we're sorely lacking. Rather than having to navigate various blogs and social media accounts to find out about local activity, there could be a central resource for people interested in their area's social movements.

The way the sites would operate, with self-organised collectives transparently editing content anybody could submit, would be a practical example of how

our politics can work. And by working together to publicise our activity, we can begin to build a unity based around the various struggles we're involved in, from workplace and housing activism to migrant solidarity and anti-fascism, saving services for domestic violence survivors to stopping fracking. To create such a network, we need to start by forming local editorial collectives. If you want to start one, contact existing groups in your area and see who wants to be involved, post on social media and forums to find people nearby to collaborate with. When you've got enough, call a meeting and get your collective launched.

Most of the work done by the collectives will be editorial, such as editing articles or making decisions on what to publish; not everyone needs to have an in-depth knowledge of how to set up websites. The Mutu network use the same code for all their sites so they can share technical support across the network; we could do something similar quite easily with a small tech collective supporting multiple sites.

Once multiple collectives and websites are set up, we can begin to talk about networking. Experience tells us we shouldn't spend too much time thinking about how we network until we have the local collectives to network in the first place. This must be built from the bottom up; it may take time, but the result will be vital infrastructure for a radical working-class movement and a radical media that is not simply the produce of overworked media collectives, but a tool we can all use in the struggle for a better world.

E & J
libcom.org

Interested in starting a new network of anti-authoritarian local news sites? Email towardsafreshradicalmedia@riseup.net



WARPED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Considering the ways in which the narratives we engage with on social media can dislocate us from rational engagement with the world, and how we can begin to rethink our more toxic online behaviours.

Our online egos are used as a vessel for spreading political propaganda, and with it, lies and misinformation. Sometimes organically and sometimes manufactured, usually polluted. We're motivated by our peers, by wanting to fit in, and we form our opinions to an extent from the views of those we trust and respect.

Certain narratives become more dominant and we perpetuate beliefs and ideals around the responses of our friends. We are motivated to not dispute those narratives, to avoid disagreements.

Thus we tend to turn a blinder eye to unreliable sources that confirm our biases and explain nuanced narratives in black and white terms. Conversely, we blur and muddy clear narratives by casting doubt about well-established facts when it contradicts our predispositions. We all do this, perpetuating lies, sometimes knowingly, more often by being too lazy to question them.

Propaganda doesn't only come in the form of "fake news", it can be through selective use of facts, blurred lines, misdirection, bombardment of topical posts, by prolonged positive or negative reinforcement of information, and many other mechanisms.

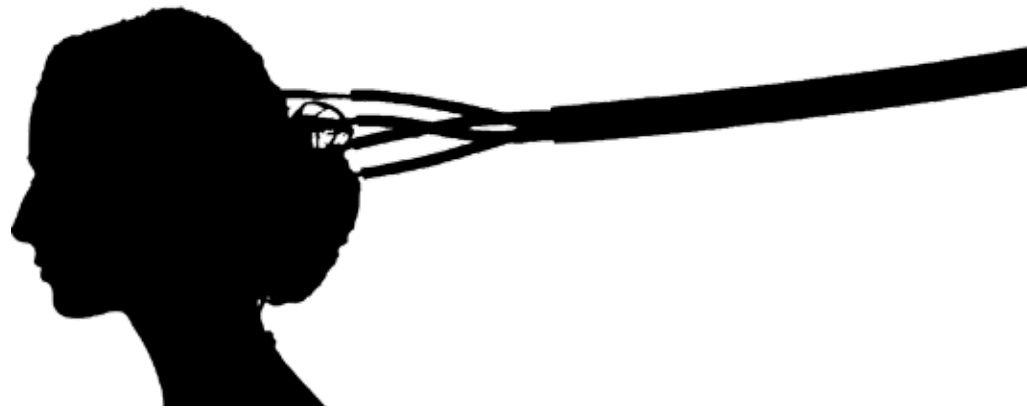
Where "fake news" stories come from is often unclear, I believe sometimes they originate naively, or organically, sometimes they're written by misinformed authors, sometimes by biased sources, left and right. Sometimes they are simply generated for targeted ratings. Some are part of sophisticated propaganda distribution machines from corporate and State powers.

Most originators of propaganda probably don't care about your politics. If a story is framed in terms of a struggle between our ideological foes and allies, we will be inclined to accept this.

As we discuss these stories, we often have long arguments based on many false statements gone unquestioned, and we use these arguments to push ideas that are foundationally not true. We evolve and mutate those concepts, and we murky

other parts that should be unquestionable. Dictators become heroes, genocides are justified, wrong becomes right, often through a process of facts getting questioned, disputed, diluted, and blurred until we can no longer tell what's true.

We create memes and content to reinforce our ideas and selectively repost articles which reiterate them. The articles themselves are often not wrong or fake, it's the mere action of sharing those while under the influence that makes it an act of propaganda, cementing such items as the ones which we should pay attention to.



We reinforce our beliefs and ridicule our opponents through a process of perpetual sharing, liking and commenting, by doing so, we reinforce our relationship with our core peer group and exclude others.

There is not one overarching interest in control, there are many sometimes conflicting interests at play, influencing different and overlapping demographic cuts of the social network.

It's more of a chaotic ecosystem than a well-oiled machine, ideas grow, evolve, die and get replaced, news cycles influence the role different stories and narratives play in our lives.

Groups often self-police, they delete or hide contradicting narratives, especially strongly-founded dismissals of parts of the stories they attempt to perpetuate.

Most of all we are blind to our own misguided opinions. Our opponents are very clear to us, but often it requires some

serious soul-searching to recognise our own bullshit exists — that we are blind to most of the lies, certain of them as facts is in itself terrifying.

This rarely comes from the people you consider your foes, it comes from those you perceive to share some ideological platform with, and those are the ones you should be most suspicious of.

By ridiculing our opponents we often unwittingly give them a platform. We watch and read and spread their words under the pretence of ridicule or criticism.

We must be able to adapt our opinions,

to allow new information to reshape our predetermined ideas. We must reject off the cuff stories that seek to cloud our judgement. At the very least, we need to start being braver in confronting our peers when we think they are spreading misinformation, and be more receptive to their presented facts.

That's not to say we need to make it our duty to argue with anyone anytime they are wrong on the internet, but we mustn't let important misinformation go continuously unopposed. Too often we let our friends slide with expressing and saying things online that should be simply unacceptable, because they are our friends.

It's important to say: It's OK to be wrong on the internet, to have passionate arguments, to change your mind.

The pursuit for truth on the internet is a difficult one, and we're in the midst of a propaganda war that is kingmaker — and near invisible to us.



MUST YOU GIVE POLICE YOUR DETAILS?

LEGAL CORNER

Going on protests can often be a legal minefield, which is why you need to know your stuff when you go on them. Below, a member of the Activist Court Aid Brigade talks through the most frequently asked questions on fingerprinting. A longer version of this article with discussion about major recent changes to police powers can be found at freedomnews.org.uk

When can police take fingerprints with a mobile device?

If you are under arrest and you are taken to a police station, the police have the power to take your fingerprints (by force if necessary).

The police can take fingerprints away from a police station ONLY if they have reason to suspect you have committed an offence AND they have reason to doubt that you have provided your real name and address.

If the police have grounds to take fingerprints, they must first give you an opportunity to give your details. They can fingerprint you only if there are “reasonable grounds” to doubt you have given your real name and address.

If you have provided a document showing your name and address, they must tell you why this is not sufficient on its own to prove your identity.

If you refuse to give your fingerprints (and the police have “reasonable suspicion”), they have the power to take fingerprints without consent, or to arrest you for the offence you are suspected of, and take you to the police station.

What if I haven't committed an offence?

To lawfully take your fingerprints the police must suspect that you have committed an offence.

They MUST tell you what offence you are reasonably suspected of having committed and why you are reasonably suspected of committing it. If the police will not or cannot do this, you SHOULD NOT provide your fingerprints (or your name and address).

If the police allege that you have committed an offence, MAKE SURE they explain what offence it is that has been committed and what reason they have for suspecting you. Being stopped and searched, DOES NOT by itself give the police powers to take your fingerprints OR your name and address.

Being detained to prevent a breach of the peace, or held in a protest kettle, DOES NOT by itself give the police powers to take your fingerprints OR your name and address.

If the police have suspicion that you are breaching bail conditions, they have the power to arrest you. A suspicion that you are breaching bail conditions DOES NOT give them the power to take your fingerprints on a mobile scanner, as this is NOT an offence.

What if I am suspected of anti-social behaviour?

If the police allege that you have engaged in anti-social behaviour*, INSIST they tell you what they “reasonably believe” you have done that was likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress.**

If the police cannot or will not tell you why they believe you were likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress, the

police do NOT have powers to take your fingerprints and you SHOULD NOT give a name and address.

If the police DO you have reason to believe you have engaged in anti-social behaviour, they DO have the power to demand your name and address. The police WILL then have the power take your fingerprints IF you refuse to provide your name and address, OR they suspect you of providing a false name and address***.

What happens if I give my fingerprints?

The device will scan your fingerprints and check them against the police database. They should return a result within two minutes. The scan taken by the mobile fingerprint device is NOT kept, and DOES NOT stay on the system.

If your prints are already on record, the police will be able to see your details. These will include your name, last known address, warning markers and whether or not you are wanted for any outstanding offences.

If the offence you are suspected of committing is a minor one, and you have given your prints, the police SHOULD consider alternatives to arrest, e.g. summons, fixed penalty notice or words of advice.

If your prints are not already on the database, this will mean that the police cannot verify your details. What the police do then is up to them — depending on the situation they may accept the details you have given as true, or they may arrest you for the offence you are suspected of committing.

If you are arrested your prints will be taken in the police station, and these will be retained on the system.

Carl Spender



* Anti-social behaviour is any behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to a member of the public. If what you did was not likely to do that, it was not anti-social behaviour. Non-violent protest is NOT anti-social behaviour, even if it is unlawful.

** Swearing in front of a police officer probably ISN'T anti-social behaviour as the law says that police officers are unlikely to be caused “harassment, alarm or distress” by bad language. (This may not be the case if other people could hear.)

***Under s50 Police Reform Act, you commit an offence if you do not provide your name and address when a police officer reasonably believes you have engaged in anti-social behaviour.

SISTER NOT CISTER: A

The issue of trans rights is one which has caused enormous upheaval across the left, including the anarchist movement. Below, a member of trans-solidarity group Sister Not Cister talks about the uphill struggle trans people and their allies are facing — and how SNC is trying to help.

One of the more infamous incidents within the anarchist movement of recent times took place in 2017, at the London Anarchist Bookfair when a group of Trans Exclusionary Radical feminists (Terfs)* attended and handed out transphobic leaflets, sparking a fight at the event and its subsequent closure last year.

This sparked a divide in the London community between those who stood with the Terfs and those who did not. (see freedomnews.org.uk/get-terfs-out-of-feminism for more information).

In response to the anarchist bookfair incident and other transphobic events taking place during that time and the general transphobic backlash towards the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) consultation, a couple of cis* female allies created a statement which was published on *Freedom News*. It was called 'It's spelt sisterhood not cis-terhood' (see freedomnews.org.uk/its-spelt-sisterhood-not-cis-terhood-statement).

The statement was then signed by hundreds of individuals, and groups. The authors of the statement then created a Facebook page called Sister Not Cister so that the statement could be kept pinned to the page. It was this statement which led to a physical group forming.

Allies of many of these anarchist Terfs within our movement would like to lead folks to believe that the transgender community are an entitled group making a lot of fuss over nothing. That we should stop no-platforming these Terf groups and hear them out.



The trans struggle is a class struggle, as a leaflet produced earlier this year by Leeds activists We Are The Rabl (bit.ly/werrable) sums up:

“As trans people we tend to be poorer, and the poorer we are the more vulnerable to transphobia.

■ We’re more likely to be unemployed. A third of employers admit to being less likely to hire us.

■ We suffer worse working conditions than our colleagues. One in eight of us have been physically attacked at work. Many turn to sex work due to this and fear of unemployment.

■ When we try to access healthcare, we are considered difficult to treat, even for issues not related to us being trans. A broken arm becomes a “trans broken arm” and inadequately trained and understaffed healthcare facilities often turn us away.

* “Terf” is claimed to be a slur by anti-trans campaigners (who usually prefer the fluffier-sounding label “gender critical”), as it is often used pejoratively online by pro-trans activists. *Freedom* has tended to reject that claim however, as in this case Terf was originally a self-descriptor applied by radical feminists which simply became associated with nasty attitudes and behaviour. If you make a bigoted bed you can reasonably be expected to lie in it — we would not indulge anti-choice activists who might prefer to call themselves “pro-life”, or racists who would rather be known as “race realists”.

**Cisgender is derived from Latin prefix ‘cis’ which is used in the fields of chemistry and genetics. Together with the word ‘gender’ it forms the opposite meaning to “trans” gender.

FIGHT TO BE SAFE

■ Due to inconsistent funding, many of us are left unnecessarily infertile.

■ We are far more likely to face housing problems due to discrimination and parental rejection.

Bosses, politicians and landlords exploit us all, and are the ones with the power to translate society's transphobia into problems in our daily lives."

SNC, with the Trans Liberation Assembly, would like to add: On February 11th 2019, plans were announced to scrap the already limited provisions for trans prisoners. Some trans women have already been moved to the men's prison estate.

Abhorrent transphobia in the media, championed by both Terfs and so-called respectable academic at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCIS) has been a sinister factor in increasingly violent treatment enacted against trans women who are victims of the prison estate.

Every prisoner is a political prisoner, and prisons make up a vast system of gendered and white supremacist violence which enforces borders and a notion of social cohesion which is held together by the most extreme brutality.

No-one of any gender can be free while we rely on the police, borders, and cages to make us safe.

Terfs have shown time and time again that they will direct the police towards us, they willingly threaten us with arrest and potentially prison. On May 1st Terfs attempted to join the annual workers May Day March, and when removed by anti-fascist comrades and the march stewards they called the police. Recently they held a protest at Downview prison with banners saying "No men in women's prisons" protesting the placement of trans women in female prison estates. SNC asks, how can these groups claim to care about women when

they hold a demo at a prison and fail to critique the structural ways in which the prison system itself is harming and killing women, and particularly those who are marginalised?

■ 45% of incarcerated women have reported being subject to domestic violence.

■ 31% were looked after (in foster care) as children.

■ Black women are more likely to be remanded in custody and to receive custodial sentences.

■ Women in prison are five times more likely than those on the outside to have mental health problems.

■ In 2016 alone there were 12 suicides.

■ For 85% of mothers, being sent to prison is the first time they will be separated from their children for an extended period of time.

Despite the above, apparently for Terfs the main concern is to move transwomen to male prison where many of our sisters have already been murdered.

Shocking statistics were released in 2018 on the discrimination we face as transgender people in the UK. More than a third of all trans people in the UK had been victims of a hate crime in 2017-2018. 41% of trans people have experienced a hate crime because of their gender identity and up to 53% for young trans people between 18 and 24 years old. 79% of trans people did not report the crimes due to lack of support or fear or further discrimination.

Speaking from experience, we also have little support within our own activist communities in supporting our transgender comrades through these situations. Trans people are twice as likely to experience hate crimes in comparison to members of the LGB community.

Sister Not Cister is now made up of 100 individuals across Britain and our activists work alongside and within various other groups such as anti-fascist and feminist organisations.

We receive information every single day about various events that are taking place. These may be Terf-led talks run by groups like Women's Place UK and Transgender Trend. Political parties hosting talks which have transphobic speakers. Universities which are acting in transphobic ways towards their staff or students. Transphobic leaflets or stickers being handed out. Transphobic materials being shared in schools. The forming of new transphobic groups. Transgender individuals who are experiencing harassment. News articles which publish transphobic materials.

We respond to each and every message that we receive and to every piece of information and then form a response.

This may come in the form of sharing social media posts through our huge and still growing network of various activist groups, writing press releases, encouraging folks to contact newspapers or advertising boards for retractions, we offer support in protest and demo planning for individuals who are experiencing transphobia, and plan larger scale protests and no platforming actions in response to transphobic talks and organisations.

SNC also runs multiple workshops and share our resources freely.

We are entirely unfunded and any money we raise through sales of our merchandise (detrohex.org/sister-not-cister) go towards printing costs/travel funds for folks who would like to travel to our protests and meetings.

We welcome all within SNC, if you would like more information or to get involved you can message us through our FB page: facebook.com/SisterNotCisterUK.



UPCOMING BOOKS

Below is a brief run-down of a selection of books due to be published in the forthcoming months which we feel may be of interest. Three main criteria are affordability, accessibility and availability.

AK Press have a bumper selection lined up including:

- *Down with the Law: Anarchist Individualist Writings from Early Twentieth-Century France* edited and translated by Mitchell Abidor. Among the authors are Albert Libertad, Emile Armand, André Lorulot, and the young Victor Serge.

- *Insurrection: The Bloody Events of May 1937 in Barcelona* by Agustin Guillamon, translated by Paul Sharkey. More than 500 pages aiming to shed light on previously unanswered questions about the conflict, especially on the way that Stalinist and Republican forces conspired through assassination, intrigue and violence, to suppress the uprising.

- *Luigi Galleani: The Most Dangerous Anarchist in America* a biography by Antonio Senta.

- May Picqueray was an activist for her entire life (1898-1983) and this autobiography *My Eighty-one Years Of Anarchy: A Memoir* is newly translated and published in English for the first time. Her story is closely entangled with those of Sébastien Faure, Nestor Makhno, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berckman, Marius Jacob, and Buenaventura Durruti, among others.

- MPT Acharya was active in the anarchist movement for many years and this collection *We Are Anarchists: Essays on Anarchism, Pacifism, and the Indian Independence Movement 1923-1953*, has been brought together by Ole Birk Laursen.

- Although an academic title, **Bloomsbury Academic's** *John Paul Sartre's Anarchist Philosophy* by William L. Remley has a paperback edition that may be worth investing some time in.

A publisher in SW England, *Breviary Stuffs*, have two new titles of interest.

- They are the UK publisher for Philip Ruff's most excellent biography *The Towering Flame — The Life and Times of the Elusive Latvian Anarchist Peter*

the Painter. No spoilers but the historical research in this is very well handled.

- They also have David Worrall's *Radical Culture: Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance 1790-1820* showing that even 200 years ago the British State was spying on political radicals.

Freedom Press have three titles slated for this year.

- The Press's summer release is Iain McKay's collection of essays by 1910s British anarchist firebrand George Barrett, *Our Masters Are Helpless*.

- Later in the year they will be releasing Spanish anarchist veteran Tomas Ibanez's reflections, *Anarchism is Movement*.

- And Mark Hayes will be looking at lessons to be learned and the use of State power to curb a neonazi group in *The Trouble with National Action*.

- **Pelican Books** are publishing, in hardback, but not too expensive, Ruth Kinna's new book *The Government of No One: The Theory and Practice of Anarchism*. A substantial tome of 400 pages, this traces the tumultuous history of anarchism, starting with thinkers and activists such as Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman before going through key events like the Paris Commune and the Haymarket affair.

PM Press have several titles lined up.

- Nicolas Walter's short classic *About Anarchism* is having a new edition issued, with additional biographical material and an expanded introduction by his daughter Natasha.

- Those seeking an examination of anarchist involvement in struggles in Cuba will welcome Kirwin Shaffer's *Anarchist Cuba*. The anarchists' efforts included schools, health institutes, vegetarian restaurants, theater and fiction writing groups, and serious preparations for social revolution.

- As the ongoing ecological disaster continues, John P. Clarke's *Between Earth and Empire* is a timely intervention. It argues that an effective response to global crisis requires attention to all major spheres of social determination, including

the social institutional structure, the social ideology, the social imaginary, and the social ethos.

- Making a welcome reappearance is a new edition of Marie Louise Berneri's *Journey Through Utopia — A Critical Assessment of Imagined Worlds in Western Literature* which begins with Plato's *Republic* and continues through to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

- Shawn P. Wilbur has brought together a new selection of theoretical articles by Max Nettlau, including some newly translated, *New Fields*. Some of these first saw the light of day in *Freedom* and *Mother Earth* in the early 20th century, others come from French publications.

- Max Nettlau is probably better-known for his work on the history of anarchism, and a new edition of *A Short History of Anarchism* is forthcoming.

- **Rutgers U P** have a paperback reprint of Candace Falk's biography of Emma Goldman *Love, Anarchy and Emma Goldman*.

- **See Sharp Press** have a timely volume *Venezuelan Anarchism: The History of a Movement* by Rodolfo Montes de Oca.

- **University of Illinois Press** have a collection entitled *Writing Revolution: Hispanic Anarchism in the United States* edited by Christopher J Casteneda and Montse Feu.

- And finally, **Verso** are publishing McKenzie Wark's *Capital is Dead — Is This Something Worse?* arguing that the all-pervasive presence of data in our networked society has given rise to a new mode of production, one not ruled over by capitalists and their factories but by those who own and control the flow of information.

Mal Function



MEANWHILE IN THE ALLEY...

Freedom Press celebrated 50 years in its building at 84b Angel Alley in Whitechapel last year with the launch of a new book covering its history since 1886 (*A Beautiful Idea*) and an announcement that long-awaited repairs had finally been completed.

It was a surprising return to form given that just five years prior the Press was in bad shape. Out of cash, the collective had been forced to close this newspaper as a regular monthly production, shut down publication of new books and cut all other outgoings to the bone.

Cashflow would remain an issue in the next couple of years and in 2016, we were hit with a seeming mountain to climb when a building survey undertaken by the Friends of Freedom suggested we needed to raise £40,000 for a repairs bill.

Today we are happy to say that the most important parts of those works are now complete — namely making the place watertight — and we're on to the next stage of refitting and fixing up the inside of the building.

As visitors will know, there has been a major overhaul of the shop downstairs over the last year or so, transforming it into a bright and much more welcoming space with a wider variety of stock and not infrequently, hosting informal events such as film nights, open group meets and talks.

That comes alongside the revitalisation of our news output through both the rejuvenation of this journal as a free bi-annual (we hope to increase frequency as our resources and support base improve) and the outstanding work of our editor on the freedomnews.org.uk news site. Our publishing too has gone from strength to strength since it was tentatively restarted

DENIZENS 2019

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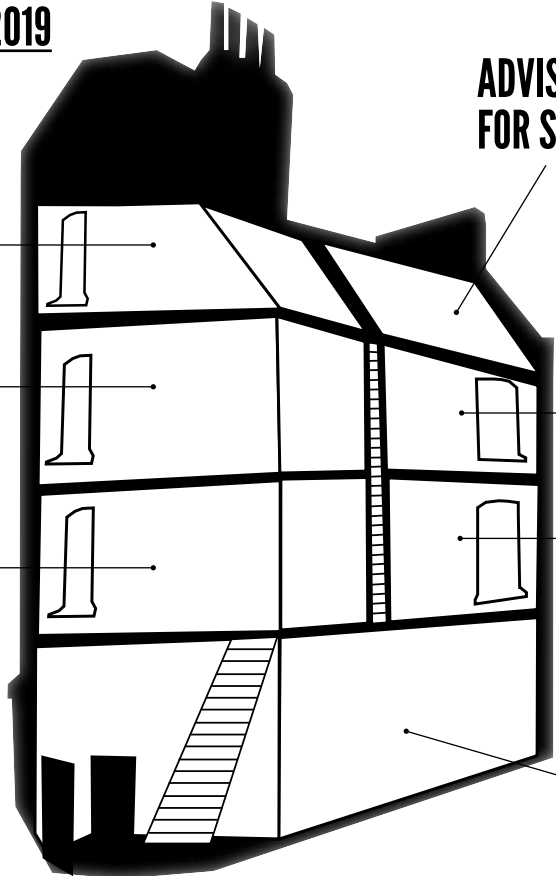
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in 2015, averaging three new books a year since 2017. This year, alongside essay collection *Our Masters Are Helpless* (see back page) we will be bringing out a new work investigating the fascist group National Action by Mark Hayes and a translated work, *Anarchism is Movement*, by the veteran Spanish anarchist Tomás Ibáñez, a major figure in the 1960s-70s CNT union.

The rest of the building however has been in need of some TLC and this is our current priority fundraiser.

Thanks to some very comradely work by our builders, we have enough cash to get many small fixes done, from doors and plastering to electrics and plumbing, but there will be some more major works down the line particularly on the windows. Fundraising for our old pile is thus still ongoing, and you can find details for donations at the bottom of this page.



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EDITED BY IAIN MCKAY
THE ESSAYS OF GEORGE BARRETT

OUR MASTERS ARE HELPLESS



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