

FREEDOM

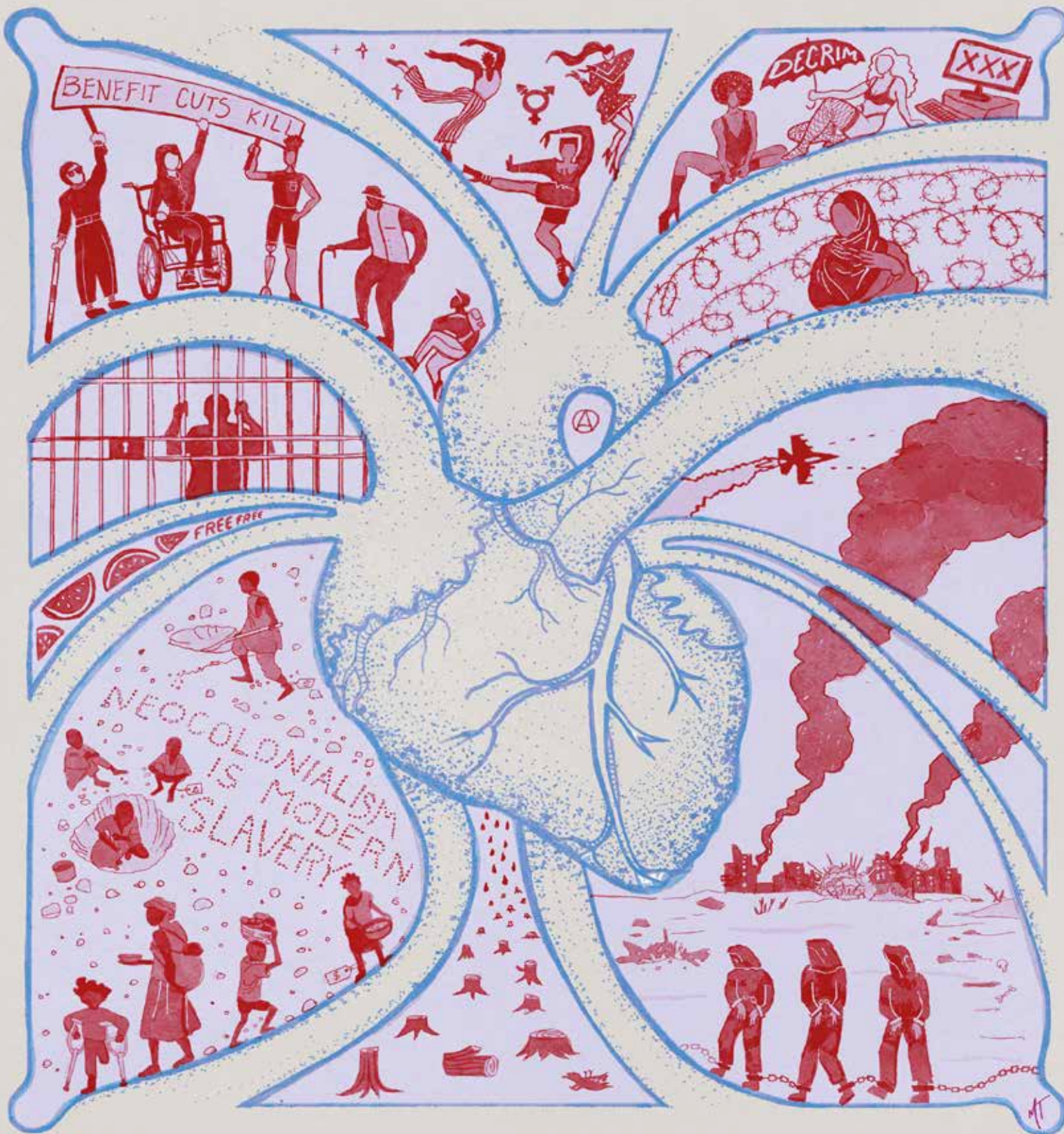
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LIFE ON THE MARGINS

DO IT YOURSELF

Bentley, a former coal-mining town just north of Doncaster, South Yorkshire, is among the 10% most impoverished areas in the UK. Life expectancy is a full decade less than the national average. This is due, in part, to high rates of nutrition-related illnesses such as childhood obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. All of which can be directly linked to food poverty.

Food is a central weapon in capitalism's war against the poor. As grime-punk pairing Bob Vylan put it in *Health is Wealth* (a three-minute musical manifesto on food, health and power):

"The killing of kids with £2 chicken and chips

Is a tactic of war waged on the poor

Can't save wages on slave wages

And you don't think fresh fruit with your face on the floor"

Under capitalism, life matters only to the degree that it can increase profits. Capitalist society is habitually abusive to anyone who is not actively producing for, consuming for, selling for, marketing for, or protecting the interests of capitalism. The young, old, poor and marginalised are supported to the degree that they remain potential cogs in the economic wheel and/or that money can still be made by supporting them. Expanding profits from the care system is a central factor in the current strategy, making local authorities bankrupt, with all but the most central services being privatised for the benefit of capitalists.

But capitalism can never "care." The bottom line of profit and growth does not allow for putting things like happiness before money. In fact, a care economy would be the very antithesis of the capitalist money/debt economy, which is exactly why anarchists need to be fighting to build it. The State has also proved itself unable to provide adequate levels of care for human beings. Nobody is coming to save us. If we want a better, braver, brighter, happier, greener world, we must build it ourselves.

Luckily, there are pockets of people around the country who are doing exactly that. Eight years ago, we created the anarchist-led Bentley Urban Farm (BUF),



an upcycled community market garden project, as a direct response to the problem of food poverty in Doncaster. We taught people how to grow their own food in raised beds made from waste materials and even purchased some of the produce for a veg box scheme.

Ironically, as self-confessed anarcho-pragmatists, we have been doing this on land "owned" by the council. Years of ideologically-led economic restructuring conducted in the name of "austerity" have created cracks in the system where we can begin to build alternatives. This could be an agreement with the local authorities, where ticking a range of green boxes for the council allows us to get away with more openly anarchist initiatives on a council owned site. Or it could be a more traditional anarchist solution like the newly-founded Sheffield Action Resource Centre (ShARC), which has squatted a large, abandoned local authority property in the interests of sociopolitical change and for the benefit of residents.

Along with creating physical opportunities, neoliberalism has created political vacuums that have left communities hungry for alternative politics. Under Blair, the first thing New Labour did was to politically abandon traditional working class "red wall" communities like Doncaster. He even used John Prescott — New Labour's

equivalent to hapless cartoon character Andy Capp — as a mouthpiece to tell us that we're "all middle class now". As if simply adopting a different class perspective was a solution in itself.

The far right have been much better than the left at taking advantage, whether overtly with populist parties like the BNP, UKIP and Reform or covertly through the conspiracy-led, alternative politics which dominate social media threads.

The people who are attracted to conspiracy fantasies are not necessarily attracted to overt right-wing ideology. They are much more likely to be disillusioned, traumatised or simply aware of the urgent need for social change. If, like much of the authoritarian left (who usually have scant regard for the messy reality of life in working class communities), we simply snub them as fascists or loons, we surrender those people to the right for the sake of ideological purity. Instead, we should be countering baseless propaganda with lived illustrations of real societal change.

Our mission, as anarchists, is to live out our beliefs in the messy, imperfect and often uncomfortable reality of everyday life. Projects like *A Commune In The North*, for example, which is building upon BUF's work, creating new ways to meet essential needs. With a long term goal of creating an egalitarian, income-sharing, anti-capitalist, anti-oppressive eco-commune for up to 200 people, we need to build more autonomous, ecologically sensitive systems with shorter supply chains to meet our requirements.

These systems cannot and should not exist in isolation. They will act as a bridge between the commune, the wider community and the outside world. The network of co-ops needed to make this happen will create a solidarity economy at the heart of an economically marginalised community and will give us the opportunity to show the community as a whole that we do not need capitalism or the State.

~ Warren Draper

acommuneinthenorth.org.uk



A TOO-COMMON PROBLEM

Here's a story of someone whose life doesn't matter. A 72-year-old, undocumented migrant. Paperless. Trained in his own country as a joiner — a celebrated one, according to his family. Over time, a majority of his siblings move to Britain along with his mum, frail and dying. Tragedy strikes — his beautiful wife dies young. So he too embarks on the journey. Cash in hand jobs, finding friends, crafting and engineering in his own time.

A shy man, holding on to his own language whilst slowly learning English. Making jokes in a second language is difficult, but he tries. His religion keeps him going — the structure of the prayers provide a structure to his day, a way to connect with others outside his family.

His health deteriorates over 20 years. Diabetes, heart issues, dementia. With no kids of his own his siblings do their best to help him navigate the system. His sister, a British citizen since the '90s, has access to NHS healthcare. Her stroke during the pandemic left her bed bound, forgetting all her English, hardly able to speak or eat. By the time her family could visit (restrictions in place), her hair was matted — she hadn't been washed, she hadn't had her teeth brushed or hands cleaned. They did change her nappy though — twice a day. Small mercies. This is a woman who, despite having



citizenship, still lacked proper care because she couldn't advocate for herself. If this is what she would experience, how would it be for her kid brother?

Worse. Complications due to diabetes and ad hoc doctor care meant his right leg would need amputation. Then, he suffered a cardiac arrest and a stroke, which set off early signs of dementia. His infection returned, requiring more of his leg to be amputated. A care package was put in place, then cancelled. No national insurance number, no carers. NHS physio once every two months, visits from the district nurse, and eventually he ends up in a hospital bed in a small living room in North London, sharing a room with his older sister. Now they are both bed bound, cared for by their younger sibling. A spritely 67-year-old widow with two grown up kids who don't do nearly their fair share to help. More strokes, and now gangrene in his other leg — but this amputation is one too many. He's given three months to live.

This story is about a life that doesn't matter.

Of course, it matters to me; he's my uncle. He has value in our hearts, he exists

on this planet. But outside of our small group his life, in the eyes of the State, does not matter. In the abstract I can name the structural causes that have led to his life not mattering — the usual neoliberal cocktail. But knowing this hasn't changed the material reality that he has three months to live. What does it mean to have your life matter in the wake of this? Matter enough to not be killed or neglected by the State until too late. Matter enough to be afforded dignity as a human being. No chance.

This is not the world we live in. Does anyone's life matter anymore? My uncle sits in a long list of people whose lives don't — from Grenfell to Gaza. It is hard to make sense of lives mattering when they can be neglected and destroyed so easily.

When you see how other lives are treated as a society and, in contrast, how yours, a well treated life, is given space, then the distinctions between people become arbitrary. I wonder if Aaron Bushnell contemplated this before self-immolating on 25th February 2024. His last words were a call for a free Palestine. He amplified the call of the long suffering resistance at a time when it matters. It gained traction because he, a US airman, was talking to his people. He said to them, their lives matter over there; I'll give mine to show it.

We don't need to be told by the State that our lives matter — we know. I know my uncle's life matters; even if the State denied his right to live with dignity, he will die with dignity.

We are occupied with telling the State that these lives or those lives matter, in the hope that the power they wield can be shared among us. I want to plead that rather than marching and waiting for the State to acknowledge this, with incremental laws, debates, and votes, maybe we should just act like our lives matter and take power. Easy, no?

I would wear that on a T-shirt, but in real life that's not so easy. Whatever my life is, whether it matters or not to the State, I will still end up a body in the ground. But maybe I can be counted as one of many fighting for a better world.

~ Movai Kitsoz



WHOSE LIVES MATTER (WE W

SOME WARS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

Palestine is burning. Ukraine is on fire. That's just the facts. The genocide in Gaza and the constant siege Vladimir Putin is putting Ukraine under are worthy causes to shine a spotlight on. Both conflicts have involved the deaths of untold thousands. Journalists and aid workers alike have been the victims of senseless murder by State machines insatiable for the blood of those unable to defend themselves. These are conflicts that the world has been up in arms about. While those who rule over us allow these atrocities to continue, we have made our stances clear by taking direct action to oppose our States' implicit approval of these acts.

However, if you dig (and I mean really dig) for stories that aren't getting as much coverage, you'll notice our darker-skinned comrades around the world, especially on the continent of Africa and in the Caribbean are going through just as much suffering, though with noticeably fewer eyes on them. It doesn't take a genius to understand why, but I'mma break it down in case you didn't know. I'd like to look at the world's biggest humanitarian crises and why you'll have barely heard a mention of them on the news, or even on your social media feeds.

A brief picture

In the Congo, nearly 7 million people have been internally displaced or made refugees, making it one of the largest displaced countries on planet Earth with over 25m struggling every day even to get a scrap of food in their bellies. It is the largest hunger emergency in the world by a country mile. The conflict between M23, a militant group funded by the Rwandan State, and the army of Felix Tshisekedi, the new president of Congo (who won an election that was called a farce by many election observers), is replete with extrajudicial killings and rapes committed by both sides. Since 2022, one in three children have been forced out of education and one in seven women have experienced sexual violence under the age of 18, showing plainly to

the world that two despotic dickheads with their hands on the levers of State power have almost done enough to damn a generation to poverty, illiteracy, hunger and bloodshed.

Why, you may ask? Well M23, the militant group backed by Rwanda's Paul Kagame, is mostly ethnic Tutsi, while the Congolese soldiers based in the east of the country are mostly Hutu. "Just blacks murdering each other!" you might exclaim. "Nothing to do with us". But you'd be dead wrong; it has everything to do with us, as I'll explain a little later. Another reason is the minerals, particularly coltan. Congo is one of the most mineral-rich countries on Earth, and coltan (of which 64% of the world's deposits reside in the Democratic Republic) is an absolute necessity for the production of smartphones and laptops. These minerals, as well as the labour of the Congolese who mine them (in some messed up conditions, I might add) are exploited by the State actors of its neighbours and the corporations in the West and China that go on to build our everyday luxuries and weapons of destruction.

Sudan is in equally dire straits; its slide into the status of a "failed state" was halted only by the grassroots work of Sudanese people on the ground. Rival generals have been locked in a spiral of bloodshed to gain control of the levers of power, resources and strategic importance that Sudan has. Ten million people have been displaced since the beginning of the conflict last year, making it the largest internal displacement catastrophe in the world, and 18m face starvation, making the food insecurity second only to the Congo. What's worse is that there is evidence of the ethnic cleansing of the Masalit people of West Darfur, committed by one of the forces in this conflict, the RSF (Rapid Support Force).

The genocide of the Masalit people is a stain on our collective conscience and is just as appalling as the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. The war in Sudan is exacerbated and complicated



by proxy conflicts from States which all have a vested interest, not in the people of Sudan, but in the power they can accrue. The UAE is in conflict with Saudi Arabia and Turkey against Libyan forces, Egypt against Ethiopia, and even the European war between Russia and Ukraine has spilled out into Sudan. How and why, you may ask? Well, I'll spill the tea. Omar Al-Bashir, Sudan's genocidal former authoritarian, formed the RSF as a pressure group to protect him from coups and as a rent-a-soldier to Libyan and UAE forces in their respective conflicts. After the popular Sudanese uprising, Al-Bashir was deposed. The people were, once again, betrayed by those in power, the generals in both the Sudanese military and the RSF, which led to the fighting we see today. The advanced weaponry we see in the conflict has been brought to Sudan by regimes which seek to protect their "investments" in the country, namely its massive oil and gold reserves.

"So, why have I never heard of these conflicts? Or the crisis in Haiti, which you didn't even mention?"

After all, with these conflicts, there are genocides, rampant forced migrations and upcoming or present food crises, just like

WHO ARE DARKER THAN BLUE)



Armed forces and cobalt mining in the Congo
Pics: MONUSCO

in the conflicts we've been following in Ukraine and Gaza; what is the difference? Well, these people are black. As much as we all loathe to admit in polite society, there's no difference between one dead n*gger and 1,000. In both the US and Britain, from the healthcare system (in the US, black women are four times more likely to experience complications in childbirth and die from them) to mass incarceration (despite making up 3% of the UK population, black people make up a majority of the sufferers of Britain's carceral terrorism) black lives are seen as invisible, inferior and disposable and this doesn't change when we get out of our own countries.

Remember the comment "nothing to do with us" earlier?

The ethnic tensions in both Congo and Sudan, Hutu vs Tutsi in the former, Arab and Non-Arab in the latter, have roots in British and the Belgian colonial rule. For decades they used the age-old tactic of divide and conquer, inflaming tensions between ethnic groups that did not exist beforehand. Our so-called leaders do not give a damn about people with dark skin and have shown time and again they will grind them underfoot to achieve what they need, be it minerals in Congo, gold in Sudan, or the Saudis

for the strategic importance of the Red Sea. Black bodies mean nothing to these bloodthirsty parasites, they will continue to let them pile high. And as long as we get our smartphones, laptops, cameras and electric cars, we'll be tempted to turn a blind eye too. The Global North is in debt to the Global South for the resources they extract and the labour they exploit, not only in the era of chattel slavery but today. They see the Congo and Sudan as pieces of a puzzle to be moved about in a morbid game of geopolitics, not as starving children, raped women or dying men. For every dollar raised for Ukraine in 2022, there were barely 25 cents raised for the world's ten next neglected crises combined, even with the significantly higher numbers of people in need in Sudan and Congo, because a face that is more European seems to naturally elicit more empathy. The disgusting slurs of Africans being seen as savage and conflict prone are not engaged with as issues that global capital and Western hegemony have inflicted, but as part and parcel of their very nature. So, the mainstream media gives it as little coverage as is necessary. Just blacks, nothing to worry about.

I contend that unless we see white supremacy as an integral part of the state of affairs that blinds us to the suffering of Africans and Caribbeans, in our own country and abroad, and unless we highlight these conflicts and make as much

noise as we (rightly) have for Gaza and Ukraine, the people of Congo and Sudan will never forgive us for disregarding their plight because they are of darker skin.

So what do we do my comrades, what do we do?

The lack of coverage on the catastrophes described above has hampered efforts for effective mobilisation, although both Congolese and Sudanese communities have rallied in their capitals and elsewhere. We have to start by listening to diaspora communities, many of which obtain the most up-to-date information on conflicts and their subsequent humanitarian crises. Spreading the word, in person or on social media, is critical. If we are able to make the plights in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Sudan even half as visible as the plights in Gaza and Ukraine, we will have done what the British Establishment could not — challenged our biases and not privileged one catastrophe over another.

Mutual Aid groups like Goma Actif, in Congo's main eastern city of Goma, which has existed since 2020, weathering the coronavirus pandemic, a volcanic eruption and the barbarism of M23, succeeding where many bourgeois international aid groups have failed. Sudan, since the people's uprising against Al-Bashir, has shown some of the most exciting prospects for mutual aid in the region. Spontaneous, grassroots organisations, known as Emergency Response Rooms (ERR) work in hospitals, neighbourhood clinics and communal kitchens helping to ease the pressure on those hardest hit in both Khartoum and Darfur. Every ERR that is set up is unique, flexible to the situations on the ground and completely non-hierarchical.

Spreading the word about organisations like Goma Actif in Congo or the different ERR's and grassroots groups in Sudan is vital, as is helping to donate to them wherever possible.

~ Daniel Adedirant



FLOWERS & FIRE

What does it mean to be a trans anarchist at this point in the 21st century? What does it mean to be a white working class English trans person living in relative security in London at this point of the global climate catastrophe, where wars rage across continents, where the police force of the rogue superpower USA kills black children with impunity whilst another rogue state armed by that superpower kills Palestinian children with impunity?

How can I survey this death spiral of capitalism, colonialism and tyranny, then dare to say “and trans rights”? Yet I must. For even with genocide in Palestine and Congo, the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and the Uyghurs, the continuing erasure of indigenous peoples, we must speak of trans, nonbinary and intersex people. Because our histories, diverse and complex, echo through history before European colonisation, the rise of capital or the State, and the stifling rise of cis-hetero-patriarchy. Our history is a stump on the road of so-called progress where binaries of sex, race, and gender are brought into sharp relief.

As an anarchist, as a nonbinary intersex, pansexual fem, my siblings and I across millennia are evidence that the forced imposition of discrete categories of sex/gender and “otherness” is there to repress free existence and limit our emotional, intellectual and social selves. In our lived experience, as we refuse glib classifications of male/female, man/woman, masculine/feminine – our acts of resistance are integral parts of the kindling of revolutions.

Anarchy itself is not unchanging. “Truths” are not set in stone; anarchy evolves — not just more cis white European men but other voices, other lives. All the iterations of anarchy from women (trans and cis), the global majority, the colonised world, in non-European languages, and yes, from trans, nonbinary and intersex people. We walk our truths in all cultures and communities, yet we are weaponised to police the lives of all. The repression of our existence is used as a tool to beat out the borders of gender and sexuality, masculinity and femininity. Yet over and again, people, politicians, religious leaders, doctors, and the



“gender criticals” reserve their most brutal State sanctioned abuse for our children. In the so-called UK, trans, nonbinary, gender-diverse and intersex children are being targeted in schools, the healthcare system, the media, social services, the family and the political class.

Our beautiful, fragile, fabulous children are venturing out into the world, realising who they are and naming it in ways people my age cannot imagine having the courage to do. And in response, they are being victimised and abused on a structural level.

In the UK, our teens and children are to be denied any trans-supportive healthcare; they are only to be allowed puberty blockers if they agree to be part of State sponsored research projects. The secretary of state for education has proposed a policy to instruct schools to deadname and misgender children, to inform their potentially hostile parents, and to deny them lifesaving information. The war waged on us is not merely a “culture war” – it is visceral, damaging and cruel. And the worst part is that we know this gender fascism is not genuinely to protect any children. We and our children

are simply collateral damage, weapons of mass distraction.

Yet we persist.

The global solidarity shown to Palestinians, from the South African government’s interventions to the blockading of weapons manufacturers, from mass marches to individual boycotts, from the disillusionment in Keir Starmer and Joe Biden’s voter base to damaged corporate profits. This is what resistance looks like. And in this climate, acts of solidarity can be very small indeed — just asking about and getting my pronouns right is an act of resistance and solidarity.

I’m an older anarchist who has seen the flow and ebb of populist left parties and watched helplessly as millions throw themselves into the futile abyss of democratic socialism. But I take courage and strength from the refusal of communities, cultures and individuals who keep choosing freedom and the sheer audacity of trusting each other’s love.

In the face of a genocide happening before our eyes, it is hard to remember that nothing lasts forever. How everything can change on the spin of a ninepence. But every day, a child realises that they can live as something other than the sex they were assigned at birth. And in these moments, brand new worlds are born.

~ Kell w Farshéa

Kell (they) is a poet, writer and historian. They have been an anarchist and activist for more than four decades.



LIFE AT LUTZERATH

Back in 2020 the locals of Lutzerath, a small municipality of around 1,400 people in Western Germany, sprang to action alongside climate protectors and began to resist multinational energy firm RWE, which wanted to strip-mine much of the local area for coal. It would become an iconic multi-year battle for the soul of the region, raising serious questions about Germany's self-image as a leader in the fight against climate chaos.

Initially, the protectors were blocking a road RWE had its eyes on, and this action later transformed into a roadside camp. Over the next couple of years the movement grew organically. Comrades from near and far heard a calling and came running. With numbers came the expansion of the occupation, which created this inclusive hub for international activists who fight for climate justice. "One struggle, One Fight".

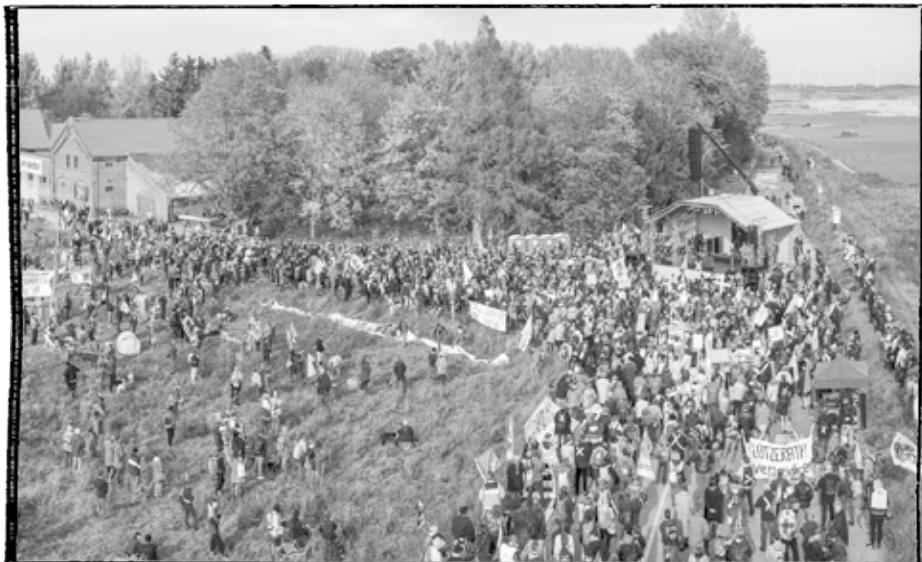
As time went on the company struggled to deal with an increasing number of occupiers until, infamously, in 2023 it faced off against thousands of occupiers and forced people out of their homes last year in a violent mass eviction.

If you saw the Mud Wizard meme, that was Lutzerath. And Tempest Valentine was there.

The alarm rings. It's 1am, 0°C outside, and I'm forcing myself out of bed for a night shift to protect my comrades, stumbling about in the dark, trying to find my thermals, jumper, fleece, and salopettes but attempting my darndest not to wake my roomies. Bear in mind that I'm totally night blind and utterly clumsy. Dressed and ready to embark on my mission to get the best coffee in town before clocking in.

Finally, my shift begins, and that 750ml of Nespresso will be very handy, trust me. The fire burns away in the background as I and others build lifelong bonds. A car may drop by because they are lost; we will help redirect them back. All of us are standing by in case anything menacing approaches, ready to sound the alarm and defend. Luckily, this night shift ends peacefully, for a live occupation.

Standing side by side with comrades



Pic: Alle Dörfer

from across the globe fighting against a system, the destruction of our planet, and the police empowers me greatly, giving me a new lease on life. Doing nothing allows the oppressive State to further our suffering and weaken our resolve. This is me taking control of a dire situation. Coming to occupations gives me hope that we will have a better and equal future for all one day. Coming into these spaces allows us to see how a society could be. It offers us hope at a time when politicians are deciding the fate of us all with only profit in mind.

"I fight cops, but food destroys me!" I scream in the 'warm room', frustrated that all I want to do more than anything is eat some food. I desire nothing more than to feel the heat it will later provide me — to just be able to function and to thrive! Every single comrade supports me in that moment. I'll forever be grateful for their friendship. For me, this place has been deeply healing.

Everyone here is willing to pass knowledge on for no personal gain. Learning could be free and with no strings attached; imagine that?!



Abbie Hoffman, the 20th-century social activist who came up with "flower power", believed we should "steal it all" — including our education. Eliminate the capitalistic, business-motivated middleman who dominates our corrupt education system, specifically universities. For many people like myself who grew up in hardened austerity under the Tories, this led to our education being piss poor and lacking opportunities.

People believe if you study and work hard, you will be able to escape poverty, shorthanded as "the American dream". I call bullshit, as have many other revolutionaries throughout history and indeed today. Since getting into activism I've been offered so many amazing opportunities, whereas in mainstream society, doors were slammed shut in my face.

No place is perfect—even the progressive need to be more progressive. Every occupation is phenomenal in its own right. Yet, they all still have so much to learn from other sites, including occupations contemporary and historical, even the ones who had struggles, because we all have much more to learn, but it's a start. Conflicts arise everywhere; you learn, and you grow as a collective and individually. It's just the beginning. It's better than what we have. The revolution doesn't just happen overnight. Every revolution throughout history took time.

~ Tempest Valentine

THE PERMAGON: PRISON

A succession of people have been jailed over the last few years for taking direct action against companies which participate in selling arms to Israel, which are then used to kill children in Gaza. **Stav** writes about being one such prisoner of conscience.

**HMP Eastwood Park
London, December 2022**

In the summer of 2022, I gained insight into the British penal system when I was remanded to Her Majesty's Prison Eastwood Park. I was sent to jail for one month along with eight other activists following direct action in Bristol against Elbit Systems, Israel's largest private arms company. During the month I spent in the penitentiary, I documented everything I saw, heard, felt, and thought as a form of resistance – knowing that whatever sufferings the British prison might inflict on my comrades and me, it would pale in comparison to what my Palestinian friends had undergone while being tortured in the apartheid prisons operated by the Israeli "Shabas" (Prison Service).

The diary begins with a real-time account of my experiences from the cellar of Bristol's Magistrates Court and later from Eastwood Park prison. It was initially written in Hebrew to prevent guards from deciphering the text. I later translated my notes into English during the hours I spent under curfew, cuffed by an electronic tag.

As I await trial for burglary and criminal damage, the struggle against the oppressive British authorities and their complicity in the crimes of apartheid and colonisation in Palestine only grows stronger as more and more people resist and take direct action to dismantle and disarm Israel's war machine. Resistance will eventually win, and apartheid will be abolished.

Until the last factory falls

Until the last drone is smashed

Until the prisoners of occupation are set free!

May 19th 2022

"I'm so proud to have been standing side by side with you for something meaningful. If this is the only print we'll

leave in this world, then it was worth it. You are beautiful inside out, a woman who carries the fire. I'll get the details for you. All my love," wrote comrade Jane on a note she smuggled for me.

Around 6pm. It's a late afternoon hour in HMP Eastwood Park. The comrades are facing release, and Lisa, in the nearby cell, is suffering. We are here because of virtue, not vice, I tell her. The State, she says, will always protect the powerful, and she's right. I must also sober up and become realistic about the prospect of spending a lot of time here. Still, if this were the only thing I'd leave behind me in the world, so be it. The only beauty that exists in the world belongs to the lovers of justice and freedom.

Outside my window there's an amazing spring day, but we are not allowed to leave our cells. In the sky there are fetters-clouds, but we can only see them through the double-glazed glass.

Evening comes, and Lisa gets bail. I'm so happy for her. I hope also to be released soon, but I will maintain my inner peace no matter what happens.

Freedom is bound by pain, and nothing can be born without pain.

The guards had mercy on us earlier and took us out to the yard after we'd missed the opportunity to go along with everybody else. Jane and I were jogging and exercising together. We also talked. One of the guards had asked us if we were sisters. "No," we answered, but in my heart, I knew she was better than a sister to me. Sisters share a womb, but we share love and fate.

She and Lisa will leave in a few moments, and I'll remain by myself. Yet I am not alone, but among all the lovers of freedom, among those who give their lives for her.

Lisa has left the cell, and the guards don't let her share anything with me – not even the stamped envelopes she had been given. The arrest and imprisonment were hard on her, so I'm happy she got bail. The rest of the girls imprisoned in the unit call me immediately after Lisa's release. They call me "Lisa's bea" and make sure I'm okay. They are very sweet and tell me I'm not alone. It seems Jane has also released,



and I am thinking of the push-ups we did together under the vast English sky as the guards were staring at us. What a beautiful sight to have experienced. If this is the only print we'll leave in this world, let it be it, as Jane wrote.

Like the birds that flew in the sky above Bristol's prison yard, my soul, too, wanders above and afar.

The days preceding the arrest were among the most beautiful days of my life. In a nearby park, we practised self-defence with our comrades. The sun shone on us in the late afternoon light, until suddenly, a marvellous sight of pure love revealed itself to me. On the same evening, we were laughing together,

AND SISTERHOOD



and when morning came, we headed to Bristol to take the factory down. That night, I didn't sleep at all. It felt like the night before a big school exam.

And indeed, it is a test – one of character.

One of the comrades had to wee in the barricade room of the factory we'd occupied. We carved out a plastic bottle so she could pee inside. To protect her privacy, we all turned away, facing the wall, and sang the partisan song, "Bella, Ciao!"

May 20th 2022

I've started running around in the yard in endless circles to keep mentally and physically fit and signal the others – you'd better chase someone else. The push-ups and exercises also signal to the guards and prisoners that I'm stronger and faster than them, but in my heart, I'm aware of my weakness. Now I'm looking out the window, and it's my third day in Eastwood Park. I remember the ride to court in the prisoners' transport van.

Going on that Mephistophelian device was a shocking experience. I wasn't prepared to be transferred to the court in such a sadistic vehicle, but rather in "normal" or "regular" police cars. When I was loaded like cattle on that huge mobile prison truck, I was shocked to see Charly, a sweet boy, sitting in the narrow iron cell, staring out of the hatch at me. I greeted and smiled at him, and immediately I heard someone shouting "Stav, Stav" from the other side. It was comrade Lisa – whose angelic look was in total contrast to the tiny iron cells we were put in. I asked her immediately who else was in the van, and she said that R and Jane were here. I then noticed R and asked him if everything is okay, and we sent each other kisses. "Be strong", I told him.

After being unloaded from the truck, we were thrown into the dock to face the judges following a long wait in a 2x2 square metre cell. Three pigs sat between us in the dock but failed to separate us. I'd written to R in Hebrew on a paper I had that "Everything is going to be fine", asking "How are you?"

When we were led out of the chamber and taken back to the arrest cells due to some technical problem (it was nearly impossible to hear or understand anything of what was going on in court), R replayed in Hebrew, "Let's hope so [that everything is going to be all right]". After that, we were taken back to the main courtroom, where the judges presided. By then, R had

also gotten a pencil and paper, and wrote in Hebrew: "We'll be sitting [in jail] for a little while, and that will be it." After the court had rendered its decision we were taken down to the holding cells, but just before being taken to the corridor where my cell was, I looked back to see him and shouted, "Bella, Ciao!". He replied, "the 15th then!" – the date of our bail hearing. He was utterly composed and calm about everything that just went down. I hope his family can stand his absence and the fact that he is injured.

After the hearing at the Magistrates court only we, Lisa, Jane, and Eden, were led back to the prisoner transport van. Through the thick double-glazed iron window, the skies were coloured with dazzling pink and orange and more beautiful than ever. I stared above me at the sky as if trying to engrave the colours in my mind, thinking I might not see the sky for a while and that I might have to spend a long time behind walls.

Yet how beautiful the world can be, even when people are led to their confinement. The love of humans, the love of my comrades and of R, reaches far beyond the material realm. I know R is imprisoned far away, but in our spirit, we are united in the love of freedom. The love of freedom is stronger than handcuffs, chains, and walls. Fetters are material objects, but the love of freedom is invisible and cannot be broken. The liberation of people from their chains will be only through the love of freedom and in love – and it is the same love that saves me now from the grey walls and the sounds of slamming doors. These walls have now become no more than parts of the palace of glory for the great spirit of freedom.

My inner freedom carries me now way beyond the barbed wire – far beyond the trees and the vast fields outside my window. I hope that the sky above will look kindly down on us.

~ Stav



A PERFIDIOUS BASTARD'S

Case Sample: Disabled People

This document is designed as a guide only. Please feel free to be as much of a perfidious bastard as you want. What are they going to do about it?

The activities outlined in this document should form the core activities of any prolonged assault. But get creative with them.

It's advisable to implement the activities outlined here in concert with each other. Hit the fuckers at all times from all sides.

Ensure you are aligned to a policy platform, departmental resources and human capacity before embarking on this mission. It saves time in the long run and makes sure you can concentrate on getting as many of the fuckers as you can.

Buy in is a critical factor to get right from the outset.

Ensure you bring to bear all the political, economic and cultural power at your disposal.

Develop a narrative that fulfils a political objective, for example, if you need to normalise huge spending cuts. Point to these fuckers for being lazy bastards and costing the country too much. People hate to see money being spent on what they perceive to be lazy bastards.

Make sure the main political parties are on board. This is easily done. The harder you kick the poorest people, the more votes that are in it. Nobody likes to think of themselves as at the bottom of the pile socially, so they'll always vote for you, thinking it's never going to happen to them. Mugs.

Get the media involved; they love an easily identifiable villain. Feed them with shite and make sure it's ubiquitous and sustained. Develop a Nudge Unit within government corridors whose job it is to fashion a new frame in which we talk about disabled people. Terms like "workshy" are proven winners. Gets the natives all riled up. Once they're onside, you can start to roll out your plan. Ensure you keep feeding the media plenty of sound bites and "exclusives". It makes them feel important.

It's really useful if you can get a few collaborators on your side. Get a few of the "big hitters" — organisations generally

perceived as allies to the disabled community, but in truth, are paternal and there to keep them dependent on services rather than empower them. Use our old faithfuls. Dangle a few million pounds in front of them, get them involved in a few meetings, and, of course, throw in the odd MBE here or there for the leadership. They love an MBE.

Disability Rights

Let's start how we mean to go on.

Write meaningless shite that can't be enforced, and if it was, it wouldn't actually make any difference. Conflate it with other guff about "equality".

Ignore international legal obligations to the point where you are the first government in the world to be found committing "grave and systematic violations of disabled people's human rights." Then just point out it was "foreigners" complaining about how we run things, and that'll be that. We hate foreigners unless we're robbing or killing them. But that's a different guide. Stay focused.

If you really want to wind up the crips, write blatantly shite laws, for example here's some abortion rights, except for the future "severely handicapped." If you find yourself potentially landed with them then kill as many as you can, beyond the rules for everyone else. Right up to the delivery suite, in fact. For added value, pit them right up against a woman's right to choose; that'll fuck em and distract people from what's actually underlying this law.

Now, they might want to challenge their rights (or lack of them) legally. Be prepared for this. Take away legal aid.

They might look to bodies which monitor human rights, like the Equality and Human Rights Commission, so capture it, then sack all the crips working there. That way you make sure anything it does happen to say is bland, beige and bollocks.

If, as a last resort, they end up organising a voice of their own and taking to the streets — we're not having that, lads. Stuff the harshest anti-protest laws we've ever seen down their throats. Break their wheelchairs. Section them. Arrest their support workers. Take their benefits.



Their cars. Threaten to take their kids if you need to. Whatever it takes to get them off the streets and front lines.

And build fully accessible jails for the bastards, in case they get too uppity and those measures alone don't work.

Housing

You might think if we're building them fully accessible jails, we'd be building fully accessible housing as well. And you'd be wrong.

One per cent. That's what you give 'em if you want to wage war in full view. Make sure that in a country where about one in six people are disabled, 99% of the housing stock isn't actually accessible. Develop future housing plans where you don't even mention it. Privatised the housing market and give private landlords no responsibility (we aren't turkeys voting for Christmas here lads).

Put access to aides and adaptations which might make a difference out of their reach. They hate that. Plus, they'll be too busy dragging their arses around their inaccessible "homes" (snigger) to do anything about it.

Education

Segregate Segregate Segregate.

Keep these kids far away from your kids.

GUIDE TO MAKING MISERY



Pretend like there's no segregation going on, but then scratch below the surface and you find that in 2024, more disabled kids than ever are being "educated" in segregated settings.

Then, pretend you have systems in place to support disabled kids while in education. But in practice, more than 95% of kids who are entitled to this support get the square root of fuck all.

Call this inclusive, with a straight face.

Health

Ha.

Benefits

Ahhh, the jewel in the crown.

Build a system so punitive, so humiliating, and so dehumanising that just the letters dropping through the letterbox drive people to suicide.

Make loads of hoops for them to jump through. Set them hoops on fire. Make sticks to beat them through those hoops. Set them sticks on fire. Blame them for burning themselves. Then gaslight them

into believing there never were any fires. Convince them (and everyone else) that they're the ones telling lies.

If somehow any cunt survives all that, give them a pittance at the end. Make it feel like you're doing them a favour. Then fine and sanction them for any shite you can. Like being dead.

For full effect, give everyone a stick and let them beat the crips on benefits with it, until they're crips themselves. Then take that stick off them, take their benefits off them for having a stick. Cunts.

Social Care

You're going to love this one. Social care is the number one cost for every single local council across Britain. Now, even though half the people receiving it are disabled, don't even mention them. Completely write them out of their own story. Why would you acknowledge they exist here when we try so hard not to everywhere else?

Turn it into a postcode lottery. Heads we win, tails they lose.

Make it so that fewer than four in 10 get any support at all. And so that fewer than four in 10 get the actual support they need.

Cut council funding so that after ten years they get £3 for every £10 they were getting at the beginning.

You don't get a "shit or sandwich" care service by funding something reasonable that supports people to live actual lives. Tell the public that two visits a day for a shit or a sandwich (never both) is the best we can do.

Don't worry about a 4% rise in demand year on year over the same period. Remember the "workshy, lazy bastards" mantra and let the media do the heavy lifting on that.

And here's the kicker — we farm out the real profit-makers to "homes" run by corporations.

Pile them high, stack them deep. Warehouse them when you can and make sure our friends in the private healthcare industry cash in. Otherwise, what's the point in even having disableds?

We could go on. Forever.

Build a transport system where only half the stations are accessible. Where about half the trains are. But bury that information so deep you have to have a degree in websiteology to find it. (And let's be honest, after 15 years of our segregated education system, these fuckers better not be even able to read).

Toxify the world of work: Inaccessible workplaces, lower wages, and cut support funding like Access to Work to the bone. (Make sure you keep calling them workshy all the while; otherwise, people might think there are actual routes to employment when we starve them out of benefits.)

And if they make their way through all that, make sure over half of employers don't want them anyways.

But look, you get the message by now. Stick it to them, nobody gives a shite. There's a good chance they might just fucking disappear.

And if they don't, welllllll — the next prime minister in waiting absolutely loves a bit of eugenics. Assisted Suicide, they call it. He's fucking mad for it. And it's coming. So, one way or another, we'll get them.

~ Andy Greene, DPAC



ONLINE SAFETY ACT: A

I wish I could say I was writing this article with a sense of justice, a burning passion to fix something broken and create positive change. Those were the drivers of my activism 10 years ago – I still believed we weren't totally fucked. I've since seen the advancement of the digital age encroaching exponentially on our privacy, from our finances to our romantic lives, with Big Data and hyper-surveillance eroding our civil liberties year by year. As a sex worker, I've had an insight into the ways digital spaces have become toxic and hostile to those who exist outside the current State and economic hegemonies.

There was a period of about five years from 2013-18 when being a sex worker on the internet was fun. Not merely because it was an effective way to find, track, and screen clients – increasing our safety and visibility – but because social media was a tool for sex workers to find each other, build community, and just ... fucking share memes. In 2013, I co-founded a sex worker-led organisation, East London Strippers Collective (ELSC), by starting a Facebook page. Back then social media was an effective strategy for building power among community members.

There used to be an incredibly active network, a private Facebook group called Women's Work, for strippers and sex workers to share information and talk shit about bad clients and clubs, giving essential feedback about industry operators. It can't be underestimated how valuable peer networks like this are, open-sourcing searchable data for those seeking to avoid risk in the sex industry. Peer networks are harm-reduction. In 2019, this group, which had thousands of members globally by this point, was deleted – no warning from the tech giant we all relied on, no reason given. It's just one example, but there have been countless instances of sex workers being erased in a click, our visibility and presence online snuffed out.

There is a political reason for this; in 2018 the US passed laws called FOSTA/SESTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act and the Stop Enabling Sex Trafficking Act, federal and state laws, respectively). They made firms based in the US criminally liable

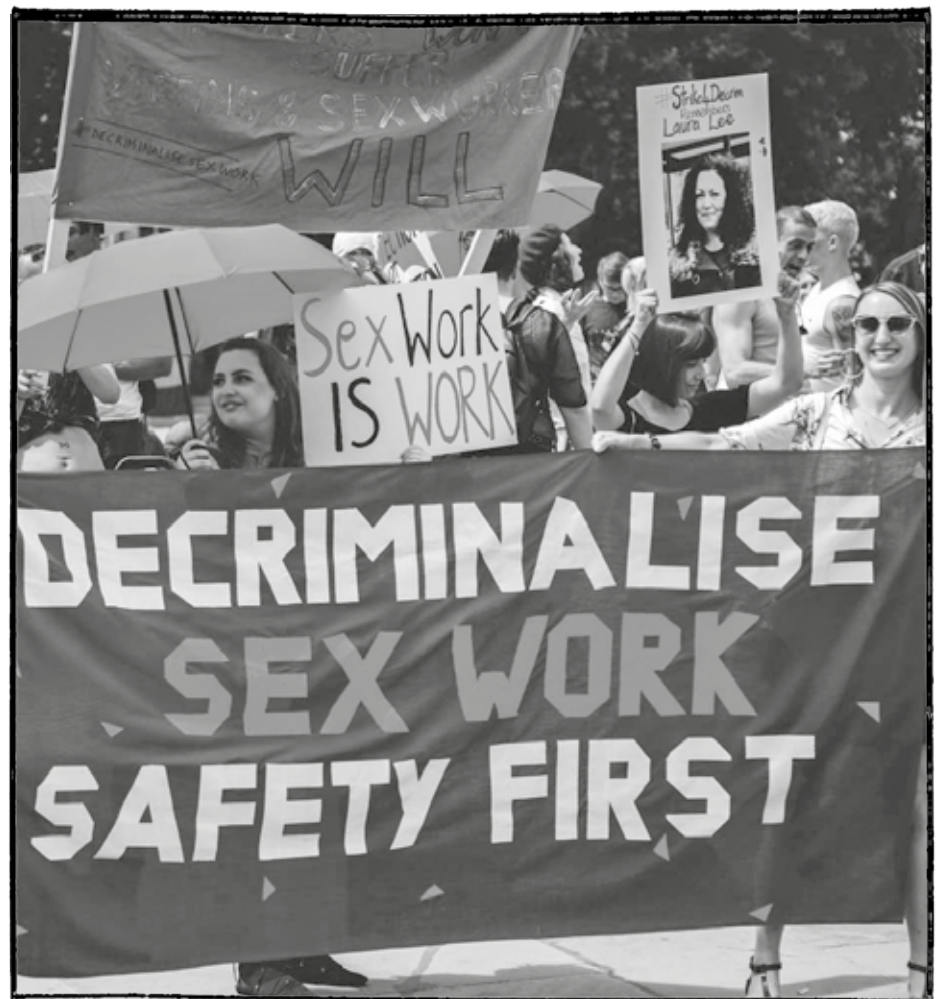
for the activities on their platform, thus fuelling a sudden moral panic, which saw the mass deletion of sex workers accounts and pages; even private messages. By removing and deleting reliable resources that sex workers themselves had carefully nurtured over many years, the impact of FOSTA/SESTA had the opposite effect of its stated purpose, censoring and curtailing harm-reduction and therefore leaving sex workers more vulnerable.

Sex workers in the US who had relied on online ad listings to find clients were turning to street work. Organisations such as COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, an organisation founded by Margot St. James in 1973) reported anecdotal rises in violence against sex workers, with predatory clients feeling more emboldened to violate boundaries. All the qualitative research, including a paper

published in peer-reviewed academic journal *Anti-Trafficking Review**, has shown that since FOSTA/SESTA was ratified, sex workers have suffered more negative consequences than positive.

I remember very specifically when the tide changed on social media. It's not a coincidence to me that these are the years Andrew Tate finessed his craft before launching Hustler University in 2021, teaching men how to identify, pursue and coerce women online who fit the profile of someone they could manipulate; young, hot, and financially precarious. The ELSC Instagram (an account that literally calls out abuses in the sex industry) was approached by creepy dudes offering to "look after" women, whose private accounts showed nothing but predictable profile pictures of a Bugatti or Maserati.

This is the climate into which the



Sex workers protest in London in 2018

Pic: juno mac/CC

SEX WORKER'S VIEW

Online Safety Act 2023 is being delivered. The internet has become, like everywhere else, hostile and treacherous for sex workers to navigate. We are not welcomed by mainstream online platforms, which simply do not understand how we create and build our own strategies for power and safety amongst ourselves.

The Online Safety Act 2023 will impact sex workers' incomes, safety, and visibility. That's not a piece of news or a polemic statement – it's an objective reality. The legislation is the latest in a long line of historical laws that restrict sex workers' movements, freedoms, and civil liberties. And, like clockwork, as with all other previous laws, it was created by policy-makers who have little to no contact with, or any lived experience of, sex workers or the sex industry besides the odd stray punter with a political career.

For a run down of historical laws that aim to "prevent" harm but have in fact been harmful to sex workers, look no further than the Contagious Diseases Act 1866 which gave police new powers to determine who was a prostitute, forced suspected women to register with the police and submit to invasive medical examinations, and gave magistrates new powers to detain and sentence women in asylums for up to three months. Or the Sexual Offences Act 1959, which criminalised brothels but never legally defined them, leaving it to be haggled over in case law which found "premises only become a brothel when more than one [person] uses premises for the purposes of prostitution, either simultaneously or one at a time"*** meaning any two sex workers who choose to work together somewhere for their own safety can be punished with up to seven years in prison. Or the Policing And Crime Act 2009, which made an absolute pig's ear of trying to introduce a licensing regime for strip clubs. It only served to give councils and local authorities more powers to either restrict Sexual Entertainment Venue licenses (thus driving stripping/lapdancing underground by criminalising it) or create

monopolies by licensing only a chosen few premises – severely restricting workers options, as they could no longer use their freedom of movement as a labour force to agitate for improved conditions.

Sex worker-led organisations have been sounding the alarm for several years already. On March 4th, an online conference was organised by committee members of the trade union branch, Sex Workers United. The conference was called "Challenging Sex Worker Invisibility: Actioning the Case for Sexual Services Protections in the Online Safety Act 2023". Someone I look up to as a mentor in the movement, Nikki Adams, a spokesperson for the English Collective of Prostitutes, spoke at the event. She said:

"We met with OFCOM in April 2022; we told them our concerns. They found it interesting; it was a good meeting, but fundamentally, nothing has changed. I know (broadcasting watchdog) Ofcom has strived to reassure people that [the act] won't result in sex workers' adverts being removed. But in our view that does not take into consideration the sexist and racist stereotyping that sex workers are subjected to, particularly migrant sex workers, and the vested interests involved in promoting a particular kind of anti-trafficking agenda... the police [are] dependent on a lot of that anti-trafficking narrative to increase their budgets and there's a whole lobby of people that are determined to promote misinformation to push forward the agenda of increased criminalisation."

I'm only one sex worker among many who has been trying to report on the failures of policies on sex work. It turns out that to succeed in media as an investigative journalist, one has to remain indifferent and impartial to their subject. As someone who has publicly outed myself as a sex worker, I have tarnished my own voice and ability to be taken seriously, at least within legacy media circles. There's a reason we sex workers are so salty. Because try as we might, our voices go unacknowledged by the journalistic

classes, whose mainstream feminism has long dominated public discourse about the sex industry by repeating the mantra "sex work is commercial sexual exploitation", with policy-makers following suit. The Radical Feminist Left has unapologetically named us "the pimp lobby" without any sense of irony over the ways the laws and policies they have fought for have, in almost every case, doubled down on the oppressive and abusive treatment of sex workers by the rest of society, merely amplifying the ways in which we can be mistreated and denigrated, not reducing them.

So, this is why I struggle to remain hopeful. The more I see the layers of dreadful misrepresentation, misinformation and mishandling of legal processes with real-life, real-world consequences, the more I want to retreat to the forest. It takes an extraordinary amount of time and resources to investigate and understand the complexities of the sex industry, how it works and who is using it – work that anyone charged with creating and enforcing policy should do and be held accountable for.

Mercifully, thanks to the emergence of sex worker visibility in recent years, particularly on the internet, more individuals are beginning to be able to conceptualise sex workers as people doing a job who deserve safety and rights at work just like anyone else. More people are dabbling with forms of sex work now more than ever before, and therefore, the circle of those with some form of lived experience of the sex industry is widening. This means more people can relate to voices from within sex work when they declare sex work is work and the future of the sex industry must be worker led. "Nothing About Us Without Us" has never meant more to me than it does now.

~ Stacey Clare

Co-founder of ELSC, Co-Creator of "Ask A Stripper" and Author of *The Ethical Stripper* (2022),



*D Blunt and A Wolf, 'Erased: The impact of FOSTA-SESTA and the removal of Backpage on sex workers', Anti-Trafficking Review, issue 14, 2020, pp. 117-121,

** "Premises only become a brothel when more than one woman uses premises for the purposes of prostitution, either simultaneously or one at a time": *Stevens v Christy* [1987] Cr. App. R. 249, DC.

INFILTRATION AND WHAT WE CAUTION IS GOOD, PARANOIA ISN'T

Every few years, the issue of infiltration into anarchist and activist groups becomes a topic of conversation again. Most recently it has been the journalist Max Parry, targeting Palestine Action. Journalists are the least of the threats against us – the list includes informers, corporate spies and the police. Anyone campaigning for justice or change can find themselves reported on.

The Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI), due to restart in July, has given us a remarkable insight into the lengths to which police have gone to penetrate organisations. This includes the type of information they report back as well as their willingness to deceive and abuse left-wing activists and family justice campaigns. Freedom will also make an appearance, the target of spycop, “Roger Thorley”.

It is natural to feel unsettled by this. Surveillance is intrusive, and not knowing the truth is even worse. When things go wrong it can be difficult to know who to trust. In this context, suspicion and rumour can become powerful and divisive. Yet, we know we are right to be wary as the Inquiry proves the State is out to get us.

The reality, though, is that many undercover were not discovered until the Inquiry. Of the few whom activists exposed, they only succeeded through a lot of hard work to turn suspicion into fact, or through mistakes. And even then, many were part of groups for years before they were revealed. The difficult truth we must face is that most of us will never know if the person we had a “weird vibe” from in a meeting was an undercover cop, journalist or similar. Most suspicions will never be proven. While we know we are under surveillance, only a handful will learn of its extent.

How not to be paranoid ...

It is easy to be caught up in paranoia. Such feelings and a lack of information can leave us with a sense of uncertainty and a loss of what to actually do. Our

biggest danger, though, is to let that paranoia overwhelm us and become the policeman in our heads. Paranoia is not security. When rumour and suspicion divide our groups, then we do the State’s work for it. Or it frightens us from taking any action, which is also a win from the State’s perspective.

As the Undercover Research Group points out, in many cases, you’ll probably never get to the bottom of a suspicion. If we focus all our energies on something that might or might not exist, many people will end up as collateral damage. Handling suspicions with poor focus can end up splitting groups.

This probably sounds very disempowering, but despite this, for decades, groups have been successfully pulling off actions under the nose of the watchers by taking sensible steps to keep information and identities secure, and protecting their campaigns from such disruption.

So, the question we face is not “who are the spycops, and how do we find them?” It’s both simpler and harder, as the police, journalists, and corporate spies all approach our movements with the same aim: to disrupt our campaigns and stop them from winning. The real question is how do we keep ourselves and each other safe while taking effective action? How do we empower ourselves in the face of such threats?

Activist security

Security is the opposite of paranoia. It is the process of considering how we manage sensitive information and protect our privacy. It means thinking through how you will handle risks at every stage of organising together. And it can make the difference between the success or failure of a particular action. Nothing is foolproof

— anyone who tells you that is lying — but you can minimise the risks.

The meme “dance like no one is watching ... text and email like it might be read out in court one day” has a basic truth at its heart. Let’s address how the State can criminalise those who take part in protests.

The State is often about disruption, but we can disrupt their tactics in turn. If we expect to be targeted, we can take simple measures to protect ourselves and reduce the effectiveness of their techniques. Remember that the State favours technology and will always have the upper hand there – low tech, or none at all, is your friend.

One of the most important tools any State has is listening in, whether it’s gossip at a meet-up or what we say online. But that is of little value if you are not saying anything that risks your action or demo. Keep things on a need-to-know basis. The less they can find out, the safer your action is. You can do your bit by accepting that you need to know only the minimum necessary and encouraging such a culture.

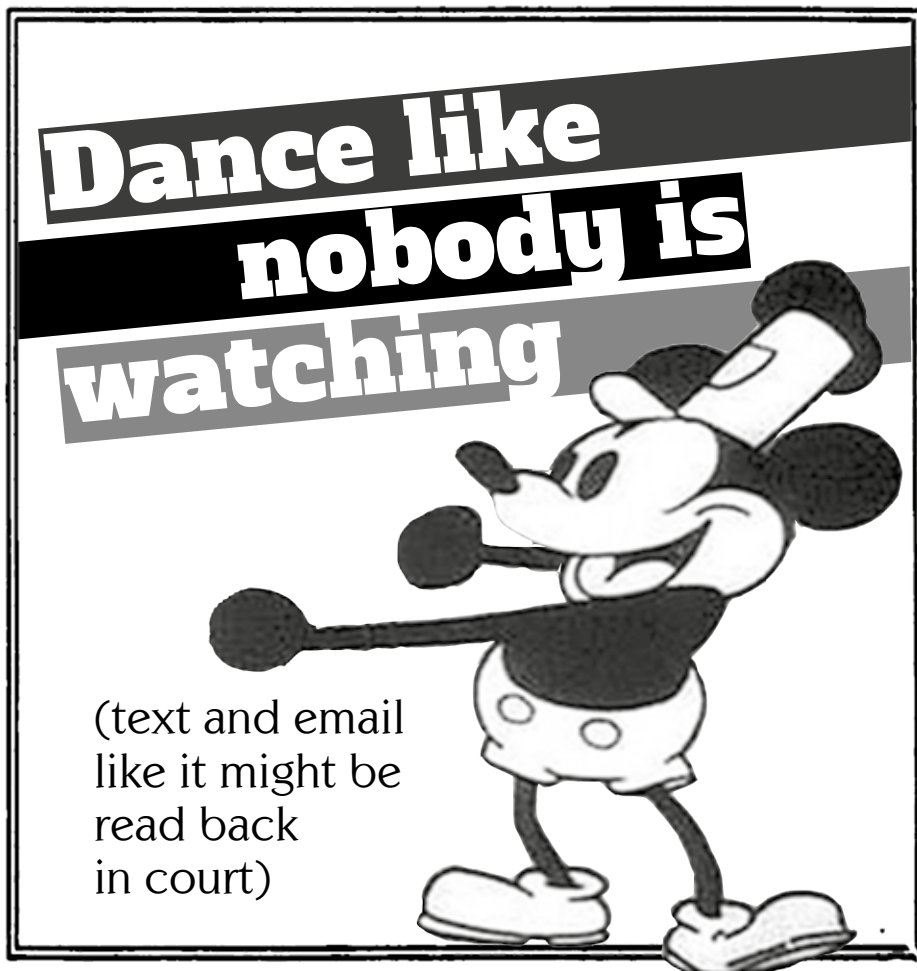
You can also help foster a security culture within your groups by helping people build trust in each other. This includes, if necessary, being open to your group doing background checks on each other so everyone knows exactly who they are taking risks with. Such questions are never pleasant, and we don’t like answering them, but if the consequences of being caught are a busted action or jail, then that is the price we must pay. It is not about our feelings or egos but about being successful in our actions in the face of a powerful opposition.

Serious Disruption Prevention Orders

Netpol has actively challenged police surveillance for more than a decade, but it feels like this work has never been more important. This is especially so with the introduction of Serious Disruption Prevention Orders (SDPOs). These are effectively ban orders targeting



CAN DO ABOUT IT



campaigners, which can restrict where you go, prevent you from attending protests, and stop you from seeing friends and comrades.

Although the Home Office and police claim the number of people they want to target with SDPOs is small, the surveillance operation required to make such orders work in practice is huge. Police will need to track an individual's movements and contacts and gauge their influence in order to make the case that they should receive a SDPO. In practice, this means surveilling everyone in their group or sphere of influence. It seems likely the police are already seeking to gather this intelligence in preparation for future applications for SDPOs against individuals.

This surveillance might sound terrifying, but as the Undercover Policing Inquiry shows, it is also not new. Indeed, the material published by the UCPI shows

what information they consider valuable and how long they've been gathering it. It is important to remember that it has not stopped movements from emerging and gaining victories. Rather, the expansion of police powers shows how worried the government is about so-called "disruptive" protests.

Still, we should not hand the police easy victories. We need to treat security as what it is – a core part of building a culture of care within our groups and a practical strategy to keep our comrades and ourselves out of jail and on the streets. This has never been truer than during the recent Palestine protests when rampant police racism has reclassified many Arab, Muslim and other racialised groups as "extremists", paving the way for expanded surveillance and criminalisation.

Netpol is collaborating with several groups to produce new activist security

guides. These will detail practical things you and your group can start doing straight away to help people's privacy and safety. They will be released over the next few months, so to make sure you are notified about them, sign up to our mailing list at netpol.org/supporters.

It is as true today as ever that we are strongest when we are in full solidarity, and security is an act of solidarity.

Spycops

In this article, we've argued against allowing paranoia to do the State's work. But as activists in previous generations have shown, there will be times when suspicion is too strong to ignore, and it's time to dig.

Once a group of you is able to determine a suspicion is well grounded, you should not ignore it. There are actions you can take to confirm if they are genuine, along with tools and techniques which can help turn those suspicions into real evidence. Or better still, show they were misplaced and that you have a genuine comrade at your side after all. For more information, read the Undercover Research Group's pamphlet *Was My Friend A Spycop?* for techniques on what to do and how to protect your group.

Upcoming hearings

Finally, for those interested in seeing how the police go about such surveillance, watch out for the next round of hearings in the Undercover Policing Inquiry. Covering 1982-92, it will explore how police infiltrated animal liberation, Poll Tax, family justice and defence campaigns. These include those relating to the Broadwater Farm riots and groups confronting the fascists dealing out racial violence on Brick Lane and elsewhere. It will explore the systematic use of sexual relationships and stolen children's identities to abuse campaigners in the name of public order policing.

Hearings will take place this summer in central London. For more information, check out *Police Spies Out Of Lives* and the Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance.

~ Netpol

A NEW WAVE: ANARCHIST

Anarchist transhuman sci-fi collective Radon have published multiple digital journals over the last few years exploring themes including dystopia, rebellion and social conflict. Rob Ray interviews the editors.

Could you explain the background of the collective?

We created *Radon Journal* to fill a niche that we wished existed when we were young: the intersection of science fiction and anarchism. We made a new space expressly for those who want to look toward the stars while envisioning blueprints for a better society. Anarchist praxis often deals with working in the present to build a better future, and so extending this timeline a little further naturally provides excellent sci-fi.

A large portion of what *Radon* does is outreach to educate the public about what these concepts entail. Because science fiction is more than just robots and spaceships and anarchism is more than Molotov cocktails and black bloc.

Two of the co-founders spent their high school years DIY-publishing science fiction books together, went into the world to be independently radicalised into anarchists, then reconnected 12 years later to combine their passion and skills for a new generation of writers.

Radon also focuses on transhumanism in its journal because anarcho-transhumanism is one of the newest and most misunderstood anarchist schools of thought and melds perfectly with what we do as a sub-genre of science fiction.

Ursula Le Guin, the most successful anarchist sci-fi writer of our time (in terms of reaching minds), passed in 2018 and devastated us. We aim to continue her legacy of combining anarchist politics with science fiction stories and showing the world that an egalitarian future is possible while also warning of potential dystopian worlds if we're not vigilant.

How difficult has it been finding a balance between dystopian, generally speculative, and more "utopian" (or post-scarcity) approaches?

Dystopia does seem to be one of our most popular submission categories.



Cover image from the January issue, by KiTT St Joans

And it's not hard to see why. Late-stage capitalism continues to tighten its grip, Earth is dying, and the world is falling back into fascist dictatorships. Our millennial generation has discovered that the promises of our future were lies and that the only things we can count on are what we claw back through direct action.

We would like to see more post-scarcity stories submitted to us serving as tales of how anarchist societies might exist in a sci-fi setting. That said, we let each issue coalesce into its own identity based on the nature of the stories that are submitted during each issue reading window. The more utopian and solarpunk stories tend to

find homes in magazines specifically reading for those genres.

The majority of our submissions come from science fiction authors who include leftist social commentary in their work, rather than anarchists who write science fiction. We would like this ratio to balance out more in the future.

Transhuman fiction has had a fairly strong uptake in anarchist circles, possibly more so than solarpunk. What do you think the draw has been?

To us, transhumanism and anarchism logically go together and complement one another. Anarchism, as we all know, aims to increase our general social and economic freedoms.

SCIENCE FICTION

Meanwhile, transhumanism aims to give us physical freedom and remove scourges of human existence, such as death and human limitations.

The concept is likely gaining attention due to the technology around us now increasing at an exponential rate. It is natural that we pay more attention to the implications and possibilities of technology as both individuals and society grapple with change.

We want to be free to explore not only this planet but the entire cosmos, unshackled by such arbitrary things such as money or natural life-span. There is so much to learn about our reality, and we humans are endlessly curious. There's no reason why we should let ourselves suffer and die if we can prevent it.

Conversely eugenicist types can also be attracted via the 'improvement' aspect. How have you tended to work through that end of things?

We believe that any parent would jump at the chance to easily and safely prevent diseases in their child. But we recognise that the technology could easily be used by the wrong hands and accompany evil eugenics practices. So, do we prevent any technological progress from occurring due to fear of misuse? What happens if capitalists use this technology? How would anarchists use it instead? Is the ethical use of new technology somewhere in the middle? We don't know the answers, and it is in exploring this middle ground that great stories are born, and what we hope to publish.

You're also right that there are several loud right-wing techno-libertarians (such as Elon Musk) who have done a shockingly good job of tying themselves to the concept of transhumanism. There is an ongoing battle being fought in most transhuman groups (especially large ones in the US) between the left and right for ownership of the label. Some Radon editors are semi-active in these groups working with other anarchists and communists to push out the right-libertarians and reclaim the label in

popular culture before it's too late.

We firmly believe that transhumanism is inherently a far-left philosophy intimately tied with anarchist thought. Radon exclusively approaches transhumanism through a social anarchist lens and rejects all tech bros and their beliefs.

Few technologies are inherently moral or immoral. Every invention increases humanity's ability to do good equally as much as it increases our ability to do evil. For instance, the invention of the aeroplane allowed us to quickly and easily reach and connect with our fellow person. But it also allowed humanity to quickly and efficiently kill entire populations.

What sort of conceptual trends have you been seeing from radical authors? What would you like to see?

Most radical authors have their pieces in conversation with the profit motive. Either dealing with its existence or living in spite of it, mainly. We also receive a number of commentary pieces on the "justice" system, either skirting around or attacking it head-on.

We've been itching to publish a good anarchist riot in space. Or some sort of fiery, captivating, and well-plotted direct-action narrative that finds the protagonists "getting the goods," as it were. Tell us an emotional story about how anarchists are liberating worlds and preventing the rest of the galaxy from destroying them.

You have an active engagement process with the broader sci-fi writing community, are you hoping to inject anarchist thinking into these spaces?

Radon is unique in that we are torn between multiple worlds. Through memberships in CLMP (Community of Literary Magazines and Publishers), we have our toe in the literary ecosystem. But through SFPA & SFWA (Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry/Writers Association), alongside our authors we have close connections to the science fiction and fantasy worlds. Meanwhile through AK Press, our Mastodon

Kolektiva account, and personal anarchist branding/beliefs, we are steeped in the anarchist universe.

It is sometimes challenging to balance all three, but in the end, we unapologetically are simply ourselves and meld them together. One of the chief goals of Radon was to inject anarchist theory and praxis into more mainstream spaces. When we launched, we hid our identities and played it safe, fearing that reactionary forces would come down hard on an openly anarchist publisher. But instead the opposite happened, and we have encountered nothing but love and support from the speculative writing and publishing community.

What other anarchist or sympathetic literary projects do you think would be worth looking into?

For explicitly anarchist projects, we suggest checking out Margaret Killjoy and her many books, podcasts, and music. AK Press, arguably the world's largest anarchist publisher, has done great work recently moving into the speculative fiction space via their Black Dawn series. We also suggest being vigilant to see if your local city is hosting an anarchist bookfair. Great anarchistic projects in our sphere of semi-professional publishing include *Strange Horizons*, *The Sprawl Mag*, *Solarpunk Magazine*, and *Seize the Press*.

Future Plans?

We're currently in the last month of reading for our seventh issue and hope to have a print version to accompany the launch of issue eight and beyond. This year, we're also hoping to meet our new fundraising goal via our community Patreon (currently at 51%!) which will allow us to raise fiction word limits, maybe go quarterly, pay authors more, or create the fabled "best-of" anthology.

All issues of Radon are available at radonjournal.com



EDITORIAL

One of the (many) ways in which the ruling classes tire us out and make us weak is by attacking on many fronts all at once. Stripping away protections for lots of different groups encourages us to all scabble around blaming each other, fighting for the remaining scraps. But when you read people's very different problems all in one place something becomes clear — what we have in common.

The retreat of the welfare state and deadly creep of punishments for those who aren't an easy fit into the majority workforce hits all sections of the working class, more pointedly here and there, in different ways, but always with the same aim. The State and capital have been and are in a process of seeing how little they can get away with when it comes to social protections before social stability goes out the window.

It relies heavily on a throw-your-hands-in-the-air exasperation, in which we look at the sheer size of the mess and give up, frozen by a perception that it's all just too

much to even begin to sort out. Better to let the experts take it on, after all they can do it in working hours.

But this is a fiction, most easily believed by those with enough income to cushion themselves. The experts are the very heart of the problem.

At some point this year, perhaps even before you read these words, there will be an election. The Tories will try to convince us they are the only ones capable of "running the economy sensibly." Labour will argue the same, with the advantage that we've not seen them attempt it. Reform will waffle about migration, the Greens about climate, the Lib Dems about whatever gets them the sniff of a seat.

What will actually *happen* is continuity. Welfare will continue to be assaulted. Migrants will continue to be villified. Trans people (as demonstrated by Labour's response to the Cass Report) will suffer yet more institutional hurdles and political brinkmanship. Disabled people will not suddenly be treated with dignity

and respect. The Met won't be held accountable, nor will the media.

The "experts" are not interested in solving anything, that's not their role. They're there to keep the economy rolling, ie. to work on behalf of the ruling class as it wrings just a little more shareholder value out of what we produce and consume.

But the thing about experts is they are actually far more limited in number than we mere mortals. The very means by which they tire us out is the way in which we can fight back — in great numbers, on every front, in solidarity.

With no prospects whatsoever for improvements to arrive from the likes of Keir Starmer, Rachael Reeves or Wes Streeting we cannot wait for experts. We can't passively present our woes and hope for change. We have to turn the tables, make *them* too bewildered and exhausted to keep coming up with new ways to exploit the working classes.

If we want change we don't have any other choice.

UPDATE FROM ANGEL ALLEY

It's been an eclectic winter and spring on Whitechapel High Street, with talks, meetings and a string of new initiatives such as Freedom Fridays on the third Friday of every month — a self-organised social which has already produced everything from board game nights to zine making workshops. If you have an idea or want to get involved please do pop down to Freedom Bookshop and have an ask!

Particularly good to see, and related, has been an influx of people helping out and starting up all kinds of interesting new projects. Those interested in social media have been making some very entertaining skits about books, events and things of interest around the building, others have been making stuff like tote bags and zines, while others still have decided to try their hand at podcasting.

Keep an ear out for a mix of old heads and inquiring brains babbling briskly about what anarchism could be, is, and used to manifest as in the near future. We're aiming to put something out for folks who might find Novara a bit limited and the Anarchist

Studies Network a bit dense.

All this is exactly what older hands have always hoped for from Freedom, for it to be a hive of activity, properly using its position in central London for the benefit of the city's anarchist movement, and indeed helping to expand the work we do.

Speaking of which, the Collective has also been busy. Alongside this ancient and august journal wot you happen to be reading, we've been running the newswire as usual, pottering along with reprinting old titles, we brought out a very well recieved new edition of *Anarchy in Action*, and continue, ever so slowly, to fundraise for works on the building.

So beyond a few concerning bills, particularly rises to business rates and the leccy, we can report a successful winter, with lots of exciting things ahead for the summer. Which is a rare note of optimism not to be underestimated these days.



Social media:

- IG: freedombookshop (shop), freedomcollective1886 (news)
- Mastodon: kolektiva.social/@Freedom_Press
- Tiktok: freedomcollective1886
- Facebook: freedombookshop, freedomnews1886
- Bluesky: freedompress.bsky.social

Xword Solution

Across

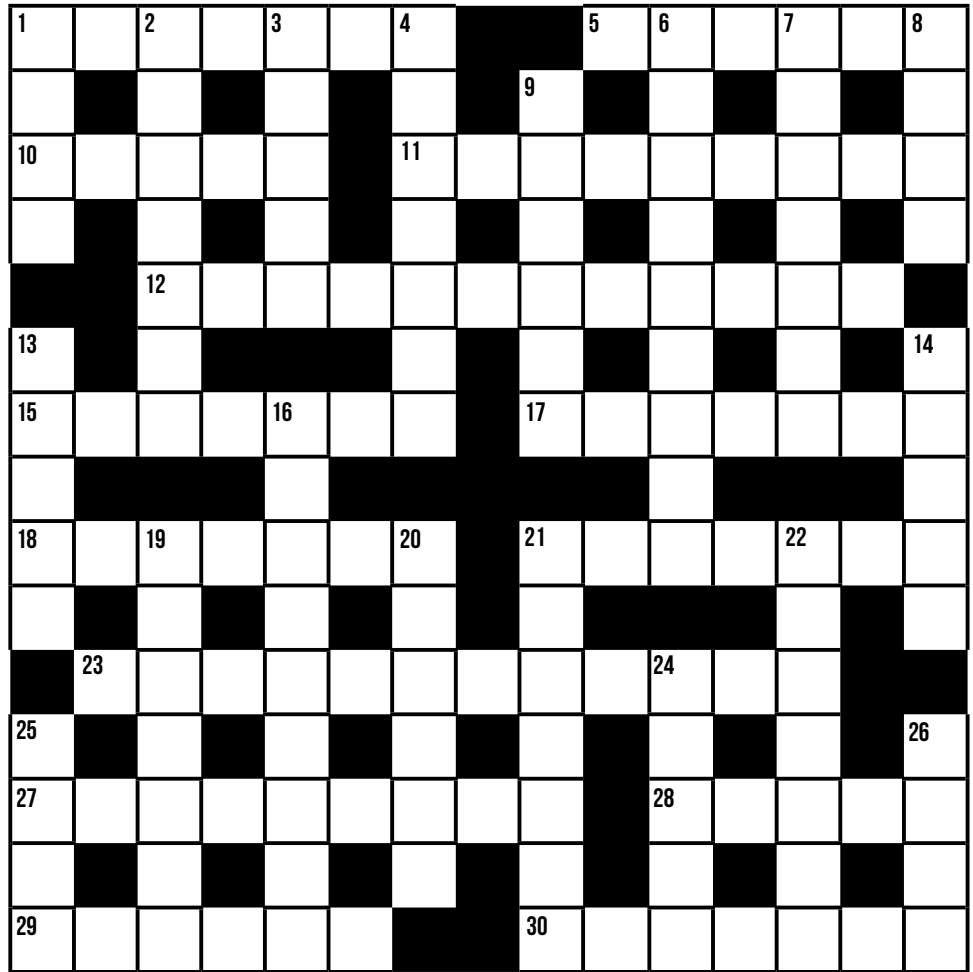
1. Belain 5. Change 10. Spout
 11. Martyrdom 12. Incarcerated
 15. Organic 17. Taken to 18. Expunge
 21. Cuticle 23. Irrationally 27. Trumpeter
 28. Genie 29. Mayors 30. Letters.

Down

1. Busk 2. Looting 3. Antic 4. Numeric 6.
 Haymarket 7. Nudge on 8. Emma
 9. Argent 13. Poles 14. Loves 16. No tam-
 per 19. Perjury 20. Evicts 21. Control
 22. Cayenne 24. Light 25. Stem 26. Bees.

ACROSS

- 1. Somehow late, skipped for pagan mayday. (7)
- 5. We can use cold and hot endless anger to make a difference. (6)
- 10. It's gone wrong up here, what the seedlings do loser. (5)
- 11. Dying for the cause yet creative resistance and not submissive on the 1st of May. (9)
- 12. Erica, cat nerd spun out and got locked up. (12)
- 15. Orgasmic, milliseconds away taking a direction toward chemical free. (7)
- 17. An Eastern way round a SE county is delivered. (5,2)
- 18. Eradicate the noise of previous cake. (7)
- 21. Crazed ice cult developed round nails. (7)
- 23. Neutral teen escaped a rendition of l'internationale to go on the railway without reason. (12)
- 27. Dizzy Satchelmouth Miles or swan? (9)
- 28. Vintage niello lampshades a granter of wishes. (5)
- 29. Confused mars boy Binface, probably not but a Dick a Legge and Clint Eastwood have been. (6)
- 30. Settler twisted post. (7)



DOWN

- 1. Does the succubus keeper keep playing in the street? (4)
- 2. Go to nil riotous redistribution of wealth. (7)
- 3. The Anti-Christ holds a caper. (5)
- 4. Mice run around figure. (7)
- 6. "Oi, tag that" heard at scene of 11. (9)
- 7. Encourage awkward dungeon play. (5,2)

- 8. Each dancing around a small distance, they were gold man. (4)
- 9. Silver rat strangely gobbled up information. (6)
- 13. Eastern European's sticks maybe danced around on Mayday? (5)
- 14. Really likes to haphazardly solve. (5)
- 16. Pet Roman screwed security screws. (2,6)
- 19. For everyone on the panel lying in court. (7)
- 20. Kicked out civets kicks out. (6)

- 21. Italian against left, must be a power thing. (7)
- 22. See Nancy lacking direction and stumbling on a pepper. (7)
- 24. Less tar, less fat but more each day this time of year. (5)
- 25. Stop, the Met's retreating. (4)
- 26. Hey, no confusion not made by drones. (4)

Answers at freedomnews.org.uk/xword

HELPING OUT

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PUBLISHING BOOKS
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WITH THE BUILDING
admin@freedompress.org.uk

BUILDING FUND

In the last issue we mentioned we were starting to raise money for various upcoming works on things like the roof, stairs, windows and suchlike, and we cannot thank you all enough for sending in more than £5,500! We still have a ways to go to hit our original target of £15,000, but the amount sent so far takes us out of panic mode and is already earmarked for various fixes. If you can spare a bit you can pay online via [paypal.me/fbuildingcollective](https://www.paypal.me/fbuildingcollective), or by cheque, payable to "Freedom Press."

COMING SOON...

Our next two books are set to be pretty weighty tomes. *Fight for the New Normal* will be out this summer, involving a considered look at the Covid phenomenon, from experiences of mutual aid organising to critiques of the State's response.

Physical Resistance, meanwhile, is an exciting project by Louise Purbrick to update and expand her late partner's historical work on anti-fascism in Britain. Much has occurred since his death and as editor Purbrick brings the story full circle, covering 100 years of direct action.

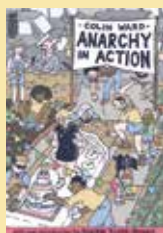
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Some resources:

libcom.org and theanarchistlibrary.org Huge repositories of history and theory on every aspect of anarchism
channelzeronetwork.com: Collection of podcasts and anarchist-aligned radio shows from across the globe
Activist Court Aid Brigade: Legal support for activists
radar.squat.net: Get involved with this open radical listings service
freedomnews.org.uk: Our very own newswire

ABOUT ANARCHISM

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, 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 alternative society .

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 runs, and no-one is unaccountable for their actions.

A thank you to Aldgate Press (1981-2024)

This will, sadly, be the first issue in four decades not to be made by the radical printing collective. Founded at 84b, for many years Aldgate ran a tiny outfit on the ground floor as a self-sustaining way of producing *Freedom* and other radical media, later moving to the Gunthorpe St Workshops and finally to Eleanor St in Bow. During Covid it lost around a third of its turnover which, alongside loans taken out during the pandemic, proved too much to bear. Our everlasting thanks and thoughts go out to all the lovely people, past and present, who made Aldgate such a special place.

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Front page image by Michelle Tylicki
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Dingbats are from 1910 issues of
Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*.

We are socialists, disbelievers in property, advocates of the equal claims of all to work for the community as seems good — calling no-one master, and of the equal claim to each to satisfy as seems good to them, their natural needs from the stock of social wealth they have laboured to produce ... we are anarchists, disbelievers in the government of the many by the few in any shape and under any pretext.

Freedom, a Journal of Anarchist Socialism, Vol 1, No. 1, October 1886