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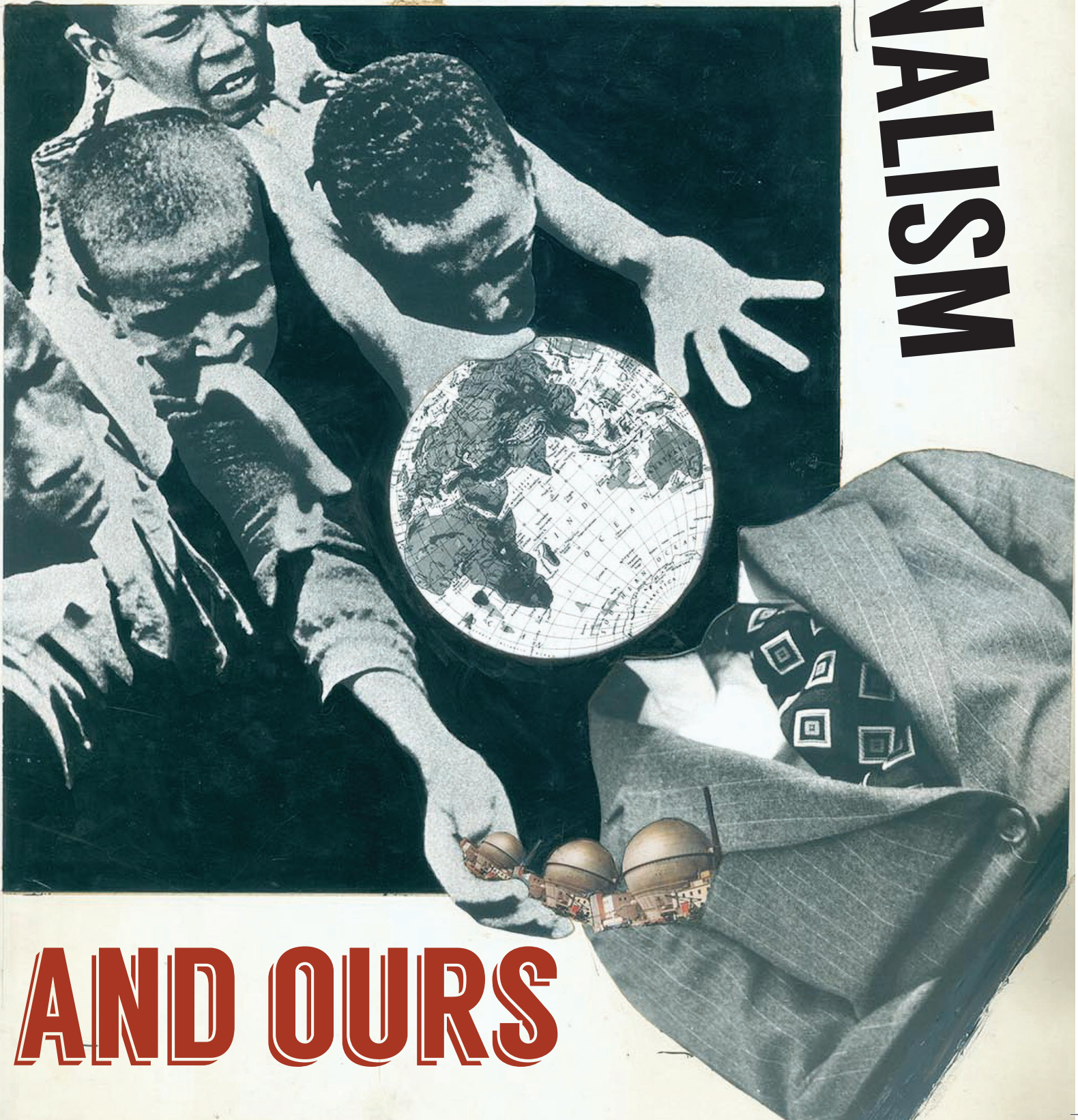
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BY DONATION

THEIR INTERNATIONALISM



AND OURS

EDITORIAL

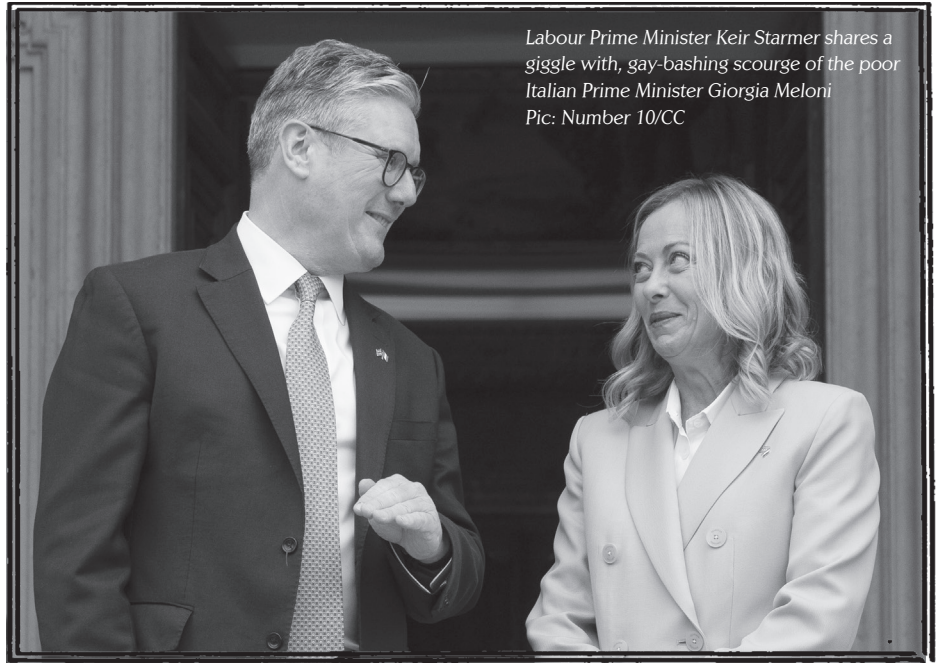
Internationalism's a funny beast, prone to making fools of us all. Just take the Leninist left's insistence that Maduro, or Castro, or Xi Jinping (of all people) are worthy of our undying loyalty as opponents of Western imperialism. Autocrats given a pass on their obvious and ongoing destruction of social freedoms because they wave a red flag around.

But the year's events in Palestine have been a truly heinous example of this reality as it applies to the powers that be. We've seen a maddened Israeli politic level the homes of millions, kill tens of thousands and starve many more. Netanyahu's quest to stay out of jail and his Knesset allies' outright pro-ethnic cleansing policies have set fire to the Middle East.

But rather than call this mass murder out for what it is the US and, to a lesser degree, the UK have shown how they view internationalism, as a cynical exercise backing particular horses in the great game. It took Sunak and Starmer more than 11 months to grudgingly suspend some (10% of) arms sales for the IDF, in which time first Gaza, then the West Bank, and Lebanon were relentlessly pummelled.

And it was not simply a bunch of imagined "terrorist sympathisers" or deluded anti-Semites who called them out on it. The South African government, reflecting a population that remembers apartheid all too well, took Israel to the international court, which ruled there was "a plausible risk of genocide". The UN has spoken up. International votes have been clear on the matter. NGOs as beige as Oxfam have petitioned for more comprehensive measures to be taken.

But Starmer and co. swan on, placid in their internationalism of the moment. And of course, why wouldn't they be? The UK Foreign Ministry is after all the most stable of the great offices of state, inscrutable in its aims, placed out of reach of serious oversight by a public that's only vaguely interested in it, for the most part. Them out there are only a big deal if it affects us in here, and the politicians of Westminster know it well.



Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer shares a giggle with, gay-bashing scourge of the poor Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni
Pic: Number 10/CC

Hence, of course, the other major moments of Starmer's early reign. The trip to America must be prioritised, obviously, but the second greeting was for Giorgia Meloni, to learn from her how best to join the internationalism of closing borders. A far-right leader whose deputy Salvini was so egregious, with his "closed ports" policy as interior minister, it sparked a court case accusing him of kidnap.

Starmer was full of praise for this brutal regime, thoroughly embedded in Fortress Europe as the bloc collectively pays thugs beyond its borders to terrorise and repress Earth's tired and powerless masses for having the temerity to approach without sufficient money.

Sir Keir's Labour is welded to the hypocrisy of it all, begging inward migration from millionaires while decrying the feckless poor both inside and beyond the grand moat provided by the North Sea. Sucking up to powerful economic blocs while mouthing vague platitudes about dying neoliberal values of free trade to placate the orthodoxies of Blairism circa 1997. Worse even than the Leninists' internationalism of fools, it's an internationalism of the graveyard.

We need the revival of a long-quietened opposition, of an internationalism that unites the working class to kick the legs out from this tottering zombie and put it six feet under. In this issue of *Freedom* we take a look at some of the work that is taking place, and which went before in the building of solidarity across borders.

Dave Morris (overleaf) talks about the McLibel campaign in the context of spycops and taking a transnational corporation to the cleaners. Ben Cowles recalls the immense work that goes on under the radar as migrant support groups work in defiance of aggressive policing, while other articles address prisoner support work, and the Zapatistas' holistic, solidaristic approaches to education.

Several touch on or recount elements of the major wave of internationalist revolt that took place around the Millennium, fighting globalised capital in its pomp before falling apart in the wave of post-9/11 reaction.

There are many lessons in this issue but the most important of them is this. Isolated, we struggle and always will. Our rulers know the value of collectivity. To rise up to meet them we must do the same, and better. Our futures depend on it.



SPYCOPS: MCLIBEL CASE

Victories continue to stack up in the campaign to expose and challenge the Met Police's spycops scandal. First their secret political policing unit was outed. Then the authorities were forced to call a public inquiry. £82 million (and counting) of public funds later, we have forced the Met and Security Services to release tens of thousands of secret reports on campaigners. These expose the range of disgusting police tactics employed. All the Met have to show for it so far is a series of grovelling apologies they've been forced to make for the targeting of women activists for abusive sexual relationships, and for the monitoring of anti-racist organisations and family justice campaigns. And to cap it all the Inquiry judge ruled last year that the spying operations should have been closed down in the early 1970s.

One aspect of the Inquiry, officially limited to "England and Wales," which has emerged is the Met and MI5's obsession with "international links." For example, in 1978 the pacifistic anarchist group London Greenpeace was added to a UK Terrorism Briefing sent to the government's cabinet. Why? Because it was making links with



those abroad opposing nuclear power plants and uranium mining. The spycops, originally set up to undermine opposition to the Vietnam war, soon started to report on the anti-apartheid movement. In July a spycop in the Inquiry witness box admitted MI5 had close links with other security service "partners" abroad, including the South African government's notorious 'BOSS' security service. We look forward to hearings in 2025 which will reveal how spycop Mark Kennedy travelled to Iceland and Germany to report on environmental activists. Most of these spies, when they "disappeared" at the end of their deployments, pretended to have emigrated. It is becoming clear that local special branches and police abroad helped them.

Governments, and their police and security services, have always of course collaborated together globally, as do corporations and military organisations. They just don't like it when activists do the same.

In the 1990s there were some determined efforts to develop ongoing international links among grassroots anti-capitalist movements. This included the development in 1996 of the Peoples Global Action anti-capitalist network in Mexico, followed by gatherings in Spain 1997 and Geneva 1998. In the UK, the Reclaim The Streets movement was particularly involved.

There were also mobilisations related to major financial and political gatherings, such as the Battle of Seattle in 1999 at the World Trade Organisation meeting in the USA, later G8, G20, Rio Earth Summit, COPs climate summits etc.

One international campaign I was involved in was against McDonald's. This features in the latest Inquiry hearings, which started in October. In 1990 the McDonald's Corporation junk food transnational sued members of London Greenpeace. The group had produced leaflets attacking its exploitation of workers and suppression of union

activity, unethical advertising targeting children, promotion of unhealthy junk food, damage to the environment caused by packaging and beef production, and industrial-scale cruelty to billions of animals. The resultant court case became the longest and one of the most controversial in English legal history.

In response, the incredibly effective McLibel Support Campaign (1991-2005) was set up to ensure the corporation's efforts to censor their critics failed. *What's Wrong With McDonald's?* leaflets had been handed out in the low thousands before libel writs were issued in 1990 — by the end of the trial millions were being given out globally.

We were sent various versions of that flyer in at least 20 languages — all put up on mcspotlight.org, probably the world's first internet site targeting a corporation, encouraging people to print them off and adapt/distribute them themselves. On the Saturday after the trial verdict in 1997 two thirds of McDonald's 750 stores in the UK were leafleted. October 16th, 'UN World Food Day' had been re-designated 'World Anti-McDonald's Day' and on that day in 1999 we had feedback from 425 protests outside stores in 345 towns in 23 countries.

The success of the campaign involved no PR firms, marketing budget, paid staff, or formal backing from any large organisation, and was up against maybe the world's largest and probably most successful marketing firm. Indeed McDonald's spent an estimated £10 million on legal costs for the trial (in contrast to the defendants' £35,000), and utilised a global advertising budget of \$2 billion per year.

However, we had demonstrated — as if we didn't already know — the huge potential of coordinated grassroots action and people power. That, and the other examples above, is of course exactly what no government wants, what the spycops were obsessed with monitoring and undermining, but which is the essential basis for ending oppression and creating a decent society for everyone.

So let's send our admiration and solidarity to all those around the world who are contributing to such vital struggles.

~Dave Morris, McLibel defendant and spycops campaigner



HAUNTING OLD RUINS AT THE A STORY OF THE NO NAME KITCHEN

Klara, Alberto and I spent the whole day driving around the outskirts of town, sneaking into abandoned buildings that they believed refugees and migrants — or people on the move (PotM) to use a better term — were using as squats.

We visited a half-built mansion, parkoured around a disused factory, breathed in the black-mould wallpapering an old mountain-side villa, and held back the spew at a house that smelt worse than the shitpits on the last day of Download.

“I remember this place,” Klara said as we traipsed through weeds to reach one of the squats, a small, half-finished bungalow by the side of a road that nature had begun to reclaim.

We were in Bihać (pronounced Bee Hatch), a small town in northeast Bosnia, right on the border with Croatia, where thousands of people seeking a better life slam against the walls of Fortress Europe.

It was the doghouse, with Amore written across its entrance, that jogged Klara’s memory. She told us she’d been here a couple of years ago.

“The guys living here invited us to dinner,” she said as we went inside. There was no carpet on the concrete floor, the bricks were exposed, and weeds crept through the walls. In the corner was a wood burning stove. Three tins of tomatoes sat on a rickety cupboard next to it.

“It was one of the nights I recall the most. We cooked together. They taught me how to make bread. And we shared it together here.”

Klara and Alberto were in Bosnia with No Name Kitchen (NNK), a solidarity network that supports PotM in Bosnia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Italy, Spain, and Ceuta — a Spanish enclave in northern Morocco. I was there working on an episode of *The Civil Fleet Podcast*.

NNK’s activists base themselves in those countries for around three months, usually, and provide PotM with medical care, food, clothes, legal support if they need it, and company — someone other than a cop or a border guard to talk to.



Most importantly, though, NNK records testimonies from PotM about the abuses they have faced at Europe’s borders, then present and denounce these bleak findings in monthly (ish) reports and on social media.

NNK’s activists organise themselves non-hierarchically. Each person has what they call a focal point — something they should focus on, like managing the warehouse, recording testimonies, issuing first aid, managing communications/media, etc. But anyone can get involved in any task.

Each day I was with NNK’s team in Bosnia went something like this: attend morning meeting to discuss the day’s plans; go to the warehouse to sort and stock up on clothes, food, and first aid supplies; put them in the car, and head out to our distribution zones, keeping an eye out for the cops.

Nothing we did was illegal. How is giving someone a pair of shoes against the law? But the cops, under pressure from the European Union, sometimes claimed it was, and threatened to fine or deport NNK’s activists.

Europe’s various authorities (be they national governments or the European Union) want PotM to suffer. They want a hostile environment, one that will demoralise PotM and drain them of hope. They hope this will force PotM to go home, or at least to go to some other country.

Even the most basic form of solidarity undermines the whole system, and therefore cannot be tolerated. That’s why activists across the continent are being criminalised for helping PotM or saving their lives.

The afternoons with NNK in Bosnia were different every day. A couple of times we’d hang out with the men stuck at

Lipa Migrant camp — deliberately located up a mountain way out in the countryside.

Another time we played basketball and football with the unaccompanied kids, teens, women and families held in Borići camp, which is located in town.

We toured the squats on my last afternoon with NNK’s Bosnia crew.

“I met them in winter,” Klara said of the people she met in that bungalow in 2021.

“They decided to stay until spring. And since they were living outside of town, we asked them, when we found a little puppy at the bus station, if they wanted to take care of it, and they were really happy.

“We brought her here, and they made a little house for her and everything. They took care of her for the whole winter.”

One of the guys who’d lived there, who we’ll call Denny, spoke English very well, Klara said. She put me in touch with him.

“It was amazing, actually,” he said over the phone weeks later when I asked him what it was like living in that squat.

“Our house became very famous, actually, with volunteers and other organisations. We were always cooking there. There was a supermarket close to our house. The volunteers brought us fresh food.

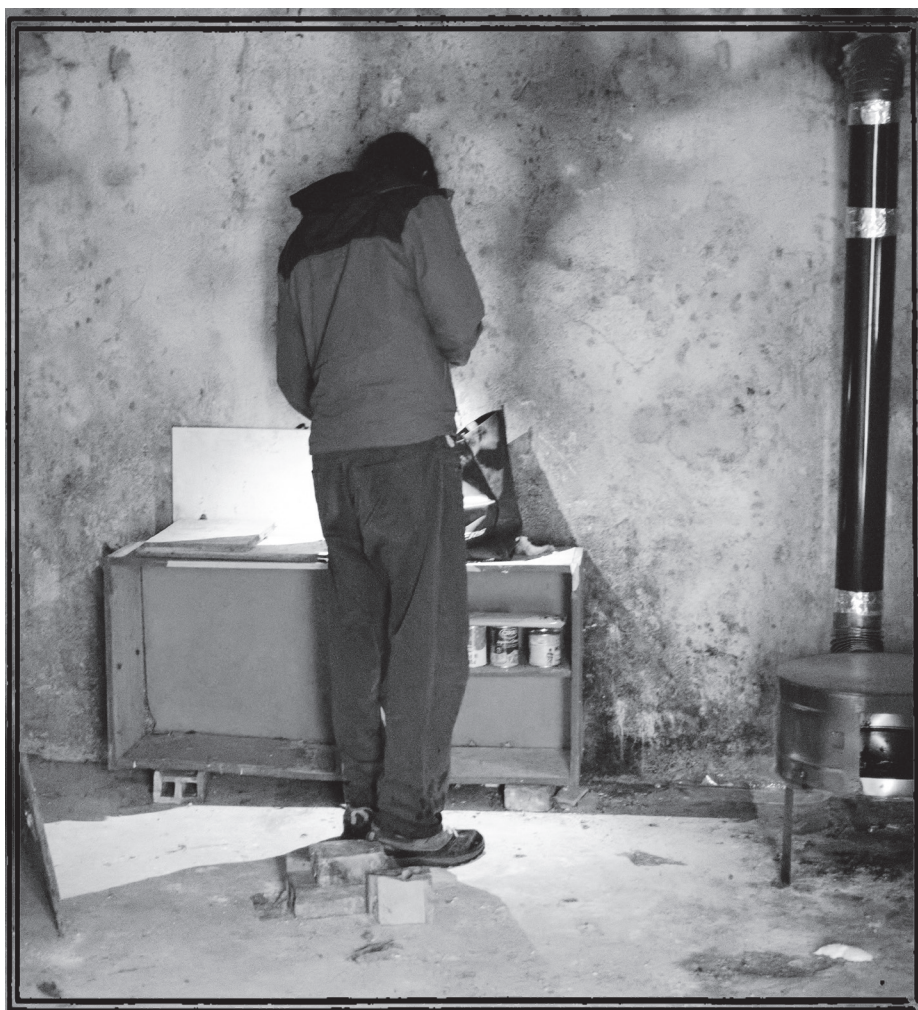
“I remember teaching Klara how to cook chapatis. It’s a good memory. She was trying to make them round. It was a bit difficult for her and her friends.”

Denny fled Pakistan-occupied Kashmir nine years ago when he was 17 years old. He asked that we didn’t discuss the reasons why he had to flee his homeland. But he did tell me how India, Pakistan and China (the three states which occupy it) have oppressed the people there and turned Kashmir into one of the most militarised places on the planet.

Of course, many of the problems there stretch back to Britain’s 19th century colonisation of the Indian subcontinent and the 1947 partition of it. But I don’t have the word count, or the knowledge frankly, to get into any of that.

Human rights, especially in India-occupied Kashmir, have been severely

EDGES OF FORTRESS EUROPE



curtailed and in recent years, thousands of activists, journalists and political figures have been jailed.

Denny travelled first to Iran and then on to Turkey, where he stayed for a while. Later, he went on to Greece, Albania and Montenegro before making it to Bosnia in 2021.

"I got there in winter," he told me. "It's really horrible to survive there in winter. I was happier living outside than in the camps, though I suffered a lot.

"Two or three times, I went in the camps, just to see the situation. It was really horrible, how they treat people. They are really far from the cities, and they look exactly like a prison.

"You see security all around you. You feel like you are the most wanted criminal in the world, and you don't know why they put you in there when you haven't committed any crime."

Eventually, Denny made it to Bihać, the final stop before Fortress Europe's high-tech border walls begin, and found the abandoned bungalow. The place was well known to NNK's team and other activist and NGO groups in the town.

One day, while he was living there, Klara and her friend Lydia told Denny they had a gift for him.

"I loved living there with my dog," he told me. "Her name is Amore."

"Lydia, asked me if I had a name for her in my mind. I didn't, so she said I should call her Amore.

"I didn't even know what it meant," he said. "She told me Amore means love.

"They brought her to me because they found her at the bus station. She was lost from her siblings and from her mum. They found her on a rainy day.

"I can't explain how good it was for me to have a puppy there. It was very helpful.

"She ate whatever we were eating. It's funny; once she ate raw potatoes. I took one out of her mouth. I told my friend: 'Okay, this is too much. We have to train her now'."

Amore now lives in Slovenia with a friend of Denny's.

"She's living in Ljubljana," he said, "with a rich family. So I'm happy that at least she's got a good life," he said, laughing at the irony.

A lot of PotM lived in that bungalow, Denny told me.

"Sometimes there were like 14 or 15 people in the house. Sometimes 10, sometimes six or seven. People were going and coming, you know. People sometimes went 'on game' by themselves.

"We call it a 'game' because it's like, if you make it [across the border] you're successful. If not, you try again, you know. So that's why they call it a game.

"But sometimes people make it over the border, but the police push them back to Bosnia."

Denny went "on game" several times, and in March 2022 made it to Italy, where he now has refugee status, after making it through Croatia and Slovenia.

Perhaps surprisingly, Denny looks back on his time in the bungalow fondly.

"Our house become very famous, actually, with volunteers and other organisations," she says. "We got lucky. The police came very close sometimes. They tried to push people back to the camps. But we were lucky.

"I met people I never imagined meeting and we became friends. We shared everything, like food. We talked about the past, the current situation and the future.

"Most PotM have a bad experience, you know, they suffer a lot. They have no hope. We don't know when we'll make it to Europe.

"We don't know who we're going to meet or if they're good people. Most PotM only meet cops, who sometime torture them, sometimes beat them, or sometimes just shout at them."

Ben Cowles runs *The Civil Fleet*, a news blog and podcast focused on the activist-led refugee rescue and support missions across Europe. You can find it on all podcast services and YouTube.

THE FAR-RIGHT AND THEIR

URI GORDON INTERVIEWS GRZEGORZ PIOTROWSKI

The far right agenda has never been so powerful since the end of the second World War. After decades of the political centre shifting steadily to the right, ultra-nationalist and neo-fascist forces are now in open alliance with populist and conservative parties around the world, or setting the tone within them. In Israel they have taken over the country and launched a regional war following the genocide in Gaza. In the USA they remain poised to stage a coup whatever the election results, but in either case far right ascendance is far from over. Repelled for now in France, in Austria they recently became the largest parliamentary party.

To talk about far right power and its international networking and funding, we spoke to Grzegorz Piotrowski, a sociologist at the university of Gdansk and the European Solidarity Centre. The answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

While the political and business elites, and especially the right wing press in Britain, are busy spreading xenophobia and calling for tighter borders, those same elites and their attack dogs have no problem working across borders. We talk about our internationalism, but what about theirs?

I mean that's nothing new, right? Even before World War II they were quite international. But if 15 years ago extreme right groups were deeply rooted in their local context, now they have gained very powerful allies, especially allies that have a lot of money. At the CPAC conference in Budapest you can actually see this 'far right International' -- Tucker Carlson, Viktor Orban, Russians cannot travel that much anymore but you have people from all over the world, even European Parliament members. But then you can observe the flow of cash and there are a lot of far-right groups that are financed by Western millionaires or the Kremlin. In Poland there are a lot of Twitter accounts that everybody knows are financed by Russia, they were sponsoring the far right

in in Austria and Italy, and with groups fighting against reproductive rights you can trace cash flows from Brazil.

So are 'gender ideology' and 'cultural Marxism' coming instead of open racial hatred, or just ideological covers?

I think the base layer is a kind of simulacrum of white male Christian identity, so Islamophobia or antisemitism is a big part of that but it doesn't work out the same way in all countries. The same with homophobia, I mean in Poland and Hungary it's quite effective but in the UK not really, but this then allows them to play the 'crusades and conquerors' card.

In addition to the welfare chauvinism card. But this is all about how you create the 'other' that doesn't match, ethnically, culturally, to your homeland, the 'sacred homeland' that is supposed to contain the formative values of the nation.

Recently it was exposed that American neo-nazis had helped start a chain of 'brown gyms' far right training clubs in England called Active Club. Are there other cross-border connections, say with the European continent?

I know there was the English Defence League — Polish Division and then there was the Polish Defence League — English Division, that created a lot of confusion. The Football Lads Alliance try to use their networks to see who is now in the UK, etc., but these are really really marginalised groups. But in general what is helping the far right internationalise is they all moved to social media, especially now that platforms like X are weaponising 'freedom of speech'. This was very evident with the Capitol Hill uprising, this scare that was created online translated into real action. So I don't know how conscious people from the Trump camp actually were of how it might end up, I think they underestimated the power of social media in this case, but you could see that vast array of groups like the QAnon, the identitarians, the Proud Boys



and so on, they all met at the Capitol Hill because of this scare that was created by Trump's acolytes online.

Let's go back to the contrast between their 'internationalism' and their racism. Are leaders like Orban in Hungary or Meloni in Italy really motivated by hatred of this 'other' that they stoke up?

This is actually a very convenient tool to seize power, because it plays on the really low instincts of this society, and in a globalising world there are more and more people coming in. But the interesting thing is that you don't really need to have refugees or migrants coming in to stoke xenophobia, you just create the image. People read that there are big movements of people from areas of civil war or poverty etc., and you can easily make a scarecrow out of that in order to seize power. I think this is a very cynical play. I think many leaders or at least their close



NEW INTERNATIONALISM



supporters are not actually ideological about it, they're just using these tropes because they think they work. And what happens after a couple of years is that you see they're trying to use this power not for some ideological purposes but that it's basically a kleptocracy. You see that in Hungary, most of the businesses are now owned or run by friends of Viktor Orban, in Poland every day there is a new scandal around stealing money from the state budget, if Bolsonaro were in power longer that would be obviously the case, also in Argentina. I'm pretty sure that lot of people from the immediate surroundings of the leaders are there only for the money and power. As for the leaders themselves, I don't know to be honest, some of them might really feel they have a mission, but it's quite often just to to seize power and whatever comes with it, usually money.

But that still causes the mainstreaming of ideas and attitudes that used to be associated only with the far right, and we're seeing how dangerous that can be. That's actually something that I've noticed recently when I was talking to parents at my children's school, and it's sometimes in form of a joke or something like

that, but you can see the spread of this xenophobic agenda in very 'moderate' terms throughout the middle class. You know, they were making jokes about lots of engineers and doctors coming on boats from North Africa to Europe, and this always comes with a small wink and so on. This is actually a 'light' version of what the far right is saying, and this scare about migrants and refugees is being extrapolated throughout the societies. So far I haven't seen any tool to combat this, to highlight things like the fact that the only rise in crime that happens after refugees come is in the crimes committed by the far right against the refugees, or against people who help the refugees. This is a challenge I actually think will need to be addressed in the next couple of years both by the movement but also I think by the policymakers to start pushing the anti-fascist agenda to middle class people.

Do you think anti-fascist groups are maybe less internationally networked than the far right? Are people absorbed in local struggles?

It's a question, how actively interested people are in what's happening in other

countries, because in some cases there are so many things going on in your home country that you don't even have time to look around at what is happening in the region or the continent, right? I mean we had that in Poland for eight years where the Polish government was quite annoying, especially to activists, and there were a lot of protest campaigns and a lot of people in the street. But there's so many things happening locally that people didn't have time to look at what's happening in Germany or beyond our eastern border because people were so busy dealing with these things on their own.

So what can you say about resisting the far right internationally?

When you look at attempts to combat those initiatives they're very much locally based, it is about people protecting their own communities. For example in the US, for many years anti-fascist politics was really scarce after Anti-Racist Action kind of slowed down, there was no militant anti-fascism.

Trump comes to power and you have people like Richard Spencer and others, and suddenly you have a revival of militant antifa. Nowadays, a lot of the American anti-fascist movement is community based, and it actually appeals to the communities saying that these people are a threat to our community which is diverse, migrant based, LGBT friendly or whatever other issue the far right is targeting. And I think that is actually a big power.

The second thing is that the far right is picking up on economic and social agendas that the left abandoned, protecting working families, a safer job environment, or restoring dignity by raising the minimum wage. These are leftist claims but the social democratic and liberal parties have embraced neoliberalism. I think today the mainstream parties' language is incomprehensible to the younger generation of activists, they want to push their own agenda which is a leftist agenda and they see threats to their agenda coming from the far right, so that's why they are becoming anti-right or even anti-fascist.

DISAPPEARING COVID'S

The government's "let it rip" attitude to Covid 19 led to the preventable death of large numbers of people, most infamously vulnerable elderly people in care homes. Lack of protections for vulnerable people, failure to provide adequate PPE, and forcing people to work in dangerous conditions exposed many people unnecessarily to the virus. It has also led to large numbers of people now suffering long covid.

Long covid can cause a wide range of symptoms but the most common are fatigue, brain fog, muscle aches and breathlessness. Fatigue is not just feeling tired, but is a very debilitating condition that can leave people unable to walk or take a shower without help. Women are more likely to develop it than men, and it's most common in the 45-54 age group.

The newspapers, when they cover long covid at all, are now reporting that patients have mostly gotten better (not the case) and that the current strains are not as dangerous. Having up-to-date boosters does provide some protection (so it is scandalous that the government is not providing free boosters to the general population) and the especially virulent early strains are more likely to lead to long covid than the later variants. However nobody is immune and every covid infection still has a risk. Immunocompromised people are especially at risk of their condition getting worse with reinfection, which makes the current "covid is over" assumptions very difficult to navigate for people.

Long covid sufferers, and other people who are especially vulnerable to covid infection, are currently having to deal with a situation where buildings do not have air purifiers, people do not wear masks anywhere even in hospitals, employers are telling people to come to work with covid, basically vulnerable people are written off and told to deal with the risk by themselves.

Some people wearing masks are abused on buses. Others have said they are marked down as difficult patients for asking staff to wear masks on hospital visits. Doctors are too inclined to write long covid off as "just a mental health condition". The push for attendance in

schools, including telling children to come in when they are sick, puts both children and staff who are vulnerable at risk of infection, and puts pressure on pupils with any chronic illness to attend to the detriment of their health.

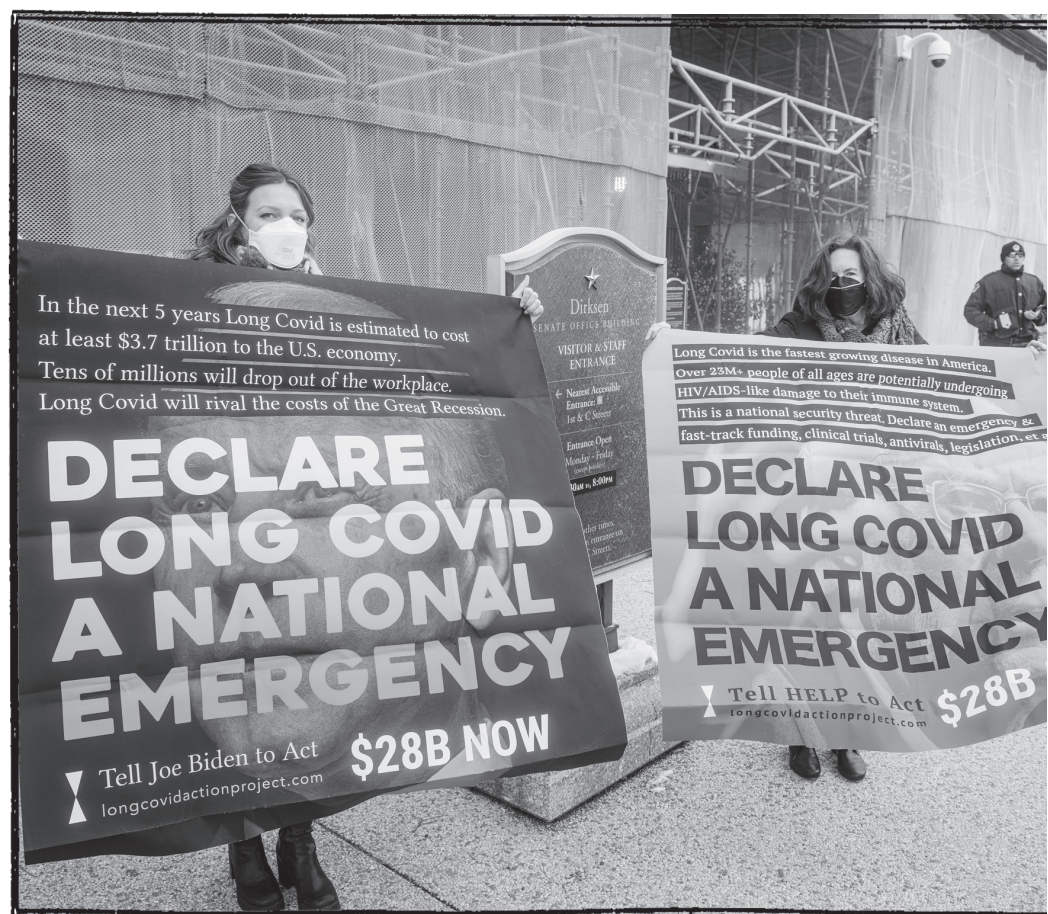
Doctors like patients to come in with a condition that has a straightforward test and then a recognised treatment plan and there is often mistreatment and neglect of patients with conditions that don't fit this model.

Long covid patients suffer from a lot of societal attitudes that affect many people with invisible and fluctuating disabilities. Many people perceive "genuine" disabilities to exist only when a person cannot do anything at all and when their condition is always the same. A classic example is that a wheelchair user should not be able to move their legs — there was a lot of fuss when Doctor Who had a character in a wheelchair who crossed hers. This actor, in real life, does

use a wheelchair, and she can cross her legs. Many people who use wheelchairs can walk short distances, and people are afraid to get out of their wheelchairs in public due to hostile reactions. The only criteria for whether somebody has the "right" to use a wheelchair is if that person benefits from using a wheelchair, and bystanders can mind their own business.

Long covid is a post-viral condition and these are not new or unknown, after the SARS epidemic large numbers of patients were ill long term with them. The government was warned about this by scientists when covid started, but appear to have ignored it. A lot of patients reporting feeling ill after the acute infection passed were told by GPs to exercise, which is now understood to be harmful.

People underestimate the prevalence of long covid for various reasons. Many who have long covid don't know it, as they don't connect a covid infection months ago with what appears to be a separate



Long Covid campaigners in the US

VICTIMS

health problem that has turned up. There isn't a straightforward long covid test, or at least not one that GPs are habitually using. People who are not well enough to work and be part of social activities drop out of sight of everyone except people who make the effort to stay in contact with them.

The treatment of patients with ME or chronic fatigue is very relevant to long covid patients. ME was identified in the 1950s at a London hospital and was considered from the start to be a real condition with a physical cause. It was studied and investigated as a post-viral condition. The widely held view of ME as fake, basically hysteria, comes from the views of a small number of scientists who have been given a lot of legitimacy by the government, who preferred to be dismissive of other scientists because it meant they could just ignore and disregard ME patients. The shocking mistreatment of ME patients is a very serious injustice and long covid patients need to be in solidarity with them struggling for research and compassionate medical treatment.

The government's increasingly shrill announcements that too many people are "economically inactive" and about returning the long term sick to the workplace are causing anxiety and fear amongst sick and disabled people of all conditions. People being pushed into work that they can't do can cause serious damage to their health. Reports on long covid minimising the severity of the condition is in this context very worrying. Many long covid patients have lost their jobs due to their employers refusal to make accommodations, and many others are too sick to work even with accommodations.

The government likes to announce yet more crackdowns on claimants, crackdowns that increase hostility, including violent attacks on disabled people, but don't tackle workplace discrimination, inaccessible transport and lack of accommodations.

Clean air inside buildings, especially hospitals and schools, would do a lot to prevent covid spread. Masking in key places such as hospitals would help protect the most vulnerable. This society

PONDERING ON PANDEMICS

This short extract is taken from Freedom Press's new title Fight For a New Normal.

The experience of confinement and the crisis of Covid-19 raise a question: why did mutual aid emerge in a moment of exceptionality, and why was it generally abandoned as soon as the possibility of private life returned? Perhaps this form in which social relations based on mutual aid have been materially constituted teaches us a certain limitation of the classic concept of mutual aid.

Outside the militant sphere, it seems to emerge, indeed, under an anarchist form — spontaneous, immanent, anti-hierarchical, solidaristic, horizontal. However, its development seems limited to the situation in which there is no alternative. Shouldn't anarchism, both theoretical and practical, ask itself as crudely as possible whether mutual aid is an effective tool of social transformation? Put another way, if relationships based on mutual support do not seem to occur outside situations of exceptionality, if they seem to disappear at the very moment when a return to normality becomes possible, how can we understand the emergence of mutual aid in such contexts?

Anarchist theory, especially in the classical vein stemming from the likes of anarchist theorist Peter Kropotkin, understands mutual aid as a kind of relationship that already exists in society, even in 'humanity' understood in its most abstract and idealistic form. However, a crude examination of one's own individual experience of everyday life shows that mutual aid is not a kind of generalised social relationship; rather, it

is that which arises when competition and authority have to be suspended.

Thus, we can draw some lessons from the Covid-19 crisis for anarchism. Even if mutual support seems the best way in which a human society should conduct itself, the fact is that we are far from the point where horizontal and co-operative relations are close to being hegemonic.

Anarchist theory should also understand that it is necessary to know under what conditions mutual aid arises and why such hegemony has not been achieved, even when the competition and authority that oppose it seem so contrary to human life.

...

The main characteristic of the mutual support movements that emerged during the pandemic was their hegemonic character. Most of the experiences during the pandemic are crossed by stories of solidarity, by people showing up to lend a hand, to help with something.

Suddenly, absolutely depoliticised people, who until that moment had been busy with their private life, discovered that living in community, living with the support of others, was a much more pleasant way of life, useful and providing a security that individual life did not provide.

Therefore, the main problem is the hegemony of mutually supportive relationships during confinement and the whole pandemic. Obviously, the question we have to ask ourselves is: where has all that network of support gone? What has happened to all that spontaneity? What has become of the need to help the other?

~ Christopher Morales

is not a caring and supportive place for people with a chronic health condition. Our movement should be, but in practice isn't always much better. People who have become disabled by a virus need support with rest and recovery, not judgment about whether they are really trying hard enough.

Covid safety is difficult to think about for people who feel burned out after years of the pandemic, but immunocompromised people can't be treated as disposable. Thinking about and including people with

long covid will involve measures that are helpful for lots of other people as well. Air purifiers help people with allergies, bringing a chair to pickets helps people with bad knees or who are pregnant.

Ill health isn't a moral failure or people being annoying, the vulnerability of the body is a part of being human.

- Fingers Malone



ZAPATISTAS: REVOLUTION

Zapatista education is an inspiration for many, as it has built an education system based on community self-organisation, mixed scientific and traditional knowledge, and the common struggle for land. For some years, the movement has been asking itself a fundamental question: how to fight for autonomy in the face of ecological collapse?

Since 1994, one of the largest popular uprisings in recent history has been underway in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico. The region's Mayan peoples practise self-determination, including in education. It is not capital or State that decides on Zapatista education, but community assemblies, with a strong role for women. In the face of attacks by paramilitary groups, drug trafficking, and threats of "development projects" by the government, Zapatista education and the construction of autonomy continue to reinvent themselves. Recently, the movement announced a structural change: hundreds of autonomous municipalities are being replaced by thousands of Local Autonomous Governments, which will be able to directly control their autonomous administrative spaces, including schools.

The Zapatista autonomous education system is different from State and private schools. Educators are indigenous people from the communities who do not lose their connection with the land. They are called promoters of autonomous education, or, in Tzotzil (a Mayan language), *jnikesvany* — the person who moves.

All education promoters are appointed by community assemblies. There is also an elected committee guiding and supporting the promoters. Each educator is accountable to the community. At the same time, the community also has its responsibilities: while promoters dedicate themselves to educational activities the community must pay them back directly with corn and beans or collective work on the educator's family's farm.

If, due to its anti-State nature, an unwary observer might imagine some similarity between Zapatista education and far right homeschooling, in reality, these proposals are antagonistic. Homeschooling is

ultra-privatist and conservative, and empties out the most collective aspect of education, making socialisation and relationships with different knowledge and worlds impossible. In the opposite direction, Zapatista education expands the relationship between school and collective life and has as one of its guidelines popular self-organisation and the end of private property.

The autonomous schools were a major transformation. Some older Zapatistas recall terrible experiences in the schools before the 1994 uprising. They say they attended for years without understanding what the Spanish-speaking teachers were saying, it was always a space devoid of meaning, where they felt oppressed because they were indigenous. In this context of extreme racism and with the end of negotiations with the State in 1997, the Zapatistas decided to form their own educational organisation. The movement then called on its rank and file to withdraw their children from official schools and participate in training for future educators. With this call, official schools were replaced by autonomous schools, and in places where there were no schools, new Zapatista schools were built.

Autonomous schools have the community's mother tongue as their main language and other languages are incorporated. Teaching and learning cannot be separated from the community and the land; there are compositions (not necessarily harmonious mixtures) between scientific and traditional knowledge with the struggle for autonomy as a reference. Students are not empty vessels receiving content; they are active subjects who also participate in decision-making.

There is an intense indigenous intellectual movement in the daily lives of Zapatista communities. In their training, educators study authors of popular education and Euro-Americans from the classical and contemporary left. They affirm its importance while saying it is not enough; education also comes from their reflection on the lives of the people. The *ch'ulel* is the "soul", the breath of life, present in all beings. Trees, rivers, land, animals and humans have *ch'ulel*, they are



in a relationship between subjects, they have value.

Capitalism weakens the *ch'ulel* of beings; autonomous education is one way to enhance it. Even in autonomy, there is no day of complete *ch'ulel*, but rather a constant walking and asking questions. It allows schools to become spaces for experimentation and strengthening struggles, where communities gain a central place, where one must give oneself completely to learn not only with one's head. To teach and learn, one must belong to the land.

Challenges, and the Web of Peoples

During the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Zapatista uprising, along with a big party, Subcommandant Moisés issued a warning to the youth: given the harsher context they are living in, there is no model or formula; a lot of collective practice is needed. The defence of common life was a recurring theme in his speech. It is necessary to defend common life, collective organisation, and the land, which is not just a local struggle: "it is not possible to humanise capitalism ... those who come from outside need to organise themselves from different geographies", he said.

Zapatista autonomy, and its educational system, is not a self-sufficient struggle.

IN EDUCATION



Given the ecological collapse we are experiencing, it is even more clear how a fire caused by agribusiness in Brazil has consequences for people in Mexico, just as the development project of the Maya Train has effects on the lives of the people in Brazil. Therefore, it is very important to think about educational practices based on connections between different struggles and geographies.

In Brazil, land repossessions by the enchanted Tupinambá of Olivença and Pataxós Hã Hã Hãe in southern Bahia, or the self-demarcation of Munduruku lands in Pará, among other examples, demonstrate how peoples' territorial struggle has an educational character. In this way the Web of Peoples, a project aiming to ally indigenous peoples across the continent, argues that: "Our perspective is not to demand the concession of plots of land from the State. It is essential that the people themselves conquer the lands because it is from the struggle that all the symbolism that will transform the land into territory is born" (Ferreira & Felício, 2021, p. 44).

This does not mean that autonomy is absolute; there are many spaces for coexistence with the State.

In the case of the Terra Vista Settlement in southern Bahia, for example, there are two public schools, one municipal and one State, which are important spaces for education and dialogue with the movement and the community. In addition, there is the Universidade dos Povos, the educational front of Teia, which seeks to promote libertarian education, based on the worldview of the people, the principles of agroecology, traditional knowledge and the struggle for land and territory. Calling this initiative a "university" is a provocation that subverts the conventional notion of a university, in an experiment to strengthen and deepen the knowledge of the people.

There are considerable challenges. Capitalism and colonialism often confuses autonomy with the supposed freedom of the individual, a perspective even present in activist spaces. Along with this, there is a concept of "decoloniality" that is empty and depoliticised. Aymara libertarian thinker Silvia Cusicanqui proposes a distinction between decoloniality and the anti-colonial struggle in response:

"Since colonial times, there have been processes of anti-colonial struggle; on the other hand, decolonialism is a very recent fashion that, in some way, takes advantage of and reinterprets these processes of struggle, but I believe that it depoliticises them, since decolonialism is a state or a situation, but it is not an activity, it does not imply agency, nor conscious participation. I put the anti-colonial struggle into practice in facts, in some way, delegitimising all forms of objectification and the ornamental use of the indigenous that makes up the State."

In addition, educational activities for the anti-colonial struggle are underway, in

the sense proposed by Cusicanqui. One path is discussed by Mestra Mayá. She tells how she became a teacher about the land reclamations with the enchanted:

"Parents would go to the retakes and carry their children, and what I had to do was go. I had 396 classrooms. And I participated in all 396 retakes. (...) I would go there and ask the children if they knew why they were in that place. That way, we were learning and rewriting our history."

For Mayá, this involves collectively telling the stories of the dispossessed. In the history of colonisation on the continent, the class struggle is a struggle for land marked by violent appropriation. Education about repossessions is necessary to learn from the Earth, keeping alive the spirit linked by the enchanted in an ongoing guerrilla war.

"We may be having a lot of difficulty with the struggle. When we put our feet on the ground, our ears to the ground, when we feel the groaning of the earth, hear its call, we know how we will follow our steps, because we are listening."

The call of Mestra Maya and the inspiration of the Zapatista autonomous education system point to learning focused on belonging to the land, but not simply defending a local struggle or identity. One challenge is precisely to build autonomy based on interdependence: between all beings; between different types of knowledge, to face ecological collapse. Interdependence is contrary to the dependence generated by capitalism, which divides and alienates.

Autonomous education as a path to interdependence enables unity: an articulation that does not lead to homogenisation. Debating these and other challenges collectively becomes urgent in the face of the fire that is destroying the lands of peoples here and there.

We conclude with a final question that Zapatismo constantly provokes: "¿Y tu, qué?" (And you, what are you going to do?).

~ Ana Paula Morel



PRISON SOLIDARITY IN

Sean Patterson and a member of the Moscow Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) discuss their long history supporting imprisoned Russian anarchists, the challenges they face under Putin and their work during the war on Ukraine.

Can you tell readers about the ABC's historical origins?

It was usual in the 19th century that groups supporting political prisoners called themselves the "Political Red Cross." In Russia, tens of thousands were imprisoned after the revolutionary events of 1905-1907, but anarchists felt that the Political Red Cross was giving priority to other socialist prisoners over anarchists, and established their own organisations. After the 1917 February Revolution they ceased their activities, but in the spring of 1918 anarchists had to set up new organisations to support comrades repressed by the Bolsheviks. They established themselves now under the name Anarchist Black Cross (ABC).

Gradually, anarchists in the Soviet Union were imprisoned and forced to emigrate, and support organisations were based abroad.

During the great purge of 1937, contact with most anarchist prisoners was lost as they were executed and around 1940, all prisoner correspondence outside the USSR was banned. Support for anarchist political prisoners in the Soviet Union became impossible.

The first modern group using the ABC name was established in London in 1967 by Albert Meltzer, Stuart Christie, and others and since then, there has been a continuity of groups working under the ABC name.

ABC-Moscow was established in 2003, in the aftermath of the trials against members of the New Revolutionary Alternative (NRA), an armed group consisting of both anarchists and authoritarian Marxists, which engaged in a symbolic bombing campaign in and around Moscow. We were supporting anarchist members of the NRA and decided to establish a more longstanding group also to support anarchist prisoners abroad.

In the first years, there was a case when a comrade was arrested in Yaroslavl after receiving our materials, and officers beat him in order to find out who was behind ABC-Moscow. But besides this incident, there was never a serious threat against our group until 2022, though the group was never working openly.

In the post-Soviet period, when did the incarceration of anarchists begin? How repressive has it been over time?

The first major campaign was for Rodionov and Kuznetsov, two punks accused of defending themselves with a razorblade and penknife against police attacking a demonstration for victims of the Soviet terror in March of 1991. The campaign kicked off in February 1992 after their sentences, less than two months after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The solidarity campaign got widespread attention and was successful in shortening the sentences.

Before the NRA case in 1998-1999, there was the Krasnodar case, when anarchists were accused of plotting to murder governor Kondratenko. Larisa Schiptsova (later Romanova) was defended by the lawyer Stanislav Markelov and received probation. Romanova was eventually sentenced to six years in prison in the NRA case.

In the second Krasnodar case in 2004, authorities planted drugs on two editors of Avtonom. They received short sentences in a low-security prison, and the journal was forced to move to Moscow.

For about 20 years, Avtonom was the anarchist journal with the biggest print run, but publication had to cease after the Ukraine invasion in 2022. The linked Autonomous Action was the largest anarchist organisation in Russia until the whole concept of organisation declined in the 2010s. ABC-Moscow cooperated closely with both.

In the early 2000s State repression was not continuous, and ABC-Moscow had more time to join international struggles, but in the latter part of the decade it was mostly busy dealing with repression against Antifa, which had first appeared in the late '90s. The scale and intensity



of confrontations grew until Nazis began targeted assassinations against anti-fascists in Moscow and St Petersburg. Previously indifferent authorities got involved, and a number of anti-fascists were imprisoned.

Stanislav Markelov was often the chosen lawyer for Antifa and an activist of the movement itself — not an anarchist but a sympathiser. He ended up on the Nazi hit list and was murdered in 2009 together with Anastasia Baburova, an anarchist and member of Autonomous Action. The murder of Markelov was a huge blow from which we still have not recovered

The Network case against anarchists in Penza and St Petersburg in 2017-2018 was a major turning point. Although Islamists, National Bolsheviks and Nazis were routinely tortured for confessions 20 years ago, this was the first time anarchists had been targeted. The case galvanised the movement, and for a few years, most of it was involved in the defence campaign, but all the accused received exactly the sentences demanded by the prosecution — apparently decided by the FSB. The torture and harsh sentences were probably revenge for the wave of insurrectionary direct actions by anarchists across Russia in 2008-2014, for

PUTIN'S RUSSIA



which no-one was ever caught.

Another blow came from revelations from one of the fugitives of the Network case that some of the accused were connected to a drug-related double homicide in Ryazan in 2017. Although most of the accused had nothing to do with the homicides, this caused solidarity to pretty much vanish.

Failure to stop the Network case set up a pattern. In 2022, authorities fabricated another underground “anarchist organisation,” this time in Tyumen, Yekaterinburg and Surgut (the Tyumen Case). All the accused were tortured, and the case is currently in court. Now, any anarchist targeted by authorities may expect torture, trumped-up charges and decades in prison.

What services does ABC-Moscow provide for anarchist prisoners? What types of events do you organise?

We are a small group, and we seldom take care of complete cases of repression — more often, we are a sort of information and financial clearinghouse between the international anarchist community and friends and family who are providing lawyers and parcels for prisoners. Often, the biggest financial burden of the defence is on the families of the prisoners.

A number of better-known prisoners have specialised support groups and campaigns, and we try to spread their fundraisers and other news.

It is still possible in Russia to organise prisoner support events, such as letter writing, movie screenings, and concerts, although they are sometimes raided by authorities. However, due to the increased attention toward our group, we do not organise such events under our name.

Are there any notable successes or particular cases you would like to highlight?

It has always been quite uncommon to have someone released due to a support campaign. Usually, we have to be happy with more modest “successes,” such as providing a prisoner with a lifeline through lawyer visits and letters.

One exception was the Khimki case, in which anti-fascists Alexey Gaskarov and Maxim Solopov were accused of organising a riot against the municipal administration during a 2010 campaign against the construction of a new motorway from Moscow to St Petersburg. Gaskarov was found not guilty, and Solopov got a very lenient two-year probational sentence. Although, it is hard to say how much of this was due to the support campaign.

How has the war in Ukraine impacted ABC-Moscow? In early 2024 ABC was declared an “undesirable organisation.” Does this label apply to the ABC inside Russia, and has it had any practical impact?

We are not planning to find out if this label applies to local chapters inside Russia!

Actually, it was the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) of the United States which was labelled “undesirable.” It might have been a donation by the Los Angeles section to us which provoked this. We do not know if the Russian authorities are aware that the ABCF is mostly busy with domestic cases inside the US, and all the groups in Europe and Russia work independently. But obviously, the goal of this move is to target all ABC groups inside Russia.

This has been a serious alert. Perhaps an even more serious warning sign was the torture of anti-war activist Vladimir

Sergeev. Sergeev was sentenced to almost eight years in prison for an attempt to torch a police car at an anti-war rally in Moscow. After his sentencing, he was sent to spend his sentence in Siberian prisons. While he was staying in Krasnoyarsk prison in February, he was tortured as authorities were pressuring him to cooperate with the prison administration.

He was one of the first known anti-war direct action prisoners, and originally, support for such prisoners was provided under the ABC label. However, eventually, a separate support organisation, Solidarity Zone, was organised by anarchists for anti-war direct action prisoners — most of these prisoners are not anarchists.

Apparently, letters from the ABC were still interesting to the authorities almost two years later, and Sergeev was interrogated about the ABC, among other things. Due to this, we have been forced to seriously increase our security, which has hampered our ability to take new cases. All of our members have been forced out of Russia.

Can the international community help?

Three main ways are to spread information, send support mail to prisoners, and donate to lawyer costs and parcels.

For news, you may check the English news section of avtonom.org, although the Russian version is updated more often. You can also find the current list of prisoners we support there.

With the service prisonmail.online, you can send mail to many Russian political prisoners. Note that many countries in Europe have halted snail mail service to Russia.

Choosing a prisoner for regular correspondence is a neat way to show solidarity if, for example, one’s life situation makes it difficult to join a group. Our donation guidelines are at wiki.avtonom.org/en/index.php/donate.



THE STORY OF A-INFOS

*This year is the 30th anniversary of long-running anarchist news clearing house A-infos. In the following article **Alisa-Ece Tohumcu** talks about its roots and impact.*

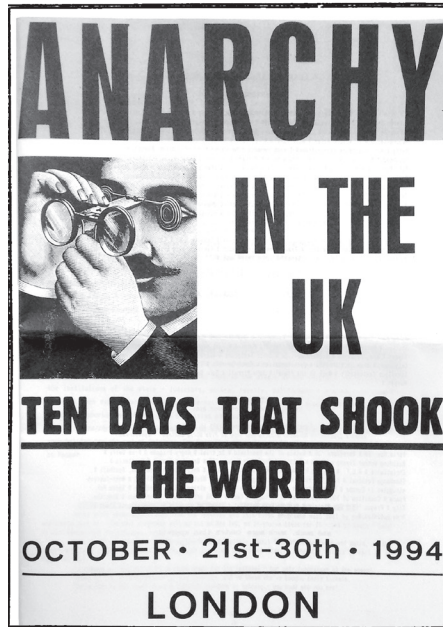
A shift in global communication was underway in the 1990s, and as digital networks began to transform the dissemination of information there was a need for a decentralised, non-hierarchical platform to facilitate the exchange of revolutionary ideas and news.

As a response, A-infos was launched in 1994, standing as an international anarchist newswire; forming a community amongst anti-authoritarians, anarcho-communists, syndicalists, and other revolutionary groups to collectively share news.

Emerging in the same landscape as other radical publications, A-infos created an international network that managed to eschew the individualism and market-driven constraints of its digital media counterparts. The project remains committed to anarchism as a “social theory”, rejecting both liberal reformism and also symbolic activism which substitutes mass struggle for performative gestures. As the biography of the A-infos page puts it, their work is rooted in the tradition of the Haymarket martyrs and the critique of authoritarianism.

The project was not simply a product of the digital age but was built through decades of anarchist organising. There were earlier efforts to create an international anarchist network around the 1990s, consisting of a printed sheet of news launched at anarchist meetings in the Netherlands. This model essentially was able to lay the groundwork for A-infos to become a multilingual digital news service which extended beyond borders and aided in the cultivation of a broader international community.

By 1995, the platform had transitioned into a wholly electronic format, with email subscription lists in a wide range



of languages to archive anarchist news and analysis; this structure remains intact to date. Its archive stretches over two decades, establishing it as a key resource within the development of anarchist thought, action, and theory throughout the years.

Andrew Flood was a contributing member of Spunk Press from its founding in 1992, a project which went on to be the largest archive of published anarchist media at the time and digitally catalogued in 1995. He, alongside some of his Spunk Press team members, went on to establish A-infos and stated that an anarchist gathering in 1994, Ten Days That Shook The World, is what enabled the project and other such collaborations to take place. With the rise of software like Google Translate in 2006, the news A-infos was circulating became more accessible and the dependency on multilingualism became less important.

Ilan Shalif, a Jewish anti-Zionist anarcho-activist is said to be one of the longest-running members of the collective. In conversation with Shalif, he recalled his

desire to be a revolutionist at the age of 15, becoming the main editor of A-infos in 1998. He detailed the struggles present in the maintenance of the newswire from its dawn, as it was initially heavily dependent on people sending in articles and needed multilingualism for international accessibility.

He also shed light on a split which occurred within the collective regarding the topic of consensus, resulting in disagreement across a great proportion of the team who left the collective. This also physically manifested through a member pulling all the server plugs, leaving the newswire incapacitated for a short period. Flood also states that following involvement in the 1998-1999 summit protests, members also began to drift.

The project's longevity is a testament to its enduring relevance within anarchist praxis and organising. As a collective they do not define themselves as an “open ‘liberal’ service that distributes anything sympathetic to anarchism”, but more so dedicated to the distribution of news from anarchist collectives and those engaged in direct action. Flood believes in the ongoing useful role of the fortune of A-infos and its cross-platform inclusivity.

As the media landscape is in continuous shift, accelerated by the rise of social media, algorithmic curation, and the exponentially increasing centralisation of digital platforms, A-infos persists as a space for unmediated and direct communication. As radical movements look toward the future, it provides an enduring model of how such communication can function outside both the State and the capital as the newswire stands as both a historical archive and also a living project. Fundamentally, their commitment to autonomy and collective decision-making remains crucial in a landscape dominated by surveillance, corporate control, and State manipulation of the media.



ANARCH-IVERSARIES

We can't let this year pass without mention of two big anniversaries in radical political history. One, 40 years ago, was the miners making their heroic last stand. And the other, merely 25, was the Carnival Against Capital.

1984: The Miners' Strike

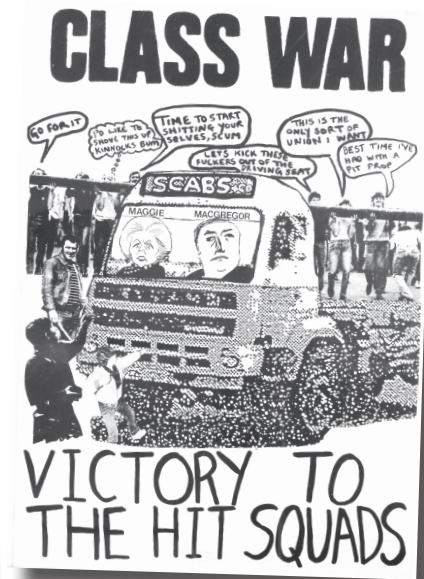
For anarchists, as for much of the left, the miners' strike against Thatcher's pit closures was broadly seen as an existential struggle and one which mobilised all quarters of the movement. Most infamous on a national scale was the intervention of *Class War*, a tabloid-style agitational paper that had begun publication just the previous year and already built a reputation for pugnacious prose. It came into its own during the strike itself, becoming popular at pickets with headlines calling for 'Victory to the Hit Squads' or featuring a noose slung around pictures of Neil Kinnock and Margaret Thatcher titled 'The Miners Have the Right Idea.'

Direct actionists were active all over the country in support of the grassroots, though criticism of the miners' leaders, especially Scargill, was common and there was often frustration in the pages of movement journals such as *Black Flag* that the struggle was tied too comprehensively to a narrow industrial fight rather than broadening into a more insurrectionary mode — though the need for "solidarity of the moment" was generally emphasised.

A letter in the June 1984 issue from D M (Middlesbrough) summed up some of the anarchists' mix of enthusiasm and ambivalence:

"The dynamism behind the strike from day one has come from the grassroots of the National Union of Miners. On this welcome development, as anarchists and believers in a revolutionary unionism under the conscious control of militant, self-organised workers, we must base our propaganda and activity. We seek working class unity yes. But don't confuse that with entertaining the mistakes and missed opportunities of reformist trade unionism."

Less noisy, but common, was anarchist involvement in solidarity groups. *Freedom*, despite making something of



a meal of things in its critical position of the miners as being marched down the garden path by their leaders, provided office space for fundraisers, while bucket rattling to fundraise round housing estates was common for radical groups from Edinburgh to London.

There is not enough room in a brief article to go through the archives of the time, but it's well worth checking out the Kate Sharpley Library's work, (especially its August *KSL Bulletin*) which considers the anarchist contribution in much more detail.

1999: Carnival Against Capital

From a purely anarchist perspective J18 (the carnival took place on June 18th) was more up the movement's alley. Decentralised, irreverent and self-consciously political, it drew heavily from the previous two decades of growing ambition in youth movements worldwide, especially in Europe, the US and South America, to challenge what had by this point been more than a decade of neoliberal hegemony.

While the Battle of Seattle in November of that year is often named as a turning

point in the ability of the anti-globalisation movement to confront capital on its own ground, J18 was when Britain's (and much of Europe's) radical youth moved from relative isolation to the high point of what became known as Party and Protest.

Nominally called as part of a global series of protests against the 25th G8 Summit in Germany, it electrified the media which ran days of front pages decrying the thousands of scruffy hooligans who reporters insisted were taking over central London.

Linking together activists from anarchist climate activism (the road protest movement, Earth First! etc.), bike-supporting Critical Mass with the free party scene and organised through Reclaim The Streets, the whole shebang also coincided with the forming of new decentralised online reporting. Indymedia, which offered open social media production long before corporate titans monetised it, began that same year as part of the drive to give activists their own voice against tabloid disinformation.

The State, panicked by partying radicals threatening to overwhelm the doors of the Stock Exchange, sent in a heavy force of riot police, confirming to activists that they were more than just a crowd of ravers. The set-tos would continue for the next two years, before 9/11 gave the state a golden opportunity to reset its position and draw on the evergreen final resort of scoundrels — wartime patriotism enabling crackdowns.



ETHEL HOLDSWORTH

For Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, an internationalist thread existed throughout her entire life and career, establishing her as a significant force in early twentieth century British socialism. She was a working-class poet, author and radical socialist (with strong libertarian leanings) active between 1907 and the early 1930s. She used literature to inspire the masses, without relying on preachy, didactic rhetoric.

She believed writing — whether in the form of journalism, poetry, or novels — could incite change as a form of praxis. She published the anti-fascist journal *The Clear Light* between 1923 and 1925, when the threat of fascism became a real presence in Britain. Inspired by Benito Mussolini's March on Rome and subsequent ascension of his fascist party in Italy, the British Fascisti were founded in 1923 by Rotha Lintorn-Orman, a war hero belonging to a family of high-ranking British army officers.

Carnie Holdsworth was one of the first people to recognise this new threat and actually do something about it. She mobilised immediately, working with E Burton Dancy and her husband Alfred Holdsworth to form an anti-fascist pressure group — the National Union for Combating Fascism (NUCF) in 1924. This was the only anti-fascist group that existed outside of London at the time, testament to the foresight and international political awareness of Yorkshire-based socialists (West Yorkshire was a stronghold of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in the early twentieth century). In *The Clear Light*, Carnie called for the alliance of Labour, communists, socialists and anarchists to combat fascism by pointing out their individual merits in an effort to get her friends and colleagues to listen to each other.

Her belief in a unified leftist force against fascism and internationalism was linked. In her early poem 'The Universal Life', Carnie Holdsworth stated:

*Wide open stands the door of my soul
and the world's men and women troop
through
some weeping, some laughing, some
dumb with despair
wearing roses and fennel and rue ...*



She forged an aesthetics of community relations unburdened by capitalist atomism and state tyranny. Her internationalism was emotional, as well as pragmatic: she emphasised the importance of emotional engagement with "the world's men and women" and was open to all people in all conditions.

1923-1925 was a busy period for Carnie Holdsworth; at the same time as her NUCF activity, she wrote a series of sonnets for *Freedom* advocating on behalf of the political dissidents languishing in Bolshevik prisons. The number of prisons was later expanded by Joseph Stalin, who came to power after Vladimir Lenin's death in 1924, to form the Gulag system: corrective labour camps containing 5 million prisoners by 1935. In 1924, the Solovki prison in the White Sea housed many anarchists, and in autumn of that year a large-scale hunger strike broke out, prompting Carnie Holdsworth to respond.

Her poetic contribution showcased the possibility of poetry as a vehicle for the promotion of internationalism. These sonnets, which contain lofty emotional outpours condemning tyranny and promoting liberty, advocated for anarchists by evoking anarchistic ideas found in their nascent form within Romantic era poetry from a century prior, such as Percy Shelley's 'Ozymandias':

*Who was the great Ozymandias, "king
of kings"?*

The desert answers with its fiery breath.

Shelley's original poem expressed the immateriality of the clamorous claims of empires: longevity, power, and — crucially — the illusion that no alternative could possibly exist. Through evoking Shelley's poem, Carnie Holdsworth belittles the Soviets' attempts to suppress dissent. The Romantic period was marked by a focus on subjective experience, emotional expression and nature worship,

which made it a good tool from which to critique the autocratic approach adopted by the Bolsheviks; Lenin's vanguard socialism degenerated into dictatorship in 1924.

Carnie Holdsworth's first sonnet in the series is her most sympathetic to anarchism:

*Laughing at times to muse how those
who prate*

*Of Liberty can think to make a cell
Strong to extinguish thy immortal flame
Unflickering in the windy gusts of hate,
Still steadfast in the ramparts of Power's
hell*

Holdsworth utilised Romantic notions of freedom and liberty to express anarchist perspectives — she recognised the enemy not as capital in this instance, but 'Power'. In a letter accompanying the sonnets, Holdsworth asserted she belonged to no political group. Instead, she declared, "I belong to the folk — from the most undeveloped and illiterate, so confused that they are the bedrock of even reaction, to Whitman and Morris, and Marx, Kropotkin, and Bakunin."

It is notable that she identified with poets as well as more traditional economic theorists. She understood the necessity of seeing multiple things at once: affective engagement with the suffering of individuals and practical political analysis. This capacity for complex engagement contributed to her unique and powerful voice within the socialist movement.

~ Megan Williams



REVIEW: THREE WAY FIGHT

Three Way Fight: Revolutionary Politics and Antifascism

Ed. Xtn Alexander and Matthew N Lyons
(PM Press, 2024)
ISBN: 9798887440415
416 pp

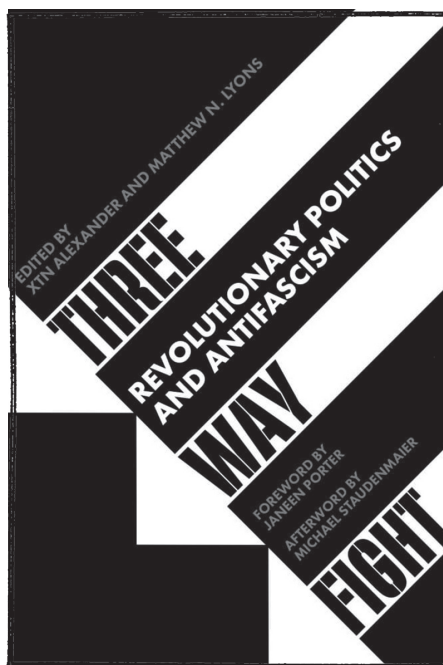
Rather than rely on the instinctive anti-fascism of many radicals who might prefer not to discuss what fascism actually looks like today, and therefore what the fight against it should look like, the essays collected here outline what being against 21st century fascism — both as it exists inside and outside the State — can and should mean.

The selections from eponymous website threewayfight.org are arranged chronologically rather than thematically, which is a fair enough editorial decision. But it was frustrating to have to wait for more than 50 pages until any concrete attempt to define contemporary fascism is presented. Significantly for the essays collected here, this came from a 2017 document, while the Marxist organisation whose former members contribute the bulk of the material (Sojourner Truth Organization, STO) was founded in 1969 and remained active through the 1980s.

The shortcomings of movement theoreticians who fail to offer more than a few obvious authoritarian characteristics of what gets called “fascism” (with or without hyperbole) are scattered throughout some of the more thoughtful essays and transcribed interviews.

In addition, there is an implicit understanding that the simplistic labeling as “fascist” of any and all opponents of communism and/or anarchism is unhelpful. The other simplistic position that’s rejected is the binary opposition of “the West” — the cartoonish stance of official anti-imperialism which embraces any resistance to Euro-American economic and political hegemony as revolutionary, even when those resistance movements are clearly reactionary.

As the editors say in their introduction, “The project’s ... supporters rejected the conventional liberal model that portrayed authoritarian extremists threatening a democratic center, but they also challenged the standard leftist binary that



saw fascism and liberalism as arrayed together in defense of capitalism against the working-class left.”

The existence of an insurgent, anti-law enforcement and sometimes anti-war reactionary fascist movement (or rather, movements) completely escapes the logic of liberal antifascism. Beginning from their experiences from STO and continuing with activities in Anti-Racist Action, many of the people who contribute to *Three Way Fight* clearly grew frustrated with the lack of an analytical perspective among American antifascists. And it paid off; reading through the selections was far more interesting and enjoyable than reading an endless catalog of self-congratulatory action reports.

That said, there is an unfortunate corollary that comes along with striving for analytical and theoretical rigour: the tendency toward centralisation and hierarchy. As self-conscious Marxists, STO already took these organisational characteristics for granted, would never have considered them to be a problem, and many such assumptions are scattered throughout the collection.



Sadly, self-described anarchists are not immune to this tendency, as can be seen with various uncritical mentions of *Love and Rage* (1990/91-98); *Bring the Ruckus* (1997-2002?); the Federation of Revolutionary Anarchist Collectives (FRAC, 2001-06) and the North Eastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (NEFAC, 2000-08). Each of these cross-pollinated organisations suffered from the usual drifts toward hierarchy and conformism. One essay, from members of the IWW union’s Atlanta General Defense Committee exhibit this without any hint of irony:

“A mass approach requires a higher level of coordination. If we’re serious about confronting fascism ... then we’ll need to get serious about group cohesion, group discipline, and accountability ... The movement that we need now has to move beyond ... individual, unaccountable behavior.”

Perhaps if I didn’t know the history of the above organisations, I might not find this quotation from the IWW to be troubling. But the history is known, and it features loss of members due to organisational inertia, attrition from simple burn out, interpersonal conflicts that leadership either deny or deem trivial, all the way to public (often acrimonious) resignations and splits.

And judging from the rhetoric still being produced by the current crop of groups deriving — both ideologically and with some of the same people — from the aforementioned outfits, virtually no lessons have been learned from previous failures to create, let alone maintain, formal cadre-based membership mass organisations.

Anarchists are not against organisation, but some ask more questions about it than others. My own experiences as part of both formal and informal organisations has made me sceptical, especially of anarchist organisations that aim for a mass base. Nevertheless, leaving aside the various challenges of how many of the contributors — Marxist and anarchist alike — have decided to organise themselves, *Three Way Fight* contains plenty to think about and discuss. As such, it’s a valuable addition to the ongoing struggle.

~ Jay Arachnid

FREEDOM PRESS UPDATE

Building

The biggest news of the last six months at Freedom has been our successful completion of the building fundraiser, bringing in £15,000 for those various works needed to keep our ramshackle old dive from falling over (it's only a little lean, hardly noticeable really).

Our everlasting thanks go both to the exceedingly generous donor who put us over the line, and the many people who gave smaller but no less vital amounts — you've very much helped to keep the place going!

With a new building admin on board we've been forging ahead with all sorts of little fixes, from leaky guttering — which had produced a small forest on the outside wall and was the reason for our plaster problems on the stairs — to renewing the damp proof course.

Volunteers have repainted various bits of the interior, and even the old varnish has been taken off the stairs to the first floor, leaving them an even colour for the first time in decades.

Still on the high priority list will be the windows, some of which are er, somewhat approximate in how well they fit the frames after years of gentle shifting about of the building, and of course there will be much more replastering, painting, replacement of iffy vinyl etc. But it's great to have a bit of security of funding for that.

Shop

The summer was relatively quiet (in a good way) but saw a number of interesting talks and events, from Tom Harris on animal liberation activism to a great talk on the speculative fiction of *Everything for Everyone* and the intersectional theory of *Neuroqueer*.

News

We are happy to welcome our new editor, Uri Gordon, to the thankless position of lightning rod and toiler in the article commissioning mines. Many thanks go to his predecessor, Sylvia Mann, for her time at the helm.



Uri is well known in the movement at large for his contributions to anarchist theory as well as pioneering *Indymedia* and resisting Israeli apartheid. He has been around for decades, so is well used to the “what do you call two anarchists in a room — an argument” situation that we are proud to call a movement.

He has been doing the job since early May and you may have noticed his touch on our daily-updated news site. We also had a mildly viral showing earlier this summer thanks to some excellent coverage of the far-right riots and their aftermath. Ambitious plans are afoot for expanding the team and redesigning the website, stay tuned for more to come.

Publishing

We have a new book! It's been a bit of

a mission this one due to various delays and troubles for the people working on it, but *Fight For a New Normal* is out and on the shelves (you can find a brief extract on page nine of this journal). As the viral-looking front page attests, this is a book about Covid, or more specifically about the mutual aid phenomenon that rose to meet it.

Freedom is sometimes poor at tooting our own horn (this column aside) but the role played by our team in generating interest in themes of mutual aid in the early days of the pandemic was considerable, and throughout the worst of it we carried some extraordinarily insightful essays about its benefits — and risks.

As FFaNN editor, Jim Donaghey picks up on some of these and gathers a terrific selection of other writings from some of the most notable anarchist thinkers writing today, from the highly relevant author of *Disaster Anarchy* Rhiannon Firth, to Ruth Kinna of *The Government of No One* fame.

As for what's coming next, we're hoping to put out, either towards Christmas or in the New Year, a particularly important title (and timely, given the recent far-right surge): *Physical Resistance*.

Originally published by Zero Books, this history of anti-fascism in Britain from the 1920s is brought up to the present day by Louise Purbrick and is a genuine must-read for anyone looking to understand the rise, fall and adaptation of our ideological enemies.

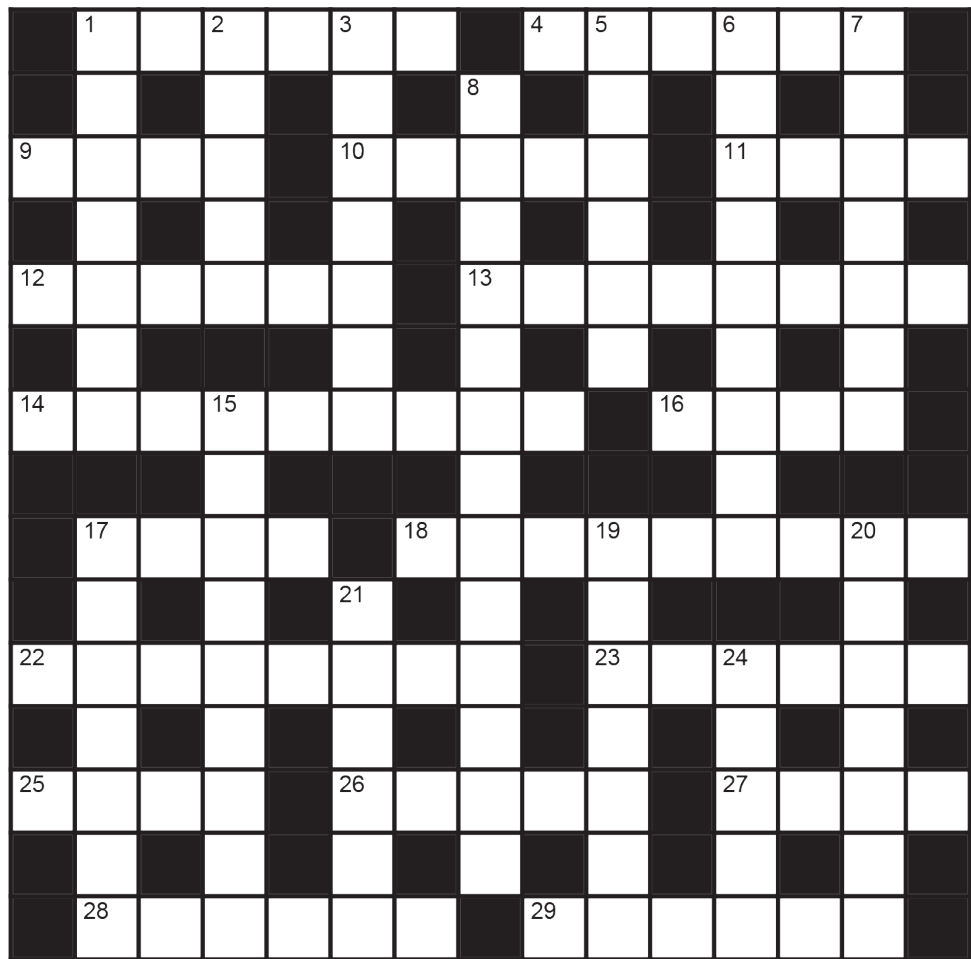
Xword Solution

In-App: 1. Probat, 2. Otter, 3. Let It Go, 4. Action, 5. Adam Ant, 6. Insistent, 7. Climate, 8. Possibilities, 9. Fragments, 10. Project, 11. Tuborg, 12. Cantata, 13. Utopia, 14. Ensign, 15. Dawn, 16. Oxeye, 17. Areal, 18. Chat, 19. Dismount, 20. Scotsman, 21. Self-Doubt, 22. Debt, 23. Trout, 24. Swap, 25. Carrot, 26. Poodle, 27. Manna, 28. Colt, 29. Across: 1. Poodle, 4. Manna, 9. Colt, 10. Trout, 11. Swap, 12. Carrot, 13. Scotsman, 14. Self-Doubt, 16. Debt, 17. Chat, 18. Slapstick, 22. Dismount, 23. Orient, 25. Dawn, 26. Oxeye, 27. Areal, 28. Ensign, 29. Utopia.



ACROSS

- 1. Looped, lit breed of dog (6)
- 4. Von Trapp apprehended Nazi on dock
- 9. Young stallion is a pistol (4)
- 10. Vonnegut character's game fish
- 11. Setback in pawpaw seed trade (4)
- 12. Orange thing is rust perhaps?
- 13. Is no true one a fallacy? (8)
- 14. Impostor syndrome revealed by unmade bed of slut (4-5)
- 16. In retrospect, flatbed lorry carried an obligation
- 17. Chartreux cat sparks conversation
- 18. A smack with a twig is a type of humour
- 22. Criticize footballer Mason? Get off!
- 23. Direct toward the East
- 25. Waved wand at sunrise
- 26. Daisy's bovine organ
- 27. Tomb raider backed into dead sea (4)
- 28. Dash to endorse national flag
- 29. Ideal spot among bayou topiaries



DOWN

- 1. Process for certifying will is for worms, they say
- 2. Not terribly fond of holding an aquatic mammal (5)
- 3. Drop that "Frozen" song (3,2,2)
- 5. Something done to a tonic cocktail (6)
- 6. Demanding sis kidnapped by design
- 7. Uncompromising singer of "Goody Two Shoes" (4,3)
- 8. Aspects of poets' lib make for good prospects
- 15. Splinters pieces
- 17. Mood set by silly clam tie
- 19. Launch an enterprise
- 20. Able to interweave a Bach composition
- 21. Formed after bath, limited association creates beer brand (6)
- 24. Purchases of some pippin apples (2-3)

HELPING OUT

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PUBLISHING BOOKS
 publishing@freedompress.org.uk

WITH THE BUILDING
 building@freedompress.org.uk

OTHER INQUIRIES
 admin@freedompress.org.uk

FUNDRAISING

The Building Fund may be done but we still have a whole bundle of stuff that needs working on and could do with a bit of cash. Most recently, due to the closure of Andgate Press, we've picked up an extra annual bill for printing this journal of £1,500 a year, more if we ever decide to increase its frequency (which we'd like to). The newswire too needs some funding as our current site could really do with an upgrade, and publishing has some ideas which would benefit from a capital injection. If you can spare a bit you can pay online via paypal.me/fbuildingcollective, by cheque, payable to "Freedom Press," or by direct transfer (email admin).

COMING SOON...

Keep an eye out on our socials (below) for more events at the shop. Alongside work towards a website upgrade we have a long list of titles to bring back into print, digital archiving to sort out, and possibly even some more multimedia adventures.

Social media:

- Mastodon: kolektiva.social/@Freedom_Press
- IG: [freedombookshop](https://www.instagram.com/freedombookshop) (shop), [freedomcollective1886](https://www.instagram.com/freedomcollective1886) (news)
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- Bluesky: freedompress.bsky.social

BOOKS FROM FREEDOMPRESS.ORG.UK

FIGHT FOR A NEW NORMAL?

VARIOUS, EDITED BY JIM DONAGHEY

In this series of essays and interviews, anarchist look at how the phenomenon of mutual aid played out amid lockdowns and State inadequacy during the Covid pandemic, and what lessons can be learned.

ISBN: 978-1-904491-44-6
BGW, 176 PAGES
RRP: £9

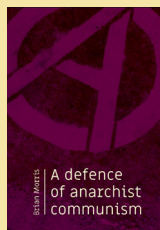


A DEFENCE OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

BY BRIAN MORRIS

Morris delves into the philosophy and action of the political theory as part of a defence against its critics within the anarchist movement. In doing so, he also offers forthright critiques of his own.

ISBN: 978-1-904491-39-2
148 PAGES (A6)
£5

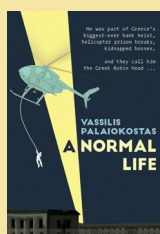


A NORMAL LIFE

BY VASSILIS PALAIOKOSTAS

Official autobiography of the famed "Greek Robin Hood" who has robbed millions from the rich and given it to the poor. Still on the run decades later, Palaiokostas is perhaps best known for his daring prison escapes ...

ISBN: 978-1-904491-41-5
352 PAGES
£15



ANARCHY IN ACTION

BY COLIN WARD WITH INTRODUCTION BY SOPHIE SCOTT-BROWN

Ward demonstrates that the roots of anarchist practice are not so strange as they might at first seem. Instead they lie precisely in the ways that people have always tended to organise themselves.

NEW EDITION
ISBN: 978-1-904491-45-3
PAGES
£9.50



THE STATE — OR REVOLUTION

ESSAYS BY CAMILLO BERNERI, EDITED BY IAIN MCKAY

"It is not so much how one dies that counts in the ultimate evaluation of one's worth. It is how one lives; and the life of Camillo Berneri stands out in all its inner strength and radiant beauty." ~ Emma Goldman

ISBN: 978-1-904491-41-5
204 PAGES
RRP: £10



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 (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 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.

Some resources:

libcom.org: Huge repository of history and theory on every aspect of anarchism
katesharpleylibrary.net and sparrowsnest.org.uk: Archives and writing on the British movement
channelzeronetwork.com: Collection of podcasts and anarchist-aligned radio shows from around the globe
Activist Court Aid Brigade: Legal support for when the action goes a bit wrong
freedomnews.org.uk: Our very own newswire

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Front page image: Earth 2 Photomontage,
courtesy of Peter Kennard
Gelatin silver and cibachrome, print on card, 1981
Dingbats 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