

New AF Pamphlet

Introduction to Anarchist Communism Anarchist Federation



New from the Anarchist Federation: Introduction to Anarchist Communism

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ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists (based in Britain and Ireland, but with many contacts overseas) which aims to abolish Capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is Anarchist Communism.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the ruling class which controls all the power and wealth, and the working class which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the direct action of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world it's destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it such as working through parliament and national liberation movements (like the IRA) as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them, they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

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The Free Hetherington Evicted...

There have been interesting developments with the Free Hetherington occupation at Glasgow University since we last reported on it (see Resistance #130).

On the morning of Tuesday 22nd March, police began the forced eviction of the Free Hetherington. They arrived with no warning and no eviction order was given. After word spread about what was happening, supporters gathered for a



sit-down protest on the front steps of the building and police amassed their forces. In the end, approximately 80 police officers, a canine unit and a police helicopter were deployed to forcibly evict fewer than fifteen people from both the Hetherington and the adjoining building. When they refused to leave, the occupiers were violently dragged from the buildings. This extremely

Continued Inside.

Then Re-Occupied!

Inside: March 26th, crisis in social care, sabotage at work & more

Continued...

heavy-handed police response resulted in several people being injured, including one student who sustained a concussion after being thrown head-first into a wall by university security.

By this point, hundreds of people had gathered outside to see what was going on. After the last occupier had been dragged out, the mass of people sprung into action. With most of the police gone, the crowd, numbering around 100 people, marched from the Hetherington towards

the main administrative building of the university, hoping to occupy the Principal's office. Unable to find it, protesters decided that the University Senate rooms would be adequate. These rooms are the incredibly plush suite where the senior university management is based and where they host their meetings and events. In the words of some of the occupiers - it wasn't an eviction, it was an upgrade!

After refusing to have a mass meeting with students for several weeks, the

Senior Management Group finally relented and held an open public meeting with students in the newly-occupied Senate rooms. Later that evening, folk singer David Rovics held a concert on the balcony of the Senate, overlooking the city of Glasgow. At approximately 10pm, the university management caved in and told the new occupiers that they could have the old Hetherington building back on the condition that they left the Senate rooms. So within 12 hours of being evicted

from the Hetherington building, the students were rather cordially invited back in.

Since re-entering the Hetherington building, the occupation has gone from strength to strength. Normal activities have resumed, from anti-cuts meetings to kids' film showings. Those involved have a renewed vigour, inspired by the re-affirmation of the old adage: direct action gets the goods!

Bristol AF on the 26th of March

The TUC predictably have turned their backs on the Anarchist groups, students and anyone else in attendance who chose to use more direct tactics than marching from A to B. Brendan Barber TUC general secretary said he "bitterly regretted" the violence, the deputy defence secretary described those involved as "tiny minority of violent, parasitic unrepresentative hooligans", while London's Deputy Mayor Kit Malthouse said they were "fascist agitators." Worryingly, shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper urged home secretary Theresa May to "consider co-ordinated action against so-called anarchist groups."

In response, we would like to state we support all those who took part in any of the marches on the day no matter which tactics they used to make



their point or their specific reason for being on the march. We recognise those within the TUC who genuinely worked hard to make the protest inclusive and successful. We even support the woman who said "Anarchists should be banned from demonstrations", and the man from the fire brigade union who accosted one of our comrades and chastised him for having a face mask. We do however condemn the actions of those scum we saw attempting to

smash the window of a coffee shop while an elderly couple sat on the other side of it, and those idiots who threw paint bombs, sticks and even metal fencing from the back hitting and injuring fellow protesters. Let's get this straight: only wankers throw from the back and endanger the safety of comrades and innocent passers-by! We really hope they were the Fascist agitators the deputy mayor described as they have no right to call themselves Anarchists.

The TUC dubbed the march "The March for the Alternative"; many people and also the media are left asking what this alternative is. Well, we have the alternative: class struggle ending in the complete destruction of capitalism and the hierarchical state system, to allow us to finally live as equals, with genuine freedom, working together to benefit our communities rather than our 'leaders'.

Swindon Anti-cuts action

Around 100 people gathered in Swindon town centre on Saturday March 5th for a local demo against the cuts. After listening to a range of speakers from various unions, community groups (and even one from the Anarchist Federation), people planned to move around the corner

for a mass leafletting session. A 20 to 30-strong contingent of radicals, predominantly anarchists, moved off as a group, defying police stipulation that the demo would remain static. It was hoped that more people would join the spontaneous march, but an early, heavy handed police

reaction deterred many. As soon as the group began chanting and marching, the police began pushing at the front banner, trying to confiscate banners and labelling the march 'illegal'. After a short, slightly comical scuffle (the highpoint being an angry cop getting wrapped up in an 'anarchists against the cuts' banner), and lots of chanting, the breakaway group split into two, congregating ten minutes later to hand out leaflets and do tax-dodger actions at Vodafone and Topshop, leading to the partial shutdown of Topshop, and Vodafone locking its doors.

Overall, the day was a success for the local movement against the cuts, with a large, well-attended rally, thousands

of leaflets given out, and a large, noisy and determined breakaway group showing that when they say 'cut back', we really do mean 'fight back'!

The day ended with the movement gaining much vocal support from a diverse cross section of the community, a few tax-dodgers losing a bit of revenue, anarchism and direct action being put back on the agenda in Swindon and the cops (who have tried their hardest to intimidate and stifle the campaign from the outset) bleating about a 'breakdown in trust'! All in all a good day, and a launch pad for more actions in the future. A Swindon and Wiltshire Afed group is planned for the near future.



Job Centre occupied in Deptford

Local people occupied the disused Job Centre Plus in Deptford in March as a response to government cuts to public services. They aimed to create a space from which the anti-cuts movement can organise resistance to the cuts imposed by the government and carried out by Lewisham Council under the control of the Mayor of Lewisham, Steve Bullock, and other Labour councillors. They also aimed to create a public social space for other members of the local community in Deptford and the rest of Lewisham. Steve Bullock had announced the closure of five libraries, children's centres

and other public centres. The local people who have opened this social centre in Deptford do not believe that vital services like healthcare and education are unaffordable, after billions of pounds have been used to bail out the financial system. The social centre is a self-organised space, run by people from a variety of backgrounds. They want Social Centre Plus, as it has been named, to be a catalyst for social and political change based on the principles of direct action, solidarity and self-organisation.

new occupied space for the community
socialcentreplus

"They Have Silenced Me Long Enough"

It was 2am on International Human Rights Day, 10th December 2009, when Israeli soldiers kicked in Abdullah Abu Rahmah's door seized him from his bed. He was dragged away in front of his wife and three children, blindfolded, to custody. Abu Rahmah's 'crime' was that he was the co-ordinator of the non-violent Bil'in Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements. He didn't so much as throw a tantrum, never mind stones, and yet he found himself in front of an Israeli Military Court and was sentenced to one year in prison, for organising demonstrations against the Wall in Bil'in.

Not content with this, the military prosecutors appealed against the undue leniency shown to Abu Rahmah and, duly, his sentence was

increased by 4 months, to 16 months.

Finally released after 16 months and one day in Ofer Military Prison (you weren't really expecting the Israeli state to let him out on his release date were you?!) Abdullah Abu Rahmah was given a rapturous welcome by family, friends and supporters in their hundreds at the prison gate. He said, "On my release, I have no intention to go back home and sit there idly. In fact, by imprisoning me they have silenced me long enough. Our cause is just, it is one striving for freedom and equality, and I intend to continue fighting for it just as I have before."

Sabotage at work

The word sabotage derives from French slang meaning ‘to work clumsily’. Literally: to clatter in sabots (wooden shoes). The term sabotage has also come to mean the destruction of machinery. Both individuals and groups of workers such as the Luddites and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) have used sabotage as a form of direct action against bad pay and working conditions. Anarchists see sabotage as an effective weapon against the bosses and their profits that is not controlled or compromised by trade unions. This month in Resistance we publish a brief account of modern sabotage at a car manufacturers in Detroit by Eugene, a carburettor assembler:

It’s common to hear people complain about American cars breaking down and having problems; there’s always some goddamn thing wrong with them. It’s almost always internal, and they have to take the car back to the shop and figure out what’s wrong with it. It’s not an accident or a fluke. These machines are designed by engineers who know what they’re doing. They’re precise. It’s the people putting them together who aren’t quite as precise as the engineers would like them to be.

I worked manufacturing carburettors in Detroit. There was one particular carburettor that you could place a BB in and it was there for life. The only way you could see it was if you x-rayed it. The only way to fix it was to replace the carburettor. It would be an intermittent problem with your carburettor; you’d never know when it was going to strike. Usually it would hit you when you were going downhill.

Anytime we got a chance to do internal parts, like a carburettor, we would screw them up purposely. We would put in bolts that were the wrong size. We would do anything we could to make the carburettors dysfunctional. We did this to as many carburettors as possible. I inspired and taught many

others. They were bored out of their minds. It was such a relief for them to take that screwdriver and damage that part internally, knowing that no one would know they did it.

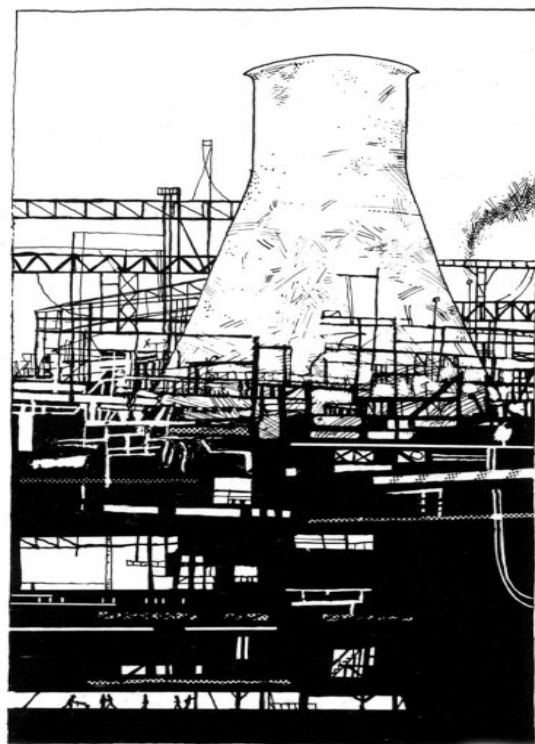
The goal was to wreak the most blatant destruction without getting caught. The most insidious thing, of course, was dealing with internal parts of engines and inside door panels. Workers might take a pair of pliers and pop off just one cog on the end of the plastic crank. There’s a gear inside that’s plastic and when you roll the window up and the cog is popped off; eventually that window won’t work. With wiring and electronic parts, you could do countless things so that initially it works, but later on you’ll have problems. You can’t find out the source of the problem, who did it, or how it happened. That’s the beauty of it.

Sabotage is different than revenge because it’s a means by which you can express yourself and free yourself from oppression and dehumanisation. You aren’t attacking a person, you’re dealing with an issue. It’s satisfying to know that you’re causing long-term problems for the industry. For the first time in my life, I saw other people like me

who were drudging through a life, making pretty good money and benefits, but whose lives were shit. Being human is so wonderful. If we’re pushed apart from that, we tend to struggle because you can’t be human in America and work in industry.

When you work for the auto industry, profit is number one. Although they say they’re not doing it anymore, they’ve cut back on quality. They’re trying to compete with Japan, but the only way to do that is to treat the most important person in the industry - the worker - as a human being.

They don’t treat you like a human being, they treat you like a robot, and your function is to produce the profit. You’re dehumanised. The carburettors were our way of equalising the situation. I caused a lot of damage. Not only did I teach and encourage others to do it, I caused many Americans strife and heartache and taught them the lesson not to buy from that particular company. The auto industry got a bad rap because of it. The fear and dissatisfaction from driving a car that breaks down all the time are going to stick.



This is an edited extract from *Sabotage in the American Workplace* by Martin Sprouse. Thanks to libcom.org and prole.info

Crisis in Care

An interview with a support worker in Sheffield about the problems in social care as a result of the recession and the proposed austerity measures:

“I work as a support worker for a private company that provides social care for people in Sheffield with learning disabilities and mental health issues. The company operates across the city. According to government officials, cuts to public spending will not harm frontline services, workers, or service users. The reality of the situation is that working conditions are getting worse, day services are closing down, and those paying for the support services are being excluded from any of the decisions relating to care that they supposedly direct and influence.

The Sheffield City Council budget has been slashed by 8.35% for next year, and this has amounted to a huge cut to frontline care. What this has amounted to on the ground is a huge reduction in staffing levels, pushing local unemployment even higher. Those left in the job are left with the unenviable task of filling in the gaps, which means being overworked and stressed. Many care workers, some with over 20 years experience, are finding it too stressful to carry on, and are walking away from the job, meaning that the most qualified staff in the company are leaving. New employees often aren’t



given a decent (and legally required) level of training before they are left to work with clients. This is dangerous to both clients, who often have serious health issues, and to workers, who are not given help to do the job safely (some clients have histories of challenging behaviour, violence etc). Many of the people I work with have been sent into intense panic, fearing that their disability benefits will be cut and that they will be forced onto a workfare scheme in order to claim. This has led to increased difficulties at work, which again impacts upon the wellbeing of clients and staff. For staff, we have been given an indefinite pay freeze (rates of pay are already extremely low – and the price of food, bills, rent etc has risen fairly sharply in recent months) and a loss of a chance of promotion and advancement within the company. The tactics of management have in recent weeks been an attempt to

shift responsibility downwards. In essence, this means an unpaid promotion – increased work hours and responsibilities without extra pay. People are worried, and the constant upheavals in company policy leave staff and clients confused. Many people within the company care deeply about the people they support, and the fact that they are leaving is causing massive emotional stress on all sides.

The company I work for claims to be not-for-profit; this tends to give people the impression that the company operates with some kind of ethical policy. The reality is that instead of money being invested in desperately-needed equipment for staff (such as computers that are less than a decade old), money has been spent on redecorating the offices of the executive managers and the reception area of the company (in order to make it ‘look more professional’ – the appearance of good care being more easily achieved

than the practice of good care).

The company has also engaged in the bizarre tactic of employing agency staff to work as short-term “bank workers” in order to plug the gaps created by the redundancies they have introduced. This means that for every worker the company gets from an agency they are paying

for two (because they are paying the agency’s ‘service rates’, which are roughly the same as the employee’s wages, plus the wages themselves). Essentially this means that the company is firing experienced and dedicated workers to employ untrained and short-term agency workers, while paying double the cost for the privilege. The reasons behind this plan seem fairly obvious. Agency workers are in a precarious position, and if they complain about being overworked and underpaid then they can be fired with no notice, whereas an employee cannot. The changes that management want to bring in over the next few months require a work force that does not feel secure or able to resist the exploitation that is happening.”

With thanks to the Fargate Speaker and libcom.org

NHS workers pay the price of government cuts

Despite an increase in inflation to 4.4%, more than a million NHS workers are to have their pay frozen this year, which is in effect a pay cut. While workers earning £21,000 or less will get a paltry £250 extra, all other staff including nurses, physiotherapists and midwives will get zero. Health workers are already seeing their workload increase as the full effects of the government's NHS cuts come into play. While the pay freeze has been condemned by all the health service unions, with the Royal College of Midwives' saying for instance: "Midwives are in effect being asked to take a pay cut in an attempt to remedy an economic situation in which they are victims, not the cause," none of the unions are



planning to do anything about the government's move. As a health worker rightly said: "We can't pay hard-working nurses a decent wage but we can afford yet another war all of a sudden and the bankers get millions in bonuses, great, eh?" Another said: "So where do we go from here? What are the unions going to propose we do?" Health unions like Unite and Unison need to stop moaning and start organising action.

Tax rise for workers, but not their bosses

You'll probably notice that your pay packet in April is different. That's when a National Insurance rise of 1% comes into effect. But of course, since "we're all in this together," your employer isn't going to pay it. They were let off the tax rise by the new government, which claimed it was a "tax on jobs."

No outcry about a "tax on workers," though, since it was a Labour Party

policy. The very lowest paid won't be as badly off as they might be, since the level where you start to pay the tax was raised slightly. Most workers will be worse off though, while our bosses benefit (again) from their bankrolling of political parties.

On the frontline

Lecturers strike over pensions

After talks broke down between the college lecturers' union UCU and the Employers Pension Forum (EPF), a wave of anger swept through colleges around the country. Changes proposed for the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension fund provoked this outrage. Even though the USS is in very good shape there were proposals by the EPF to reduce benefits and increase costs. Lecturers at 63 colleges involved in the USS voted for strike action and action short of a strike.

As a result lecturers in Scotland went out on strike on March 17th at Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, Strathclyde, St Andrews and the Open Universities. In addition lecturers struck at Warwick University on the day. As we go to press, further strike actions were planned in Wales on the 18th March, Northern Ireland on the 21st and England on the 22nd, to be followed by a second day of strike action for colleges and universities throughout Britain on 24th March, which could involve as many as 120,000 workers.

Teachers Walk Out

Teachers at Rawmarsh Community School in Rotherham went out on strike for a day on 16th March. This strike was due to be followed by two more in the following week. They were taking action against vicious job cuts, involving 34 staff, 20 of them teachers. The local Education Authority had already made some concessions over redundancies but direct action has to be the response to stop all redundancies. There was widespread support from

parents in this ex-mining area.

Council workers and teachers in East London

Council workers and teachers in Tower Hamlets, east London, planned to strike against cuts in the borough on 30th March, while in Camden teachers planned to go out on strike on the same day. Earlier the HQ of Barclays Bank in Canary Wharf was occupied by 20 teachers as the company announced huge bonuses for the bankers employed there. Tower Hamlets has the highest child poverty rate in Britain. Council cuts will affect nurseries, disability services for children and youth workers.

Speech therapists

Southwark speech and language therapists went on strike on February 3rd after they were informed that eleven of their jobs were to be axed in March. This would mean that a third of staff would be made redundant. Twenty therapists were on the picket line, in a service where there is no history of militancy. Some jobs were saved as the local Health Authority rapidly made some concessions. The strike immensely increased the confidence of therapists and dispelled the sense of hopelessness and apathy that is afflicting NHS workers. If strike action from a small number of workers who have never taken action ever before can win some limited concessions, think what could happen if more workers and in other sectors, both inside and outside the NHS, were to go into action.

Protest at Lib-Dem Conference in Sheffield

The Lib Dems were in town! And Clegg and his bandits wanted protection from the angry people whose jobs and services they have been systematically cutting since they gained power. South Yorkshire police obliged with a thousand-strong police force in the city centre, mobile barricades, surveillance and a steel ring around City Hall. The media had been bandying about figures of a ten-thousand strong demonstration over the weekend, a figure not a single activist on the ground agreed with and was clearly a pretext to justify the reported £2m cost of the entire operation. This expense clearly flies in the face of local people who have been told in the past months of the need to tighten their belts and accept harsh and "unavoidable" cuts to public services. There is a general suspicion that this was a bit of a trial run for March 26th and the type of tactics deployed on the day seem to confirm this.

In the end around 5,000 people turned out for the

main demonstration on the Saturday. A good turn-out in spite of the predicted figures and generally a good atmosphere with groups from all areas of life that are currently being affected by the Con-Dem agenda. The speeches were, predictably, a staid affair, dominated by trade union bureaucrats and self-appointed leaders of the movement. Thankfully the vibrancy of those marching injected a bit of life into the event in spite of this. The anarchists formed their own bloc with individuals from Sheffield Student Occupation and members of People and Planet (who had also brought a bicycle-powered sound system to provide a soundtrack to our march). The "friendly face" of S. Yorkshire police was on show as well with liaison officers deployed throughout the crowd, not evidence gathering teams at all honest!, there to assure us that we "weren't gonna be caged" in front of City Hall and honestly inquire where we were from, who we were associated with and what our plans were. Direct

action had been promised by some Trotskyist groups for in front of City Hall, unsurprisingly they failed to deliver (a single student from Nottingham let off a flare and was arrested scaling the fence). Clearly selling papers was a far better use of their time than disrupting the conference. Aware that this would be the case, the libertarian bloc opted to take matters into their own hands, decided not to enter the "freedom cage" in front of City Hall and split from the main demonstration for a direct-action tour of Fargate.

Tax dodgers and bail-out banks were targeted in a series of "bail-ins" made all the more entertaining by the sound system in tow. A number of locals even joined the festivities and people were generally very supportive. One activist reported a passer-by saying, upon seeing fifty masked troublemakers charge down Fargate, "This is what they ALL should be doing!" Despite the size of the operation, S. Yorkshire police were totally unprepared

and Topshop, Vodafone, Natwest and Boots were all shut down. When the response finally did come it was predictably violent. The successful use of de-arrest and anti-kettling tactics meant no one was arrested. Unfortunately, a small group did get kettled on Fargate for a short period of time. Police were indiscriminate in detaining people, trapping a few local people who weren't part of the protest but just happened to look alternative. A fifteen year-old girl was punched in the face at this point and a mother pushed to the floor while with her kid. Locals were on the case though and thanks to a load of hassle the cops quickly realised they would have to release the kettle, marching them back to the cage in front of City Hall only for everyone to quickly disperse. Overall it was a successful day made all the more successful by no arrests.

These direct action tactics need to be applied on a mass scale if we are to be successful in beating the wave of cuts and austerity measures. Direct action really does get the goods! We showed what we could do with just fifty people. Imagine what could be done if we had just three or four times that willing to take things into their own hands. This means the end of A-B marches, no more leaders and bureaucrats bleating on about writing to your MPs. It means real action led by those affected pushing the ONLY real alternative – anti-capitalism.

