

RESISTANCE

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Everything We've Won... THEY WANT IT BACK

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After months of speculation, leaks and scaremongering our new government has finally announced the massive cuts that it intends to make. Nothing is left untouched. Schools, universities, local services, health care and, above all, benefits will all be hacked to pieces one way or another. Talk of 'ringfencing' this or that is so much hot air when you examine the details. Every service that we rely on to make our lives possible is to be hacked back, sold off or 'reformed'. In the last hundred years, the working class won

concession after concession from government. The NHS, free education, pensions and benefits – all victories for the working class in the class struggle. Our new government of millionaires, aristocrats and spivs has decided that this cannot stand. Everything we have won, they want back. With interest.

It is obvious by now that the cuts are an attack on the whole working class. Changes to university funding will leave poorer students with crippling debts and make sure that the better universities are only for the wealthy. Housing benefit changes are likely to drive poorer people out of wealthier areas, a consequence already prepared for by many councils who've booked up B&Bs across the south of England.

Continued inside ►



Inside: Glasgow bank occupation, Fire strikes, community campaigns, and much more!

► Continued from cover

The £7 billion cut to all benefits is likely to drive many onto the streets and blight the lives of those who manage to cling onto substandard housing. Local services like libraries, rubbish collection, youth clubs and so on are likely to disappear as budgets plummet. And all this is before we get to the 490,000 jobs to go in the public sector, with knock-on job losses in the private sector likely to push that to a million.

Plundering the Public Sector

These cuts are not necessary in any way that should matter to the majority of us. This is not about 'saving the economy' but about restoring profitability to the banks and businesses that made the mess in the first place. These cuts are about strip mining the public sector to support a financial sector hungry for 'opportunities'. This is a massive transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor modelled on the structural adjustment programmes imposed on Latin America, Asia and Africa through the last 30 years. This is not 'prudent economics' pulling Britain 'back from the brink', it's plunder plain and simple. From Iain Duncan Smith's 'get

on the bus' rhetoric to suggestions for factories to be run in prisons, from attacks on health and safety at work to caps on housing benefit everything suggests that this is a government set on turning back the clock. The poor should be punished, the safety net pulled away and fear of unemployment, homelessness and worse should keep people working in fear as their wages plummet and their work gets harder.

Labour, Tory, Same Old Story

Just as the government is turning back the clock, so the loyal opposition in the Labour party and the trade union movement tries to do the same. Already, leftists are calling for the Labour party to do something. The same party that proposed all but £6 billion of the Lib-Dem/Tory cuts, that began the creeping privatisation that the new government will speed up, is expected to lead the fight against both of them. This loyal opposition would have us forget everything they did to make the mess we're in now possible. They would have us believe that this time it will be different, that this time they really are serious about fighting

for the working class rather than their own careers.

Just as we should expose and ignore the lies from the government, so we should expose and ignore the lies of the loyal opposition. Labour won't save us. The trade union bureaucracies will posture and posture, but ultimately do nothing. The best they've managed so far is to call for a rally sometime in March – too little, too late. We can't look to any of the generals without armies shouting for our support. If we're going to fight back against these attacks we're going to have to do it ourselves.

Fighting Back

The various marches and rallies up and down the country when the spending review was announced were a mixed bag. Some managed to bring new people onto the street, angry but unsure of what to do. Others were a parade of tired clichés from tired party hacks and displays of everything that is wrong with the left. In London, the solidarity with striking firefighters that saw smaller marches but mass pickets was an encouraging sign. In other towns and cities the domination

of Labour MPs and the usual lefty suspects was as depressing as it always is.

In France, Spain and Greece, the mass mobilisation of workers in strikes and demonstrations has shown that a real fight back is possible, and that it can move beyond the boundaries set by the loyal opposition. In this country, it is still unclear how ordinary people will fight back. There are strikes, but they're small and scattered. There are demonstrations, but they're isolated and lacking in confidence. The question that will be answered in the next few months is whether we can build a movement against these cuts that will fight, or whether we end up with a purely symbolic and ultimately pointless resistance like the antiwar movement of 2002/2003. This question will be decided at the local level – in individual workplaces, in community campaigns and in the various coalitions springing up but still unformed across the country. It's a question that we have to answer for ourselves through the work we do over the coming weeks and months.

Protesters Occupy Bank in Glasgow

On 21 October, 11 protesters from a group called Citizens United occupied Lloyds TSB Bank in Glasgow to speak out against government spending cuts, with two supporters handing out leaflets outside to passers by. The bank closed itself to customers during the protest, which was broken up by police after half an hour without any arrests, although police stuck around afterward to get details of as many protesters as they could. The protest targeted the bank because of banking's part in causing the economic crisis, and it included pensioners, students, teachers and nurses, who drew attention to the impact cuts will have on benefits, education and health services.

Even small actions like this one set a good example by demonstrating how easy it is to just show up and make a fuss – you don't need a big crowd to make a big point if you use direct action and get in the way of established business-as-usual. Protesting isn't just for students who can be arrested, and it doesn't have to be organised by trade unions or political parties. In fact, it can have a lot more impact if it isn't. While anarchists are unlikely to agree with one of the Citizens United organisers that our economic problems can be solved by raising taxes or that a reduction in police numbers can even be counted as one of the disastrous effects of the cuts, the message

of the protest remains simple: stop the cuts! And that message, coupled with direct action, is

one that this writer, at least, can support.



On the Front Line

Workplace Roundup

Tube strikes over office closures

The 4th October saw 11,000 London Tube workers stage a 24-hour walkout over Transport for London's plans to cut over 800 jobs, mainly ticket office staff. Since then, an additional 800 job cuts were announced, which include the sacking of 400 existing workers. The striking workers have also expressed concerns about the safety implications of staff shortages; that a reduction in staff will mean possible dangers for those using London's Tube network. In response, mayor Boris Johnson has called on government ministers to bring in new anti-strike laws. Further action has been planned throughout November.

London Firefighter Strikes are On

Firefighters in London have overwhelmingly voted to take strike action in a dispute over new contracts.

The first strike is scheduled for 23 October, with the second following on 1 November. The strike was backed by 79% of Fire Brigades Union members in a secret ballot, with the outcome announced earlier in the month. As part of a series of provocative measures in the run-up to the announcement of the result, management withdrew fire engines from stations around the capital and handed them over to the private contractors AssetCo.

The changes would equalise the length of day and night shifts. However, the real significance as far as firefighters are concerned is that the new shift pattern would make it much easier to close certain fire stations in the evening. With spending cuts on the way, the London Fire Authority has already

been discussing making cuts of 20%-40%, with significant job losses. The contract dispute is widely seen as the first stage of the cuts.

Meanwhile, the union-busting chief of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority has threatened to "do a Ronald Reagan" and sack the firefighters who don't sign the new contracts – in his own estimation cutting London's 5,600 firefighters down to 2,000.

Rossendale Taxi Strikes

Taxi drivers in Rossendale, Lancashire, voted for strike action in protest against the council's plans to implement penalties on drivers, forcing it to back down.

Under the scheme, drivers would have been hit with point-based penalties if they broke one of 34 rules. Drivers who accrued more than 20 points in a year would have been made to re-sit their test or have their licence revoked. For example, sounding a horn to announce arrival at an address will result in four points.

The decision was taken at a mass meeting of 150 cabbies.

Sellafield Workers in Strike over Pay

Workers employed by Babcock, a contractor at Sellafield nuclear plant, struck on 12 and 13 October and held up traffic at the entrance to the site.

The workers, who are members of the Unite union, are owed back pay relating to a promised annual pay rise which never materialised. They have been taking regular strike action and have imposed an overtime ban. They held up traffic at all four entrances to the site leafleting other workers.

Action at Swindon Leisure Centres

September saw two strikes at Swindon's leisure centres, parks and car parks after the Tory-run council moved to withdraw shift allowances for compulsory overtime at antisocial hours.

The ballot was organised by Unison, which backed the strikes. The cut represents a significant drop in pay for many workers, resulting in the loss of as much as £300 a month. The strike has led to the closure of car parks and the winding down of leisure centre activities. The hardship fund set up for the strike is reported to have received £1500 in donations so far.

AstraZeneca workers fight on

The strike by workers at AstraZeneca in Macclesfield has continued into October. The dispute began last month after the company, which reported pre-tax profits of £1.8 Million in the three months to June this year, implemented cuts to staff pensions (whilst Chief Executive David Brennan boosted his pension entitlement to £17,500 a week).

The strike vote saw a 70% backing for action being given by GMB members, with the Macclesfield drug factory seeing the first strike in its history.

A GMB-organised demonstration marched from the AstraZeneca site to Macclesfield town centre on 6 October before returning to the site, on what was the sixth day of strike action.



No Police Base!

The Metropolitan Police want to put their 2012 Olympics security base on a site at Wanstead Flats, part of Epping Forest in London's East End. Local people found out only through a leak to the Evening Standard newspaper. The plans would create a fenced high-security compound with buildings, parking areas, stables & police holding cells, all for a minimum of 3 months, within 100 metres of the residential neighbourhoods of Newham and Redbridge.

Unsurprisingly, these plans have met with dismay and anger from many local people who value the green space and relative peace of the Flats in an area which is crowded, noisy and polluted, with much poverty and deprivation. The 'Save Wanstead Flats' campaign was set up in mid-July. The reaction of the authorities has been to go through the motions of a 'consultation' process (a

touring exhibition with accompanying PR), and attempting a meeting with 'representatives' of the opposition (which was sensibly rejected). There has been regular leafleting, the collection of several thousand signatures on petitions, and a well-attended mass picnic on the site where the Corporation of London representative, Paul Thompson, was forced onto the defensive admitting that other sites were looked at, but that the Flats were chosen 'as the cheapest option' (at £170,000). He couldn't reveal what the other sites were because the information was 'commercially sensitive'. Epping Forest is protected by the Epping Forest Act of 1878, itself the result of a successful community campaign by commoners to safeguard the area. The authorities are trying to amend the Act through the Legislative Reform Order; campaigners are worried that the Base would be the thin

end of the wedge, providing a precedent for future enclosures ('development'). There have been two packed public meetings where people demonstrated their opposition and gave the police and Corporation of London – the 'conservators' (supposed protectors) of the Forest – a hard time. Action East End are supporting the campaign with their participation and

through their free paper East End Howler - all donations welcome.

For more information, see www.savewansteadflats.org.uk or email actioneastend@googlemail.com.



UCL Cleaners Win Wage Struggle

For years London universities have been paying low wages to their cleaners. To date, thanks to pressure from various groups and campaigns, all London universities except University College London have been forced to pay their cleaners above the minimum wage and raise pay to at least the London Living Wage.

UCL authorities resisted this. The president and provost Malcolm Grant is the second-highest-paid university head in Britain, his £404,000 a year exceeding that paid to the heads of both Oxford and Cambridge universities. He insisted paying the cleaners a living wage – that meant a raise from £5.80 an hour to £7.85 an hour – was a "luxury". UCL is one of the richest universities in Britain. It declared a surplus

of £12 million on a budget of £713 million last year and has considerably raised the salaries of academic staff since Grant's arrival in 2003. Grant's annual travel expenses alone exceed a cleaner's annual wage.

The UCL Living Wage Campaign was formed two years ago and is an alliance of cleaners, students, academics, and staff. Under pressure from the campaign, reflected in adverse publicity for UCL and Grant in the London press, the university caved in late this September. A picket put on by the campaign heard that President Grant had capitulated at 1:00am, which was met with jubilation by the 40 or so supporters present. The living wage is meant to be introduced over the next two years.

The Campaign is not disbanding and it will not disband until the London Living Wage is fully implemented at UCL, staff and

services are brought back in-house, away from outsourcing, and all low-paid staff are well organised.



The Price of 'Security'

On 26 October a number of Glaswegians gathered at Hampden Park, the national football ground, to protest at a conference being held there by G4S security. People from the Unity Centre, an amazing asylum seekers support project in the city, the Anti-Injustice Movement and the Anarchist Federation were there to highlight the recent death of an asylum seeker at the hands of G4S.

Two weeks earlier, 12 October 2010, Jimmy Mubenga was killed as officers from G4S security, a worldwide security firm that incorporates Group 4 and Securicor, attempted to restrain him as he was being forcibly removed from the country following the refusal of his application for refuge in the UK. Passengers heard Jimmy saying he couldn't breathe as the three thugs held him down. One witness said *"The first thing I saw was the stewardesses running forward. One of them was almost in spasms she was shaking that bad ... I saw three men trying to pull [Mubenga] down below the seats. All I could see was his head sticking up above the seats and he was hollering out: 'Help me'. He just kept saying 'Help me, help me'. Then he disappeared below the seats. You could see the three security*

guards sitting on top of him from there. And then it went kind of quiet."

Witnesses began coming forward after seeing Home Office and G4S reports that Jimmy had been taken ill and later died in hospital. They described this report as 'totally false'.

The barbaric treatment that killed Jimmy Mubenga is all too common in the asylum business. Dehumanised and vilified by the press and used as political football by politicians, asylum seekers are treated like animals simply for the 'crime' of being in the UK. Asylum seekers are forced to live on less money than benefits, if they get anything at all, and constantly live in fear of being dragged from their beds and forced onto planes out of the place where they are seeking to build a new life.

The Unity Centre in Glasgow has been on the front line of defending asylum seekers since 2006 and is more than familiar with the disgusting practices of the Home Office and those companies employed by them to carry out their policies. Chris, a volunteer at the centre, said "I think it's important that the G4S themselves get confronted with the reality of consequences

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ITT's Hammer-time

On 13 October 2010 hundreds of antimilitarists converged in Brighton for a mass siege of EDO, the arms factory, aimed at closing EDO down for the day. The demonstration did what it said on the tin; the factory was closed down for the day.

The day was marked by police repression in what turned out to be the largest anti-protest operation seen in Brighton (save for party conferences). Police had been drafted in from Hampshire, Surrey, Wales and London. The order of the day was pre-emptive continental-style arrests and kettles, aimed at disempowering and controlling demonstrators; in all, 53 arrests were made and all were released without charge.

As the protest began, over a hundred police officers surrounded the convergence centre and escorted everyone to their 'designated protest area', a pen next to the bottom of Home Farm Road, then made everyone remove face coverings before marching them in a mobile

kettle to Wild Park.

On reaching Wild Park, protesters refused to move further and demanded to be allowed to reach the announced meeting point, Wild Park Cafe. After a stand off, police released everyone and allowed them to assemble at the cafe, where rather than be cordoned again, some EDO smashers took to the hills, running into the woods. Others formed a picket at the bottom of Home Farm Road with a sound system and a 12 foot replica F-16. Later in the day, activists made it to the centre of town to target investors in ITT. A protest was held outside Barclays, and an attempt was made to block the doors. The Royal Bank of Scotland, an investor in ITT, was disrupted by activists who glued themselves to the doors.

If you were arrested at ITT's Hammertime and want support email smashedo@riseup.net. For emotional and trauma support call 07980387900.

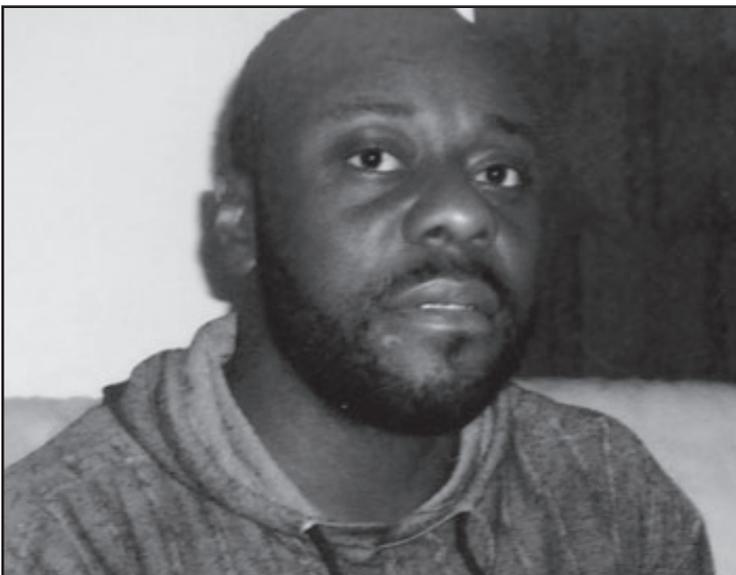
Demonstration against army showroom

The Army have opened a "showroom" in a shopping centre on Kingsland Road, Dalston, in East London. The showroom is home to a virtual battlefield simulator which gives visitors a chance to use their friends as target practice with a replica handgun. Mothers Against Guns spokeswoman Lucy Cope stated that it was grossly insensitive to house the showroom in a borough that has been plagued by gun violence.

The showroom is the first of its kind in the country and the simulator is open to 14-year-olds

and over. The British and Russian militaries are the only European militaries that recruit as young as 16. The military plans to open such showrooms across the country. The next one is planned for Croydon.

Antimilitarists have mounted pickets against the showroom. The local Kurdish and Turkish community strongly supported a demonstration organised by the European Confederation of Oppressed Migrants in mid-October and other pickets continue every Wednesday.



Victory for Queens Market!

St. Modwen Properties have thrown in the towel with their proposed redevelopment of Queen's Market, East London.

St. Modwens was Newham Council's preferred developer for a regeneration scheme on the site of the 110-year-old traditional London street market. Following a high profile campaign which included the collection of 12,000 signatures to stop the demolition, the anchor supermarket for the development, Asda-Walmart, pulled out in June 2006. This was the Friends of Queen's Market's first victory.

In May 2009 a multi-million pound planning application was submitted by St. Modwen which included a 31 storey high-rise tower block on the market site

with a token amount of social housing. The market was scheduled for demolition and local opinion was deeply suspicious of Newham Council's claim that St. Modwens would rebuild the market and run it as before. This resulted in sustained grass-roots opposition to the plans from the local community and 2,600 individual letters of objection. Despite this unprecedented response, Newham Council approved the scheme at planning stage. Friends of Queen's Market then turned to the final authority, the Greater London Assembly, where London's Mayor, Boris Johnson, deemed the development 'inappropriate' and threw it out - Friends of Queen's Market's second success.

A year later, St. Modwen and Newham Council have parted company, claiming that they could not agree about a way forward. Pauline Rowe, Secretary of Friends of Queen's Market

commented, "We will be asking a 'Freedom of Information' question to find out how much taxpayers' money was wasted on this unwanted scheme."



Radical Free School in Sheffield

The weekend of the 8th-10th October saw the running of a radical free school in Shalesmoor, Sheffield. The weekend opened with a welcome social on the Friday evening complete with a live samba band, and carried on through until Sunday evening.

Workshops throughout the weekend included discussions on radical workplace and community organising, permaculture, anarcha-feminism and online security for activists,

as well as big discussions on how to set up a viable anti-capitalist social centre in the city. There were also film showings, information stalls on radical topics and a library. Food and drinks were provided by a local animal rights group throughout the weekend.

The school was well attended with some meetings reaching around 50 people, and the space was busy on all three days with lively discussions. People of all ages came along and

workshops included art spaces for kids.

The space played host to a variety of anti-capitalist groups and organisations and was organised by the Sheffield Social Centre Collective. This group is made up of radicals from across the city who aim to establish a permanent space for non-hierarchical, non-discriminatory and anti-capitalist activity in Sheffield. To find out more, see sheffield-socialcentre.org.uk.

The Price of 'Security'

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of their actions. When talking about enforced removal we always focus on the UK Border Agency, however in this case it was different - the extreme force used by G4S resulted in a man's death."

Whether fleeing persecution or simply seeking a better life it makes no difference, workers are workers. We have to stand together whether we are resisting lay-offs at work, defending the services we need in our communities and across the country or fleeing the wars fought over capital that rage around the world. We are workers and that is what unites us. As we face the latest wave of attacks on us by the ruling class we need now more than ever to stand together with our fellow workers no matter where they are from or what their situation is.

Belarussian anarchists face wave of repression

Since the beginning of September 2010, social activists in Belarus have been facing unprecedented levels of state repression. Following an arson attempt at the Russian Embassy on the night of August 31, activists from different cities (Grodno, Brest, Gomiel, Minsk and Soligorsk) have been subject to ‘talks’, interrogations, house-raids and arrests. Some of them are still detained. Diverse groups of people (from counter-culture and football fans to anti-nuclear and “Food Not Bombs” activists) have been questioned about their communications, cell calls, friendship groups and activities and asked to identify people from photos of underground concerts. It is no small coincidence that this added pressure has coincided with the announcement of presidential elections in Belarus and the start of the presidential campaign. In fact, the investigation into the incident near the Russian embassy has been quietly dropped over the past month, with the latest arrests and interrogations focused mainly on individuals’ involvement in any form of political activism, lawful or otherwise.

Belarus has previously come under attack for its human rights

abuses, harassment of ethnic minorities and the state’s strict control of religious, political and journalistic activity. The state’s use of the far right to intimidate political opponents is well-documented, as is its appalling treatment of political prisoners (an Amnesty International report heavily condemned police treatment of around 100 young, pro-democracy protesters in 2000). Many of those detained have been done so without charge and refused communication with their friends and families. The police have taken advantage of a legal

loop-hole which allows for the arrest of individuals for three days without filing accusation, with the authorities re-arresting activists every three days as suspects on different cases to prolong imprisonment. Already 13 people have spent a total of 153 days under unlawful arrest. Those arrested have also reported that during the interrogations activists are beaten, threatened with expulsion from school or university and been subjected to intense psychological pressure. All those oppressed are activists and participants of the social,

ecological, anti-authoritarian, antifascist and humanitarian initiatives in Belarus. Direct support (money for defence lawyers and letters to arrestees), solidarity actions at Belarussian embassies and consulates and greater publication of this situation is desperately needed. Please help us to spread this call for solidarity as widely as possible. If you want information on how to help, please email minksolidarity@riseup.net. For continuing updates visit <http://belarus.indymedia.org/blog/minksolidarity>.



General Strikes in France

This month has seen France gripped by a series of protests and general strikes, with up to 3.5 million people taking to the streets to protest the raising of the retirement age from 60 to 62. The strike has involved many sectors including transport, education and infrastructure. Opposition has come from both older workers who face having to work for longer

and young people who see this as another nail in the coffin for their future prospects.

Schools and lycées have played a big part in the unrest. In the south-western town of Ales, pupils from one school erected barricades around the building and then marched to other nearby schools, which culminated in a march of 4,000 in the town centre. One primary school class

near Montpellier was occupied by parents who gave the lessons themselves. Truck drivers, dockers and refinery workers have also joined the strike, causing widespread fuel shortages and travel disruption.

The current situation in France could go the same way as the country’s general strike in 1995, which only ended once the government relented and dropped its

reform plans. In the context of the increasing austerity measures being put in place across Europe, the series of strikes in France is not merely about pensions but the conditions of life itself. The extent of these cuts will perhaps only be matched by the resistance to them.

New AF Pamphlet

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Introduction to Anarchist Communism

Anarchist Federation



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In this brand new pamphlet we lay out what's fundamentally wrong with the world we live in, how we can fight to improve our lives in the here and now, and what kind of world we should struggle to build.

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Organise! is the Anarchist Federation's theoretical and historical magazine. It is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered in agitational journals. You can order or subscribe online at www.afed.org.uk, or get in touch with your local AF group for a copy.



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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