

JACKDAW

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS

ISSUE N° 1

Universal Credit: stop it, scrap it!

Universal Credit is being rolled out across the country in stages with all new claimants having to apply online for this benefit that is replacing Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, ESA, Housing Benefit, Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits. People currently claiming these benefits will be transferred to Universal Credit over the next 18 months.

In the majority of cases claimants will be worse off, particularly working single mums and people with disabilities, who stand to lose additional premium benefits.

Many of those affected already have jobs but they will be expected to look for more hours and pay in return for Universal Credit. If they don't, they face sanctions, i.e. loss of benefit for up to three years. If they do find extra work, they will lose 67p of every extra pound they earn.

You can only apply for Universal Credit online, and only get messages about UC online. But many don't have the internet at home or are not comfortable with using computers.

In areas where UC has already been tested there has been a big increase in personal debt, rent arrears, use of food banks and eviction threats. A lot of this is unnecessary, due to a badly-designed system and administrative cock-ups. Already, people have to wait six weeks or longer to receive their first

UC payment. This causes severe hardship to many who have no savings to rely on. Will your landlord wait that long for the rent?

Many have already turned to the overloaded Citizens Advice Bureau for help - one in ten of those already claiming UC. Agencies and food banks are predicting chaos when the full roll-out of UC begins.

The proposals will particularly hit women as second earners in households with children, women who want to return to work already hit by increased childcare costs.

The Way Forward

Universal Credit could be the equivalent of the Poll Tax for the May regime. The Thatcher government's very unpopular Poll Tax resulted in mass non-payment, riots and the eventual resignation of Thatcher.

This government is weak and fragile and mass resistance could topple it. But we have to turn the despair at worsening conditions into a positive anger and a determination to resist. But don't rely on the Labour Party to help. All they can offer is a tinkering with UC, not its abolition.



Already the Tories have been forced to climb down over the 55p a minute Universal Credit helpline charge. As well as that, twelve back bench Tory MPs are worried about a Poll Tax style scenario and about their seats and asked the Work and Pensions Secretary David Gauke to pause the roll out back in September 2017.

The message has to be no! We won't pay for your crisis!

Meanwhile, get advice if you are worried about claiming Universal Credit or the implications for your current benefits.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk
CAB helplines
England: 03444 111 444
Scotland: 0808 800 9060
Wales: 03444 77 20 20

Ultimately, claimants need to come together to organise and fight against Universal Credit. This is a blatant attack from the boss class on the poorest and most vulnerable.

So let's make this
the Poll Tax Revolt
Version 2

INSIDE

- Daily Mail Cleaners
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**Universal Credit:
£3 billion taken
from the low-paid,
the unemployed
and the disabled
and given to
corporate bosses
and bankers by the
Government.**



VOICE OF THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

Introducing *Jackdaw*

This is the first issue of the paper of the Anarchist Communist Group.

Why *Jackdaw*? Looking for a name that was not the usual, we settled upon *Jackdaw* because of the characteristics often associated with this bird, characteristics which are an important part of a revolutionary anarchist movement for a new society:

resilience and a fighting spirit, as well as being social and co-operative.

'Jack' means 'rogue' and 'daw' means 'call.' We are rogues in the current society and our paper aims to call for a working class revolution and the creation of an anarchist communist society.



"the potential is there for a movement to emerge, one that seriously challenges the current system"

Demand the Impossible!

In the months prior to May 1968, no one would have predicted that France would soon be in upheaval, with both students and workers coming together in full-scale rebellion against a repressive, unfair and generally alienating consumer society. Their slogan, 'demand the impossible' symbolised this period of optimism and hope.

We have plenty of reason today to rebel. Most of us struggle to survive, often in boring and unsatisfying jobs, or with no job at all. Young people are faced with a future of insecure jobs and high cost housing whilst older people are facing attacks on their pensions. Those

who are thought to not 'belong' such as migrants, are met with racism and xenophobia. Women's equality is still a pipe dream; the reality is still discrimination and violence. Meanwhile, the rich get richer and it is 'same old, same old' from the government- each day bringing something even more harmful or repressive. It seems that there is not the will to actually do anything about it, except to wait for a new government.

However, as with May 68 in France and many other examples of rebellion, the situation can change very rapidly.

Though we may not be see-

ing massive strikes or unrest at the moment in Britain, if we look more closely, at the grass roots campaigns and struggles going on around a wide range of issues, the potential is there for a movement to emerge, one that seriously challenges the current system. In this issue of *Jackdaw*, we show all that is going on both in Britain and elsewhere. Whether it be the massive women's strike in Spain, the long-term strike in British higher education, or the growing resistance to Universal Credit, these struggles show the potential for what could happen, should the working class rise.



Paris, 1968

Migrant Cleaners at the Daily Mail Strike Against Poverty Wages

Outsourced cleaners at the Daily Mail, predominantly from Latin America and Africa, have demanded to be paid the current London living wage of £10.20 p/h and threatened strike action, if their demands are not met.

On February 26th, the Mail sent the manager of their contractor MITIE, who claimed that their union was illegal, and went on to threaten that they will all be sacked if they go on strike.

The United Voice of the World (UVW) union, representing the workers, state that

this represents a clear violation of trade union and human rights. Not only has the Mail paid them poverty wages of £7.50 per hour, but is now also threatening to kick them out onto the street merely for exercising their trade union rights and asking for a decent wage. The irony of the Daily Mail, a newspaper which frequently runs racist stories about migrant workers pushing down British workers' pay, not just employing migrant workers on minimum wage but also fighting to keep their wages at that minimum rate, is lost on no one,

not least the UVW. As the union says on its website:

"The Daily Mail is a media outlet that claims migrants are taking British jobs and undercutting wages. ... This campaign will prove that trade unions can boost wages for migrants and low-skilled workers anywhere."

The UVW has organised numerous struggles amongst migrant cleaners in London, such as the ten-month struggle of outsourced cleaners at the London School of Economics, which resulted not only in winning them the same terms and

continues next page

Founding Conference of New Anarchist Organisation, the Anarchist Communist Group

On Saturday 17th February, anarchist communist militants met in Leicester to found a new organisation, the Anarchist Communist Group (ACG). Those present adopted Aims and Principles and a constitution. The preamble to the Aims and Principles reads:

“We are a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation made up of local groups and individuals who seek a complete transformation of society, and the creation of anarchist communism. This will mean the working class overthrowing capitalism, abolishing the State, getting rid of exploitation, hierarchies and oppressions, and halting the destruction of the environment. To contribute to the building of a revolutionary anarchist movement we believe it is important to be organised. We are committed to building an effective national and international organisation that has a collective identity and works towards the common goal of anarchist communism, whilst at the same time working together with other working class organisations and in grass roots campaigns. We do not see ourselves as the leaders of a revolutionary movement but part of a wider movement for revolutionary change. In addition, we strive to base all our current actions on the principles that will be the basis of the future society: mutual aid,

solidarity, collective responsibility, individual freedom and autonomy, free association and federalism.”

The discussion document “Potential Activities Of A New Organisation” was discussed and adopted. Initial emphasis would be on agitational literature and activity around Land Justice, housing, workplace organising and solidarity and the NHS. In addition, there was a commitment to street agitation-stickers and posters.

It was decided that the ACG should focus on the campaign against Universal Credit using the Disabled People Against Cuts slogan “Stop It and Scrap It”. Leicester ACG agreed to make and circulate leaflets and stickers in regards to Universal Credit, capable of being locally adapted.

It was also agreed to hold Annual Day Schools. The first of these will be in early November 2018 in London on the subject of “Advancing The Class Struggle: Problems and Issues for the Anarchist Communists”.

It was agreed to bring out a newspaper that will be primarily agitational. The first issue should appear in April of this year. In addition we will be establishing a new website soon. We will also soon be producing a series of pam-

phlets.

It was agreed to seek affiliation to the International of Anarchist Federations and to attend the forthcoming international conference in Slovenia.

A motion was passed on Anarchist Communist Unity. It reads:

“Whilst recognising the differences between our organisation and others on the libertarian communist spectrum in Britain – Anarchist Federation, Solidarity Federation, Libertarian Socialist Federation, etc. – we should seek to promote where possible: joint solidarity work with comrades facing repression, imprisonment, bad health, either here or in the rest of the world; joint solidarity work over workplace struggles – joint bulletins where possible, joint fundraising and publicity etc.”

The conference was marked by a spirit of enthusiasm and by a business-like approach. We intend making ourselves known through our activities, propaganda and development of theory.

Enquiries about the ACG, membership, etc. should be sent to:
info@anarchistcommunism.org



“We are a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation made up of local groups and individuals who seek a complete transformation of society, and the creation of anarchist communism”

Daily Mail Cleaners Dispute (continued)

conditions that in-house staff possess, but ultimately forced the university to take the cleaners themselves in-house and employ them directly.

Cleaners asked to be paid the London living wage, based on an assessment of the amount of income that a household needs to lead a basic but decent life, taking into account the price of rent, primary living costs as well as childcare, travel

costs, food and household bills.

The Daily Mail instead decides to pay them as low as they legally can, while their editor Paul Dacre managed to earn £2.37 million last year, a 50% increase on the year before.

If you want to support the cleaners’ strike at the Daily Mail, donate to their strike fund at www.uvwunion.org.uk/daily-mail-cleaners

Source: libcom.org



PROPERTY IS THEFT!



The UK has one of the most unequal distributions of land in the world!

Around 0.6% of the population owns over 70% of the land. Over a third of this is in the hands of the aristocracy - a legacy of the Norman Conquest.

When people refer to 'land' most think of the countryside. Land rights movements have focused on gaining access to land for recreation purposes, eg the mass trespass of Kinder Scout, and calling for community buy-outs of the large estates in places such as the Highlands of Scotland. Rural areas are also faced with companies taking control of land for fracking. However, in the city, underneath the buildings and tarmac, there is also land and the struggles for access and community ownership are just as relevant in the city as they are

in rural areas. The high cost of housing and other property is mainly due to the value of the land beneath it- up to 80% in central London.

Abolish Private Property

The reason we do not have access to and control of housing, social centres, community gardens, parks and open spaces is because we do not own and control the land. Even land that is in public hands is not controlled by us, but by the State, which is more concerned in supporting commercial interests than public ones.

Anarchist communists have always believed that we can only have a free and equal society when private property is abolished. This does not mean that a person cannot have their own personal property, as some critics of anarchist communism have said. However, we do

need to hold the main productive assets of society in common so that they can benefit us all. Land is a main example of this and struggles to get access and control of land are an important part of the working class struggle for a better society.

Land Justice Network (LJN)

The LJN was launched in June 2017 with the aims of both educating people about land inequality and campaigning for land to be held in common, for the benefit of all. They have called for a Week of Action on Land Rights from **April 14th to 22nd**.

Lords Vs Commoners LJN call out leaflet

"More than a third of our land is still owned by the aristocracy, whose ancestors seized it during the Norman Conquest. By fencing off land and using violence to exclude people, landowners (the lords) have deprived the rest of us of what should be a shared resource.

"The vast majority of us, the

"Around 0.6% of the population owns over 70% of the land"

UCU strike

As *Jackdaw* goes to press, negotiations continue between the University and College Union (UCU) and Universities UK (UUK) as staff in 61 universities continue with their strike, now entering its third week. Morale has been high on picket lines across the UK, with considerable support from students and lots of energy, creativity and fighting spirit amongst academic and professional workers.

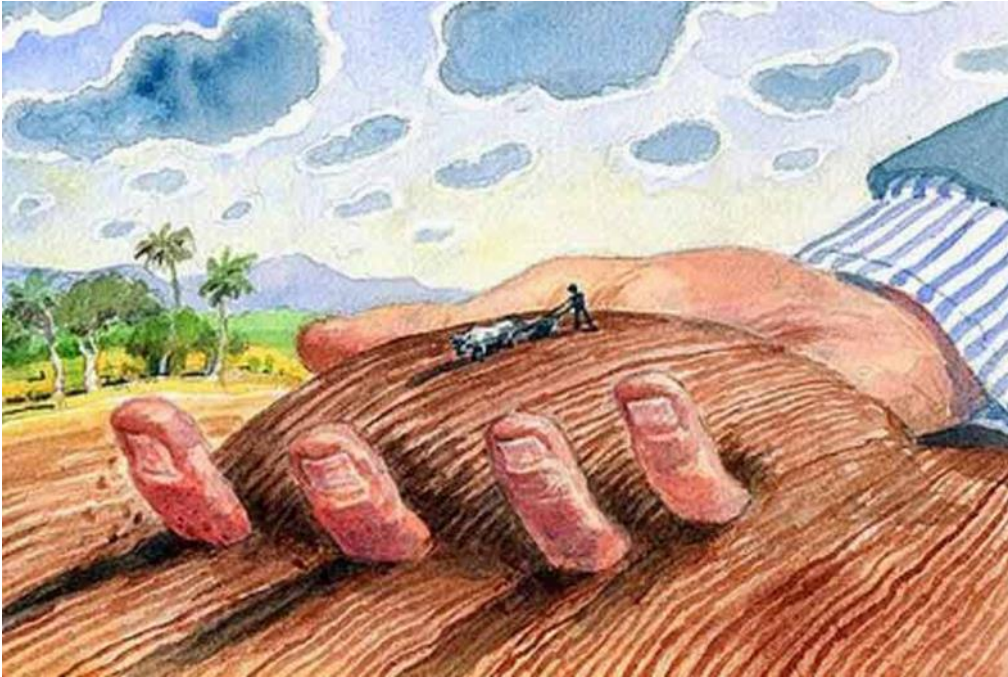
The nature of the attack upon the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) is so particularly brutal and provocative, with

some staff looking to lose up to 50% of their pensions, it has created a level of anger amongst Higher Education workers that has pushed the UCU into calling sustained strikes and making militant noises.

Some UCU branches have opened their strike committees to students, to members of other unions and to supporters from outside the university. Others have passed resolutions demanding that UCU negotiators reject any substantial change to the existing scheme - something which the UCU negotiators have already accepted as inevitable. Both of these are positive but they need to be generalised. In order to win this fight the rank and file have to take

the lead and find ways to broaden the struggle in a way that can bring on board ever larger numbers of workers who are facing similar attacks. Student occupations, which have taken place at 9 universities so far, have hinted that direct action could be used to maximise impact beyond picket lines. Years of marketisation of Higher Education, where profit and market position has become central to working life at university whilst casualisation has become widespread have seen little resistance from the union. UCU members are aware of this but instead of waiting for the 'sell-out', they need to take the initiative in the strike and link up with other workers' struggles.





commoners, own little or nothing. Even most of the land that was once declared common land (for local use) has been taken away from us. Land in community use, such as hospitals, fire stations, school playing fields, is increasingly being sold off for the short term profit of private developers.

“Land issues are central to much inequality and environmental degradation in society today. Land-owners control and exploit our natural resources and force the rest of us to be beholden to them for food, shelter and other needs. Despite their huge wealth, our taxes are used to pay them £billions in ‘farming’ subsidies and housing benefit, increasing inequality still further.

“In the countryside, large land-owners dominate agriculture, squeezing out small farmers and collective farming. Agriculture workers are poorly paid and struggle to find housing that they can afford. Huge tracts of land are turned over to grouse moors to provide the rich with space for their destructive past times. Our freedom to walk and enjoy nature is largely restricted to a limited network of ‘rights of way’.

“In the cities, land is also unequally distributed, owned by a combination of traditional aristocrats

and their modern-day equivalent: offshore companies and institutional investors. Increasingly homes are now owned by buy-to-let landlords rather than by individual home owners or social landlords. All of this forces up the cost of living for those who have to rent. Tenants have little security with standard tenancies running for just 6 months.

No Control

“There are no controls on rent, so now on average people pay a quarter of their wages to their landlord, while in London it’s roughly half their salary. Even those who manage to buy their own home rarely own it outright until late in life. Most people are stuck paying a big chunk of their salary on their mortgage every month, with the worry that if they lose their job they could lose their home too.

“In the last 6 years homelessness has dramatically increased. It is obscene that in this day and age so many people do not have a secure home. This could be achieved if the £9.3 billion a year paid in Housing Benefit to wealthy landlords

was instead used to build social housing in all communities.

“Urban areas also need well managed parks, community gardens and allotments, so that everyone has access to nature and the opportunity to grow food. But increasingly these spaces are being sold off or rented out to private companies for events, damaging the parks and shutting out residents for lengthy periods of time.

“More and more people are realising how important the issue of land is and are questioning the rights of the rich to do what they want with what is **our** land.”

For more information about the week of action and land inequality in general see:

- ljnaction@gmail.com
- <https://www.landjustice.uk/lands-vs-commoners>
- <https://whoownsengland.org>

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March 8 is International Women's Day. This date commemorates March 8, 1909, when 129 employees of a cotton textile factory in New York were killed when their own owner set fire to the factory while all of them were inside making a protest demanding labour rights. In addition, the colour of feminism is violet because, it is said, the smoke that came from that fire was violet, like the fabrics that were there that day. At an International Congress of Socialist Women in 1910, Clara Zetkin proposed this date as the International Women's Day in honour of the cotton workers.

If We Stop, The World Stops

Millions of women around the world participated in events for International Women's Day (IWD) on March the 8th. The most militant action was in the growth of the 'Women's Strike', with 5.3 million people on strike in Spain. In Britain, the interest in the tactics of the strike on IWD is relatively new, yet still 7,000 women pledged to strike. In addition, links were made to grass roots unions such as the Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIUW) with support for their pickets for a Living Wage. Sex workers also coordinated their own actions for decriminalisation and trans women held an action over the problems of access to NHS services.

The organisers in Britain made it clear that the strike should focus on demands for working class women, including those who often face the most exploitation and discrimination, like migrants, sex workers, trans women. It is not just a strike about traditional work but also about 'invisible labour', such as care, domestic and emotional labour, and against male violence. The historical origins of the day make it clear that the purpose is not to have more women politicians or company directors (see box). Instead it is focused on the majority of women who are at the bottom of the pile, both in the workplace and in the home. According to one organiser of

the Women's Strike in Britain: "We are instead taking action – action against our exploitation under capitalism, where the domestic and emotional work we do for little or no pay is made invisible, while austerity measures force us into a more and more vulnerable position. This is feminism for the 99%".

It was in Spain, however, that the strike was the most successful. This was partially because of the support it got from the mainstream unions. However, it is clear that they were forced into support as a result of the massive upsurge from the grass roots feminist organisations, as well as the radical unions the CGT and anarchist CNT, who were behind the call out and initial organisation. According to The Free Online: "An important feature of this strike is that it has been promoted and organised from the bottom up, and not the other way around. That is to say, the initiative of the strike has been born first in the streets, in the neighbourhoods and districts and has developed in open assemblies. It has not been a proposal of the unions, but of the feminist movement."

Despite calls for the strike to be based on working class women, it is uncertain to what extent many women could actually participate, given that they are the ones in the most precarious positions in society. In Spain, headlines were given to women in media and other

professional jobs. In Britain, the strike was most successful in the universities, with 61 universities taking part. However, the link to CAIUW and sex workers showed that there certainly was support outside the universities. And in Spain, the huge support indicates that the support went far beyond academic and media institutions.

If women are to truly win all the demands put forward on the day then we must go beyond demands for equality in the system and call for both the end of capitalism and patriarchy. So how is this going to happen? The strike in Spain may have been very successful in terms of numbers on the streets but what will it achieve in terms of winning demands? Politicians and even bosses may pay lip service to the aims of IWD but they are unlikely to do anything about it. In the end, using the success of March the 8th, women and men must continue to organise at the grass roots level and build up a movement that lasts much longer than a day. The linking up of a number of groups on the 8th provides a good basis on which to move forward.

<https://thefreeonline.wordpress.com/2017/03/03/womens-strike-takes-off/>
<https://womensstrike.org.uk>
<https://caiwu.org.uk/wp/>
<https://www.uvwunion.org.uk/>
<https://iww.org.uk/news/womensstrike/>
<http://autonomies.org/2018/03/a-strike-against-beyond-borders-the-march-8-feminist-strike-in-spain/>



Help Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin is a former member of the Black Panther Party in the United States and is a longstanding black anarchist and community organiser. He currently lives in Memphis, Tennessee. Please consider contributing to this fund-raising campaign for medical treatment.

"He has been going through a lot as of lately, including financial difficulties, transportation issues, health concerns and the medical expenses that come along with being type-2 diabetic. His life's work has opened a path forward for anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-patriarchy organizing in geographies where

the non-profit and academic industrial complexes have largely co-opted the progressive-to-radical "Left." He needs to survive. Please consider contributing to this fund."

Fundraiser call: <https://www.gofundme.com/Support-4-Lorenzo-Komboa-Ervin>

Repression Against Russian Anarchists

We are currently fundraising to pay the lawyers working on several cases related to the police raids and arrests of anarchists and anti-fascists in St. Petersburg and Penza, Russia.

Right now, two people in St. Petersburg and five in Penza are under arrest, while many others have been connected to their cases as witnesses. The raids and repressions are likely to continue.

The arrestees are charged with part 2 of article 205.4 of the Russian Criminal Code, participation in a Terrorist Organisation, and the entire process has been started at the request of the court in Penza.

On January 23rd, on his way to Pulkovo Airport, Victor Filinkov was detained by the Federal Security Service (FSB)- the new name for the KGB. In order to force a testimony out of him he was beaten and tortured with electric shocks in the woods. Signs of torture have been confirmed by the Filinkov's lawyer and members of the Public Monitoring Commission (ONK) who have visited him in the pre-trial detention centre. Filinkov is currently in pre-trial detention/remand for the next two months.

On January 25th the FSB raid-

ed Igor Shishkin's apartment.

After the raid neither his lawyer, nor members of Public Monitoring Commission were able to find Igor for more than a day. On January 27th Igor was brought to a session in court with clear signs of beating. He is currently in pre-trial detention/remand for the next two months. Journalists were not allowed to attend the hearing and furthermore two of them were arrested.

Several witnesses were also tortured: Ilya Kapustin was beaten up and tortured with electric shocks while police demanded he give testimony that some of his acquaintances are up to "something dangerous." Medical services later recorded numerous traces of stun gun usage.

In Penza, arrests began in October 2017. Local FSB officers have arrested six people, five of whom are currently in pre-trial detention. All of those arrested were brutally tortured.

Legal help is needed for prisoners and witnesses, as their numbers are constantly increasing. It is early to speak about an exact amount of money, but it will cost at least 200 thousand roubles (around 3000 Euros/3500 USD) to pay for lawyers' fees in the next months.

**Anarchist Black Cross
St. Petersburg**

You can help by donating to:

PayPal: abc-msk@riseup.net

ABC Moscow. In case you want to support a particular prisoner, add a note about that. In case you want to donate to St. Petersburg and Penza case, write a note for "St. Petersburg and Penza". We recommend to send euros or dollars, as other currencies are automatically converted to euro according to PayPal rates.

Yandex-wallet of Anarchist Black Cross St. Petersburg

41001160378989

Bitcoin 1EKGZT2iM-

jNKH8oVt7svXpUdcPAXkRBAH

Litecoin LNzk1uyER7Kz9n-

miL6mbm9AzDM5Z6CNxVu

Etherium

0x1deb54058a69fcc443db2bf956

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Monero

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Zcash t1dX9Rpupi77erqEb-

def3T353pvfTp9SAAt1

If you need another way to transfer money/make a donation please contact Anarchist Black Cross Moscow:

abc-msk@riseup.net



"The Mapuche people have faced violence, persecution and imprisonment for not wanting to give up their ancestral homes to logging firms, and the clothing giant Benetton"

Solidarity with the Mapuche

Benetton is exploiting huge areas of stolen land in Argentina paid for with the blood of the indigenous Mapuche people.

The Mapuche people have faced violence, persecution and imprisonment for not wanting to give up their ancestral homes to logging firms, and the clothing giant Benetton.

In 2017 at a demo blocking Benetton's headquarters, the anarchist Santiago Maldonado disappeared. His body was found two months later near to where he was last seen being chased by the police.

On the day of Santiago's burial, the Mapuche community of Ba-

riloché faced a violent eviction which resulted in the death of Rafael Nahuel, who was shot in the back. He had gone to Bariloché with his relations to show solidarity with the Mapuche.

The Mapuche people and Argentinian anarchists have asked for solidarity actions across the world to raise awareness of what is happening, targeting both Benetton and the Argentinian state.

Anti-authority

Protests and other actions have already taken place in February in Britain, Greece, Italy, and Germany.

The Mapuche are a group of

traditionally anti-authoritarian indigenous communities living in Chile and Argentina. They resisted Spanish colonisation for nearly three centuries, and today they fight against land grabs by the timber and hydroelectric industries.

An estimated one million indigenous Mapuche lived in the territories now known as Chile and Argentina, when Spanish colonisers arrived in the sixteenth century. The Mapuche were organized into small familial clans or communities. Each community manages its land collectively and makes many of its decisions at a popular assembly.





JACKDAW



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UPCOMING EVENTS

21/3/18 Leicester - Discussion Meeting:

What is Anarchist Communism? 7.30pm at the Regent Club, 102 Regent Road LE1.

25/3/18 London - Public Meeting:

London in Struggle. 1pm at May Day Rooms, 88 Fleet St, EC4.

31/3/18 Birmingham - "Homeless Voice"

Rally, 4.30pm Victoria Square - called by Revolutionary Anarchist Group, Brum.

7/4/18 Liverpool Anarchist Bookfair

11am-6pm, The Black-E, 1 Great George Street
www.facebook.com/liverpoolanarchistbookfair

6/5/18 Norwich Anarchist Bookfair

2pm-11pm, Bedfords Crypt, 1 Old Post Office Yard, Bedford Street NR2 1SL
www.facebook.com/events/175234316411777

12/5/18 Bristol Anarchist Bookfair

details tbc. www.bristolanarchistbookfair.org

WHO WE ARE...

The Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) is a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation made up of local groups and individuals who seek a complete transformation of society, and the creation of anarchist communism.

This will mean the working class overthrowing capitalism, abolishing the State, getting rid of exploitation, hierarchies and oppressions, and halting the destruction of the environment. To contribute to the building of a revolutionary anarchist movement we believe it is important to be organised.

We are committed to building an effective national and international organisation that has a collective identity and works towards the common goal of anarchist communism, whilst at the same time working together with other working class organisations and in grass roots campaigns.

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If you are considering joining the ACG, then to see where we are coming from in terms of ideas and politics, we suggest you look first at our **Aims & Principles** on our website www.anarchistcommunism.org

Then if you think the ACG is politically the right place for you, simply drop us a line at info@anarchistcommunism.org or write to the postal address at the top left of this page.

Anti-Fracking Round-Up

During 2017 the fracking industry's activity continued but strong, well organised and imaginative community opposition resulted in delays and heavy costs for the corporations involved. This year promises to be another grinding, slow slog for the fracking industry with money being lost hand over fist due to community opposition around the UK.

The fracking industry has to artificially crank up the possibility of profit to draw in investment capital that is its life blood. But there are over 300 local groups in the anti-fracking movement which has successfully increased in numbers, strength and motivation. It is this direct action movement which threatens to bleed the fracking industry of its profit and stop it dead in its tracks.

Last year saw a broad range of creative resistance to the fracking industry. That resistance focused on the fracking sites with protest camps, marches and blockades.

But the challenge to fracking also involved organising disruption of the network of supply routes and support sites. Lorries have been held-up for days with different tactics including lorry surfing.

The tactic of communications blockades such as coordinated mass phone-ins has also been used to effect business and cut the profit of those companies engaged in fracking. In the face of these organised protests some suppliers have stopped working with the fracking industry. Some fracking operations have been slashed. Cuadrilla planned two large shale gas sites in Lancashire but these were scaled down to only one at Preston New Road. That site was going to have four wells but those were then reduced to just two. The construction work took over six months — double the planned time.

While Lancashire is a major front in the battle against fracking, North Yorkshire, the East Mid-

lands, South East and other areas are important and anti-fracking actions are ongoing in these places. A winning strategy of causing construction costs to skyrocket by creating painful delays through organised disruption using a whole array of tactics could mean that the fracking industry grinds to a halt. Organised direct action against fracking can win, both in the UK and internationally.

For extensive info about the anti-fracking movement, including updates, local groups, maps and other resources check:

frack-off.org.uk

