

REBEL CITY

LONDON'S ANARCHIST PAPER | ISSUE NO.8 | FREE/DONATION



If most of the statements below sound good to you, you're probably already an anarchist. Congratulations: you're part of a centuries-old libertarian tradition of people who have refused to accept the brutality and restrictions of present society and recognise that a better, freer, more compassionate, world is possible. Read on and get your teeth into a small slice - the cake of liberty!

YOU THINK:

- 1. Bosses are unnecessary - the workers can run things better themselves.**
- 2. The police, courts, and prisons exist mainly to benefit and protect the rich and powerful.**

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

- 3. Elections are a joke - replacing one politician for another doesn't make much difference. Proper change comes from our actions.**
- 4. There's plenty of everything to go round (housing, food, education, etc) if the rich didn't grab it all for themselves.**
- 5. The mainstream media seems to represent the interests of government, big business and the status quo.**
- 6. No one should be discriminated against because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, age, ability.**
- 7. No one should have power over anyone else.**
- 8. Our economic system (capitalism) is unfair, unjust, and unsustainable. It gives huge advantages to a tiny minority of people.**
- 9. National borders are imaginary lines that should be got rid of.**
- 10. Society's problems can't really be solved by reforming a rotten system; we need a totally different way of organising the whole thing.**

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT: STOP IT, SCRAP IT!



**WE HAVE TO TURN
DESPAIR OVER UC INTO
POSITIVE ANGER AND A
DETERMINATION TO
RESIST**

The May government is bringing in Universal Credit (UC) by stages, starting in 2013. It replaces Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, ESA, Housing Benefit, Tax Credits and Working Tax Credits. At the moment there are 590,000 people on UC in England and Wales, with around 50,000 new claims each month.

LIES

- It will encourage more people back to work.
- It will be more efficient than previous benefits.
- It will improve people's lives and raise their incomes.

FACTS

- More people back to work? In minimum wage, zero hour contract, or other insecure jobs!
- More efficient? You can only apply for UC and get messages about UC online. But many don't have the internet at home. With the closing of many public libraries with free internet access, many will be forced to use cybercafés. Already, people have to wait six weeks or longer to receive their first UC payment. This causes hardship to many with no savings to rely on. Would your landlord wait that long for the rent?
- Improve incomes? Many of those affected already have jobs but will be expected to look for more hours and pay in return for UC. If they don't, they face sanctions, that is, loss of benefit for up to three years. If they do find extra work, they will lose 67p of every extra pound they earn. Some UC rates are lower than current benefit rates.

£3 billion taken from the low-paid, the unemployed and the disabled and given to corporate bosses and bankers by the Government

When fully UC is implemented millions will be worse off. What this is really about is cutting Social

Security. Housing subsidy will be cut creating more homeless. Disability elements will be cut or abolished. Support for child care is massively cut, hitting women returning to work already hit by increased childcare costs.

Many have turned to the overloaded Citizens Advice Bureau - one in ten of those already claiming UC. Agencies and food banks are predicting chaos when the full rollout begins. The six week wait already means referrals to food banks, getting in arrears with rent, and evictions. One foodbank has said referrals have doubled. Two south London boroughs have said half their UC claimants have gone into further debt.

THE WAY FORWARD

This government is weak and fragile and mass resistance could topple it. But we have to turn despair over UC into positive anger and a determination to resist. But don't rely on the Labour Party to help. All they are offering is tinkering with UC, not its abolition. Already the Tories have been forced to climb down over the 55p/minute UC helpline charge. Also, twelve back bench Tory MPs, worried about a Poll Tax style revolt and about their seats, 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!

Day of Action: April 18th called by Disabled People against Cuts: <https://dpac.uk.net/>

OTHER GROUPS FIGHTING UNIVERSAL CREDIT:

Kilburn Unemployed Workers Group:
kilburnunemployed.blogspot.com

Newham Claimants Union:
www.newhamclaimants.org.uk

LORDS VS COMMONERS: WEEK OF ACTION FOR LAND RIGHTS (April 14th to 22nd)

The Land Justice Network (LJN) week of action highlights the incredible inequality between those who own land and the majority of us who don't.

Stops along the route include offices of overseas investors, streets with large numbers of empty homes in the same borough that Grenfell Tower residents are still waiting to be housed, walled-off private gardens, and other sites symbolic of the power of the traditional and new 'Lords'.

One example is the Grosvenor House Hotel, owned by Ben Ashkenazy, an American billionaire with a \$12 billion property portfolio. The Grosvenor hosts regular property-related events, such as the Property Developers Awards (April 18th) - a handing-out of rewards to those who have ripped off Londoners the most, and has hosted arms trade events. It is also symbolic of the plight of catering and other low-paid workers in London. In 1983 casual workers tried to form a union and get permanent contracts. They were sacked, took their case to court and lost; a loss that paved the way for zero hour contracts. Like hotel workers throughout central London no one on such low pay can afford to live anywhere within easy reach of their work.

**Show the Lords we Commoners have had enough!
Come and join the protest walk and/or get involved:**

<https://www.landjustice.uk/lords-vs-commoners/>

Email: ljnaction@gmail.com

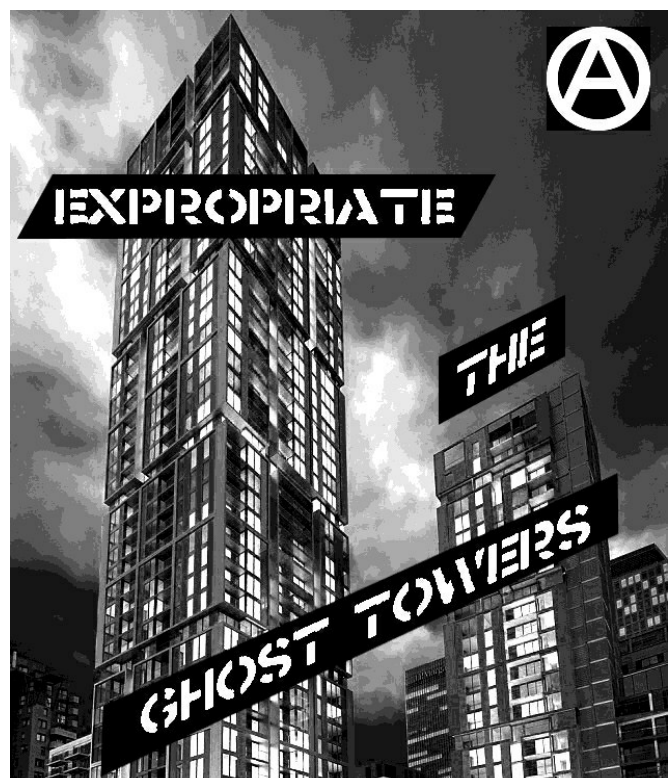
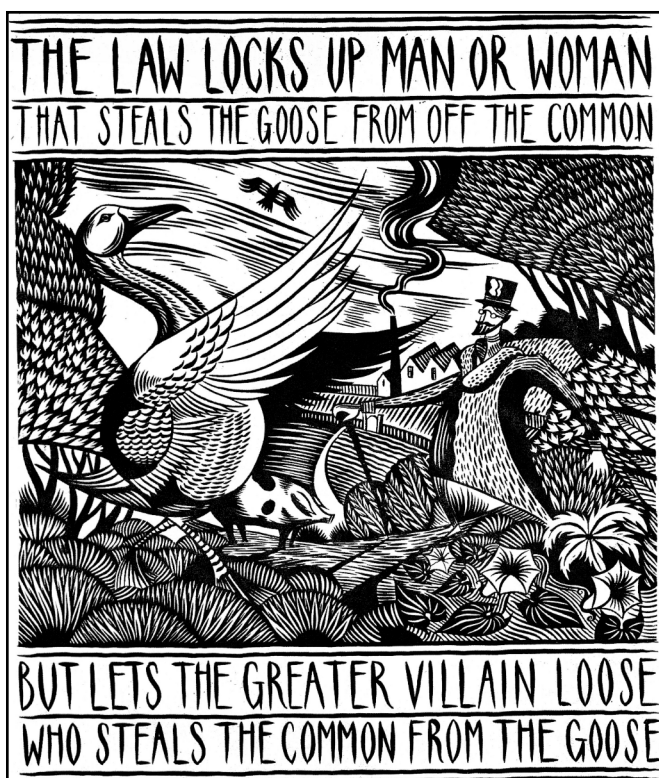
Land in cities is unequally distributed, owned by a combination of traditional aristocrats and their modern-day equivalent: offshore companies and institutional investors. Homes are increasingly owned by buy-to-let landlords rather than by individual home owners or social landlords. This forces up the cost of living for those who have to rent. Tenants have little security with standard tenancies running for just 6 months.

Rent controls have gone. On average people pay a quarter of their wages to their landlord; in London roughly half. Even those who manage to buy a home rarely own it outright until late in life. Most spend a big chunk of their monthly salary on their mortgage, with the worry that if their job goes their home could go too.

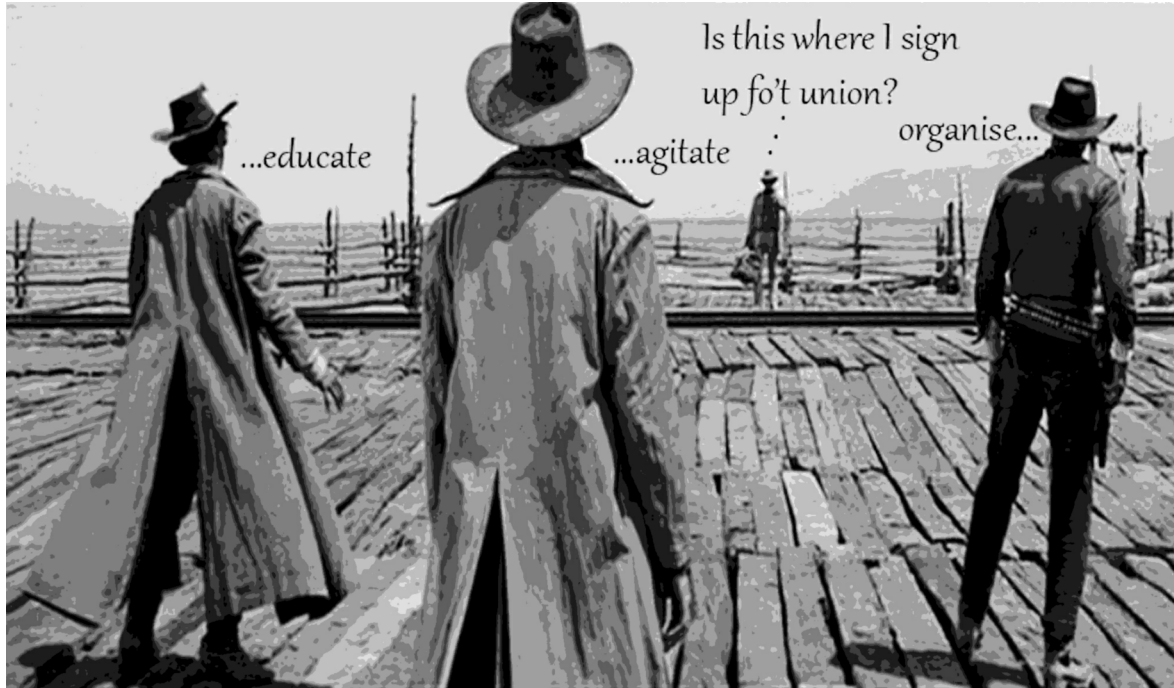
In the last 6 years homelessness has dramatically increased. This lack of secure homes is obscene in this day and age and could easily be remedied if the £9.3 billion a year paid in Housing Benefit to wealthy landlords was used to build social housing in all communities.

Urban areas also need well managed parks, community gardens and allotments, so 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.

The LJN walking tour route covers Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, two of the wealthiest London boroughs. In these boroughs massive areas have been taken from the people centuries ago and are now home to some of the richest landowners, investors and property speculators.



ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WILD WEST



These are interesting times. The establishment is shaken. It's time to dig deeper and try something new! The West London branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) invites you to take part in a 6-month organising drive amongst workers in warehouses and some of the bigger non-unionised workplaces in West London, mainly Greenford and Park Royal.

Most workers in these workplaces are migrants, mainly from Eastern Europe and the Asian subcontinent. Our organising effort will focus both on the miserable wages and working conditions, and the problems of workers as tenants, migrants and women. We will organise ourselves into teams of 3-4 for each workplace and visit workers regularly when shifts change to build relationships. We will have training sessions and discussions on how to approach workers and about the goals of the organising effort.

Where we are organising is part of the 'Western corridor', a major logistical and processing hub, where 60% of London's food is processed, packaged and/or handled. The more than 100,000 workers who work in this sector have insecure, poorly paid jobs, despite their vital role in keeping the city ticking over. Recent warehouse struggles in Italy have shown that individually vulnerable, migrant workers can turn the logistics sector into a collective weapon.

This part of West London has a rich working class history of militancy which we are slowly unearthing: Strikes in Park Royal in the 1930s; early 'Asian' strikes and anti-racist actions, in Southall in the

mid-1960s and Grunwick in 1976; and workers' self-management experiments at the Lucas plants in the late 1970s. We hope this tradition can be tapped into, learnt from and revitalised at a time when things look bleak and discontent is building.

This IWW organising drive is a collaborative effort with AngryWorkers, a collective which has been active in the area for over three years. The AngryWorkers organise weekly solidarity network drop-ins, try to organise two initiatives in larger workplaces and distribute 2,000 copies of their newspaper WorkersWildWest. They have been involved in informal overtime-strikes and slow-downs in major supermarket warehouses, supported the Ealing hospital cleaners' strike, and taken part in local working-class campaigns, e.g. against the redevelopment of our local leisure centre.

There are various ways you can get involved: join an IWW organising team and visit a particular workforce regularly; help with translations, in particular Gujarati, Konkani, Romanian; help out with the weekly solidarity network drop-in; or come whenever it suits you to help distribute WorkersWildWest. Alternatively, we are always interested in talking to people who want to set up similar initiatives in other parts of London.

Get in touch: westlondon@iww.org.uk

Find out more:

www.workerswildwest.wordpress.com

www.angryworkersworld.wordpress.com

www.iww.org.uk

DON'T VOTE, TAKE TO THE STREETS!

May sees another round of local elections - an opportunity to vote for people who will supposedly carry out our wishes. But the reality is very different. The only way politicians respond to our demands is when we are on the streets, screaming loudly, forcing them to hear us.

Voting is not act of political freedom. It is an act of political conformity. Those who refuse to vote are not expressing silence. They are screaming in the politician's ear: 'you do not represent me. I do not believe you'. Many people are deeply alienated by the political establishment. In the 32 London boroughs less than 40% of us took part in the last local elections. But it is not just a question of getting the 'right' politicians, politicians that listen, are well-meaning or have better policies. Even if everyone voted, 'our' politicians would not do what we need them to do. No matter which lot get elected, no matter what they say before the elections, they always end up betraying the working class. They sell off our treasures (municipal buildings, council estates, playing fields, parks, swimming pools, youth centres, etc) to parasite developers and landlords, they privatise and cut our services and raise council-tax to unaffordable levels. They even undertake a targeted policy of 'managed decline' and social cleansing in our communities. That mark on the ballot paper means 'yes'; it is us agreeing to the electoral process by way of participating. No wonder all those who stand for election agree you should vote - it gives them credibility. Sadiq Khan won the election for London Mayor on the basis that Londoners had had enough of gentrification, social cleansing and the sell-off of public housing. But his new London plan is just more of the same - 'partnerships' with private developers - continuing to hand London on a plate to those whose main aim is profit.

The expression "don't vote, it only encourages them", gives an idea of why anarchists are against participating in elections. Voting just gives politicians our backing as they bring in policies most Londoners are against. They cannot help but do this as they are operating within a capitalist system; power lies outside Parliament in the hands of banks and big business. Don't give them an excuse to say that 'we voted for this'. It's on the streets and in grass roots campaigns that the true voice of Londoners will be heard. Not via the ballot box.



THE MENACE OF 'PROFESSIONAL ACTIVISTS'



The housing crisis has seen a number of grassroots campaign groups set up all over London to resist what is often referred to as 'regeneration', which effectively means social cleansing. As residents and businesses are forced out, the whole area changes and the community is gone forever.

Naturally people want to fight this and there are some great examples of people doing that for themselves. However, there is also a bandwagon rolling by for 'professional activists' to jump on - this is a worrying and slightly sinister trend that needs to be watched out for. Activists are not necessarily bad of course and the great thing about them is they often have experience of running campaigns and they are used to operating in a political environment. They're a mine of information on what works and what doesn't.

However, there are other types of activists whose impact is more negative. One type comes to help but because they have experience they are given far too much a say into how the campaign is run and before long it isn't grass roots anymore; the local people have been side-lined. The second type is much more sinister. They are the activist groups who have their own political agenda. It is more about building their own organisation rather than showing solidarity.

Groups on the left such as Momentum, the SWP and the Socialist Party are in it for new members

and converts – they have an ulterior motive. They will invariably arrive not just with practical advice but with leaflets and probably newspapers. It won't be long before they're dishing out membership forms too. They might back a political campaign in order to get certain people onto the local council and they will direct activity away from what the grassroots want and towards their own political ambition – they just cannot help themselves because they are being directed by a certain leadership/party line.

This is something we have seen in various parts of London, where a strong, grass-roots, radical campaign has developed to prevent regeneration and has been swamped by political parties. Typically, there will be a growing focus towards official political methods like influencing councillors and getting new councillors elected and this has stifled the local voices that were pressing for more direct and immediate action. Labour and the SWP have been at the forefront of damaging campaigns that had (ironically) enough momentum of its own before they waded in.

Regardless of whether the tactics work or not in the long run, the fact that these groups have invaded a grassroots campaigns is shameful. It has to be the people most affected that direct and deliver a campaign. Anything else is elitist and therefore undemocratic. Good activists know when to step back and when to offer help. They know when to stay in the background.

WHEN WOMEN STOP THE WORLD STOPS

**WE HAVE THE POWER
TO DISRUPT, TO
DISMANTLE AND TO
REBEL**



On 8th March - hundreds of thousands of women in over 50 countries worldwide went on strike. In the UK, Women's Strike assemblies and actions were held in London, Edinburgh, Brighton, Aberdeen, Derry and Cardiff.

In London, sex workers co-ordinated a strike to demand the decriminalisation of sex work. In recent years, resurgent grassroots unions have been organising service workers and cleaners, many of whom are migrants. On 8th March cleaners went on strike in workplaces across London demanding a living wage, and dignity and respect at work. Trans-women, central to organising the Women's Strike, organised direct actions demanding control over their own bodies and access to healthcare.

The London Women's Strike Assembly in Russell Square was opened by Gail Lewis; co-founder of the Brixton Black Women's Group and the Organisation for Women of Asian and African Descent in the 1970s. From the outset it has been clear to the Women's Strike assembly that our feminism will be anti-racist and anti-imperialist or it will be meaningless, and that we need to connect our current struggles to previous feminist movements.

The Women's Strike is not a traditional industrial strike because women's work crosses so many boundaries between waged work and work that we do (or are expected to do) for free, that is, almost all the cooking, cleaning and caring in the world. The Women's Strike takes the individual arguments and disagreements that women have with partners and husbands - about housework and caring - and turns

those arguments into a public form of action.

In the world of waged work it is overwhelmingly women who are teachers, nurses, nannies, cleaners, child-care workers and secretaries. Considered 'women's work' these jobs are devalued and paid shockingly low wages. When women strike (from our waged and unwaged work) we can start to see how gender and race determine who does what, and how different types of work get valued or devalued.

The Women's Strike also makes it blindingly clear that women can't actually stop all the everyday domestic and care work we do - as many people, young and old, rely on women's labour to stay alive. In this way, the Women's Strike is about making women's work visible and shining a light on the fact that our work is essential for life, yet remains devalued by an economic and political system built on women's oppression and exploitation.

The reason we went on strike - and will go on strike again - is because we intend to change not only women's work but the system that benefits from our oppression. The Women's Strike is about recognising the power we possess, creating and nurturing resistance. We want to build communities and collective solutions to the individual problems we face and destroy the idea of women as weak. We are more than stories and hashtags. We have the power to disrupt, to dismantle and to rebel. We will strike and we will win.

For more information and to get involved check out: www.womenstrike.org.uk

CLASS ACTION WINS SATISFACTION

The last few years have seen an avalanche of campaigns and news around the violence and harassment perpetrated against women. Examples of relentless sexism and harassment are being exposed through the #MeToo following the accusations of rape by Harvey Weinstein - the latest of a string of high-profile men outed as rapists. More recently we have the collusion of humanitarian institutions in the sexual abuse of young women, which followed on from news about the collusion of public agencies in regional paedophile rings. All of these cases are seen as 'scandals'. This hides the fact that the oppression of working class women is a daily occurrence.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, working class women have been squeezed on one hand by welfare cuts and increased pressure to work more and on the other a conservative toting of the family as a safe haven in times of austerity, hardship and male insecurity. However, it is impossible both to bring in extra-income and create a family haven. Instead these dual pressures can make the home into a place of tension, often violent tension.

We need a new approach to the continuing triple burden of women (waged work, emotional labour and male violence) in an age of supposed equality. This approach must bypass old labour organising models that relegate women to the margins. It must include a feminist movement and analysis, and be rooted in the experiences of working class lives if it is to understand and respond to worsening working conditions in terms of real wages, zero-

hours contracts, legal rights and slashing of the social wage. Sections of the feminist movement have already adopted a class-based approach, for example supporters of Yarl's Wood detainees. However, often, feminism doesn't touch the lives of the women it professes to place at its centre.

To mark International Women's Day, AngryWorkers shared five stories of working women in the sprawling city of London in 2018. You can read these 5 stories at:

www.angryworkersworld.wordpress.com/2018/03/08/a-series-of-interviews-with-working-class-women-from-west-london

These women bear the brunt of sexism in the workplace, racist border controls and an increasingly punitive welfare system, with little opportunity to highlight their experiences through the media or organisations. The people who keep the economy going - those doing the low-paid jobs, those doing the lion's share of caring work - are never given any meaningful space to articulate their own experiences, needs and desires. AngryWorkers hope this series plays a modest role in giving some space over to them.

We don't just want to share them as 'sad tale' fodder, but as the foundation upon which we can orient our political work.

To do this it is necessary to address the material forces on working class women which often make 'choices' a privilege. We need to build working class, grassroots organisations that address working class women's issues. AngryWorkers tries to do this with our workplace newsletters, weekly solidarity network drop-ins and newspaper.



**OFTEN, FEMINISM
DOESN'T TOUCH THE
LIVES OF THE WOMEN
IT PROFESSES TO
PLACE AT ITS CENTRE**

NO TO A NATION OF IMMIGRATION OFFICERS!

**AS WE WORK TO
DEFEND EACH
OTHER WE GAIN
FRIENDSHIPS,
A SHARED DIGNITY
AND A BETTER
FUTURE**



Last year, Paulette Wilson, a 61 year-old grandmother was locked up for a week in Yarl's Wood Detention Centre and almost deported to Jamaica. Her crime? Failing to complete paperwork telling the Home Office she is legally entitled to stay in the UK.

In 2015, Paulette received a letter from the Home Office saying she was regarded as an undocumented migrant and faced forced deportation to Jamaica. Her pension and benefits stopped immediately and she was no longer entitled to free healthcare. Paulette had worked as a cook in the House of Commons, volunteered with her local church, and paid National Insurance for over 30 years.

Arriving as a commonwealth citizen before 1971 meant Paulette had the legal right to remain. Nonetheless, in October 2017 she was imprisoned and would have been deported but for a last minute appeal by a local migrant charity. She told The Guardian, "I felt like I didn't exist. I wondered what was going to happen to me. All I did was cry, thinking of my daughter and granddaughter; thinking that I wasn't going to see them again... I couldn't eat or sleep."

In January this year, Paulette gained "indefinite leave to remain", and while she is now free from future threats of deportation, she is still traumatised by the brutal experience and can't eat and sleep properly.

Paulette's case is not an isolated one. In Edmonton alone there have been 10 similar cases in the last year including Anthony Bryan, a 60 year old painter and decorator, locked up and threatened with forced removal on similar grounds. Targeting of retirement age commonwealth residents by Immigration Enforcement agents is the latest example of Theresa May's "Hostile Environment"

policy: A project to turn Britain into a nation of immigration officers by requiring public servants, like teachers and hospital workers, banks and private landlords to provide the government with information on immigration status.

From September 2016, schools are required to collect nationality and immigration data on pupils aged 5-19 in England. Parents can currently opt-out or request that their child's nationality details be removed using a form on the campaign website: www.schoolsabc.net

From October 2017, NHS staff must ask patients if they are entitled to free healthcare for non-emergency treatment and charge if they have no proof of entitlement. This has led to Black and Asian patients being asked to bring passports or prove they are "British". Pregnant women have received menacing letters asking them to pay thousands of pounds before attending their next antenatal appointment. Anyone worried about healthcare access can contact www.docsnocops.co.uk for confidential assistance and information.

From January 2018, banks must supply the Home Office with customer data. Bank accounts of anyone identified as an unauthorised migrant will be frozen immediately. Given the Home Office is well-known for having inaccurate and outdated information, the risk of incorrect identification is high. If you need help, contact Migrants' Rights Network - info@migrantsrights.org.uk or call 020 8123 602 | 07534 488 696.

It is clear these racist myths and scapegoats are being peddled by the Government to justify greater monitoring and control of everyone's lives. These laws do not protect but destroy. As we work to defend each other we gain friendships, a shared dignity and a better future.

EL PODER ES DEL PUEBLO, NO DE LOS POLITICOS *

SAVE LATIN VILLAGE TOTTENHAM

Growing up in Tottenham I have always enjoyed the rich cultural diversity and energy of the area. Latin Village/Wards Corner is very much part of that community and has organically evolved in an unlikely corner of Tottenham in a former Edwardian department store right near Seven Sisters station.

Unfortunately, this location, with its great transport links also means that beady-eyed developers are circling. They plan to demolish the site and replace it with a clone town mixed retail development, complete with luxury flats and zero affordable homes. The developer has allowed the site to fall into disrepair to strengthen their demand for a Compulsory Purchase Order and then demolition. But the Tottenham community spirit of rebellion is traditionally strong and we fought and defeated yet another CPO in July 2017 - this hasn't been the only legal challenge that has been fought but one of many, as our community and our supporters have been fighting for over 10 years.

With the support of activists and local campaigns, we celebrated our 2nd human chain around the whole site in April 2017. There was live music, singing, samba bands, placards with slogans such as: **'STRICKLAND EL BURRO SABE MAS QUE TUI!'*** and **'EL PODER ES DEL PUEBLO, NO DE LOS POLITICOS!'*** and an 'anti-gentrification piñata' where local kids took a big stick to the

threat of redevelopment.

What puzzles and saddens me, is how Haringey Council have not supported us or put up any kind of fight. People on low incomes can't always afford to go to the theatre, etc and enjoy other inaccessible cultural activities, however, they can enjoy cultural activities at the Latin Village at an extremely affordable rate. Authentic Colombian coffees for instance, are sold at £1 each!

It's free to hang out at the Latin Village and children use the place on a regular basis as a place to play and enjoy their culture. Socialising and cultural exchange takes place between all generations here and everybody is made to feel welcome - in fact this fight and this campaign has brought the various communities closer together and we are a force to be reckoned with. Our unity is our strength and it will be required to prevent greedy developers capitalising on what makes Tottenham so special.

**Strickland (despised housing and 'regeneration' officer Haringey council), a donkey knows more than you!*

**the power is with the people, not the politicians!*

A personal perspective by a Tottenham Resident & Community Activist

#SaveLatinVillage



A SICK JOKE

**OUR ONLY REAL
HOPE IS FANNING
THE SPARKS OF
RESISTANCE, AND
BUILDING OUR
VISION OF A NEW
WORLD IN THE
SHELL OF THE OLD**



Anarchists are against the State “a compulsory political organization with a centralized government and monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain geographical territory.” They believe ordinary people, left to themselves, are perfectly capable of organising together to meet their needs and don’t need any state telling them what to do!

The area covered by a State is usually defined as a Nation. The Nation has members (“us”) - everyone else is foreigners (“them”). Nationalists tell us those of “us” born in the UK are “all in this together”. But most of us know perfectly well that’s nonsense! Worldwide the rich get way richer and the rest of us get poorer - on an almost daily basis, regardless of national borders and immigration policies. Fighting each other for scraps hasn’t done us any favours.

Some politicians have sold Brexit by spouting nationalism, but it’s become glaringly obvious neither them, their Remainer “opponents” nor richer people generally have any intention of giving up their cheap workers. So no surprise the promise to close the borders so ordinary “decent hard-working (Brit) families” can get jobs went straight out the window.

The inevitable logic of the EU has always been to move from a loose collaboration of Nation States to being a Super State. Eastern and Western European governments may have different visions of the kind of EU they want (Christian and authoritarian, vs sort of secular and democratic) but they both want their

Europe to be increasingly open to white residents moving where they want inside it, and keeping everyone else out. With thousands drowning in the Mediterranean or trapped in the poorer member countries on the edge of Europe, EU anti-racist rhetoric has to be a sick joke. As the EU becomes a racist fortress with its own army, European imperialist ventures in the Middle East and North Africa will become ever more deadly.

What bosses love is having a mass of people who are so desperate they’ll accept peanuts and compete with the better paid to force wages as far down as possible! For them the Brexit debate - Leave vs Remain - is simply about which particular bunch of poor bastards get to be at the bottom of the pile. More and more zero hours’ contracts and rip-off wages is modern capitalism inside or outside the EU.

We certainly won’t solve our problems by waiting for some new leader to rescue us, or by hoping we can get a few more crumbs by stomping on people worse off than us. Our only real hope is fanning the sparks of resistance, and building our vision of a new world in the shell of the old.

LONDON RADICAL HISTORY CORNER

With Past Tense

EAST END RENT STRIKES

2018: housing in London spirals into a morass of high rents, inflated property prices, homelessness and housing benefit cuts. Private landlords overcharge for rundown, overcrowded housing; council estates are sold off to developers; housing associations become property companies. Even many folk with mortgages are a payday away from defaulting.

Londoners have faced such conditions before - but they didn't just take it lying down.

In the 1930s, the terrible housing conditions in the East End triggered discontent - and collective action. In the autumn of 1937 the Stepney Tenants' Defence League was established, and began to deal with the rent and repair problems of hundreds of tenants. Tenants' Committees were set up in blocks and streets, acting as a kind of shop stewards' committee and dealing direct with the landlord.

Two years of Stepney tenants' organising crystallised between August 1938 and mid-1939, as hundreds of mainly private tenants refused to pay rent, and physically resisted violent eviction attempts. Demands varied: from repairs and decorations, to rent reductions. The Brunswick Buildings tenants were out on strike for eleven weeks. Langdale Street Buildings and Brady Street Mansions were on strike for five months; their landlords refused to negotiate and issued eviction orders to the most active tenants. Tenants barricaded both blocks with barbed-wire, and guarded them day and night.

In June 1939 bailiffs and police, broke into Langdale Mansions, sparking a battle, between brutal cops with truncheons, against tenants armed with saucepans, rolling-pins, sticks, and shovels. As news spread, 1000s of angry locals left work to join the resistance. The terrified police withdrew. The Stepney Tenants' Defence League immediately announced that its 7500 members would strike in solidarity with the Langdale and Brady Street tenants, unless their demands were met. Within a week the landlords caved in: rents were reduced, arrears written off and spending on repairs guaranteed. The 21 weeks' rent strike, bitter, bloody, had been won. Other landlords wishing to avoid trouble suddenly became quite amenable. The rent strikes spread across London as well as to other parts of the country, eg Birmingham, Liverpool and Aberdeen.

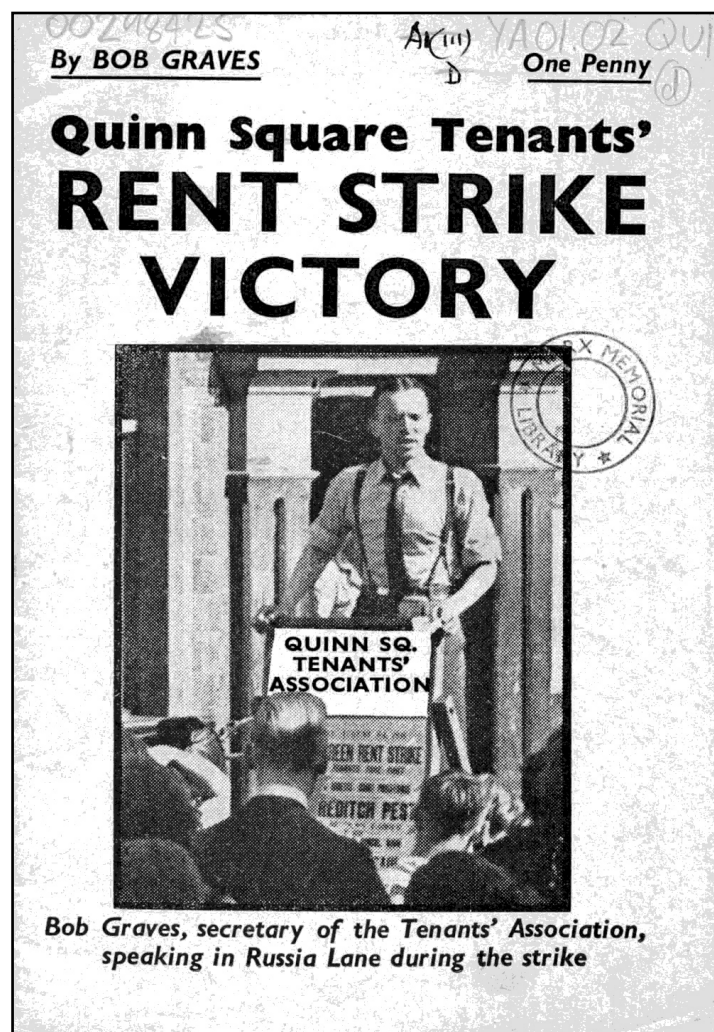
Rent strikes, and the growth of tenants' organisations both locally, London-wide and nationally, forced the government to act. When World War 2 broke out the Government immediately froze rents - fearing a repeat of the great Glasgow rent struggles of 1915, and not wanting mass struggle on another front while war was beginning.

Resistance to the dire state of housing in London is growing. Renters Unions are sprouting among private tenants; council tenants fighting off the alliance of councils/developers; in the harsh weather of Feb-March 2018 empty buildings were squatted to house street sleepers.

1000s of new build flats remain empty while tens of 1000s live in mouldy hovels or are threatened with eviction. We need to replace property for profit with housing for need - a massive project; but it can be done...

A longer version of this article can be found at the past tense blog:

<https://pasttenseblog.wordpress.com/2016/02/13/>



PAEDOPHILIA AND POWER

It seems that every month more large-scale child abuse cases hit the news. Initially it came to light with Jimmy Savile. But before that numerous religious institutions and people in power were using and abusing children in their care. More recently, we've had gymnastics coaches abusing children in the US, Barry Bennell (and others) abusing his power as a football coach, and reports of children sent to Australia after World War II abused by religious leaders and others in positions of power. Even groups like the scouts are implicated.

Every time a new case hits the headlines we're told there will be procedures put in place to stop it happening again, and that it's just "one bad apple".

Let's get it straight. The people committing these abuses are nearly always men in positions of power. Child abuse, like rape, in many cases isn't just about sex. It's also about patriarchy (a system where men hold the power and women and children are largely excluded). And until we destroy patriarchy and the power that comes with it we will continue to hear of more cases.

Power corrupts. It's not necessarily that people are bad. But give anyone power and they will take more, feeling they are totally entitled to it. While we continue with our present power structures, people in positions of power will abuse it. Child abuse is just one of the more horrible manifestations of this power.

If we really want to get rid of patriarchy and abuse, we have to get rid of the structures that breed this arrogance and sense of entitlement. We have to get rid of people having power over others. If the word of a child was as important as the word of a politician, church leader or sports coach, kids and young adults would not be frightened to speak up or think they won't be believed.

We need to turn society on its head and take away the power we (often unintentionally) give to (mainly) older men. And let's not put others in power instead. Do that, and we just get a new set of abusers. We all know of someone given a small bit of power who suddenly thinks they are better than the rest of us and starts (in small ways at first) exploiting others around them. It might be a friend, a workmate, or someone we play sport with.

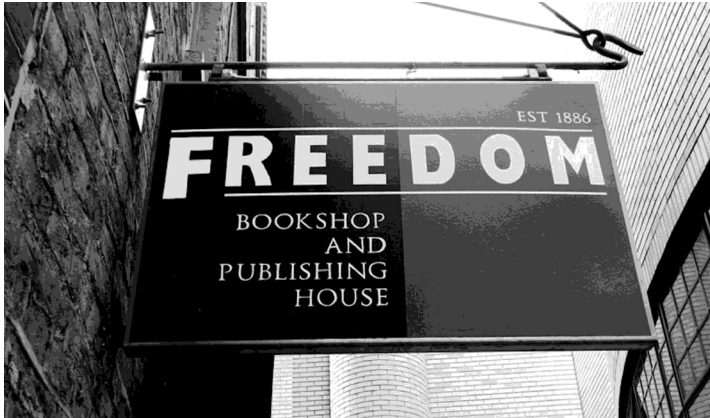
We have to work out ways to stop allowing people to assume power. In fact, we need to question the whole idea of "power". Changing the way we do things is one way. Getting rid of bosses and having workplaces where everyone has the same degree of authority is one example. Getting rid of organised religion is another. We can all think of other examples. But until we confront all power structures we won't get rid of abusive behaviour. We need to start acting now.

**WE HAVE TO WORK
OUT WAYS TO STOP
ALLOWING PEOPLE
TO ASSUME POWER**



FOCUS ON ANARCHIST SPACES IN LONDON

FREEDOM: THE ANARCHISTS OF WHITECHAPEL



It's easy to miss Angel Alley, which runs under a KFC sign down the left hand side of Whitechapel Art Gallery, but it's been around a very long time and, since the 1960s, been home to the longest-running anarchist organisation in British history, Freedom Press, first founded in 1886.

"Anarchist organisation?!" I hear you scoff, and if you visit the tumbledown old place you might think yourself right to chuckle. Getting along on a shoestring for over 60 years, the building's not in good nick. On the other hand, we've survived on our own terms without ripping anyone off and without rich benefactors, who - shocking though this seems - rarely come a'courting with brown envelopes.

Everyone involved has an equal say at the monthly collective meeting, we have no bosses and decide our own priorities. Sometimes it's frustrating, often it's slow going, occasionally we get things wrong, but it's always us controlling our own projects. And we have a lot of projects.

Among other things we run a seven-day-a-week bookshop, a small publishing house bringing out classic and contemporary anarchist literature, a daily news website, a bi-annual free journal, and a digitisation project for our historic newspaper - published almost continuously since we were founded.

Along with groups like the Advisory Service For Squatters, Haven Distribution (which sends books to prisoners), investigative journalism collective Corporate Watch and others we manage the upkeep of our own building and help provide mail and support services for a huge variety of groups, from anti-eviction campaigns to legal rights work.

We do this in the face of hostility from all the right people. The mainstream press doesn't like us, old "State Communism" types don't like us, and the fascists don't like us - indeed they've tried to burn us down, most recently in 2013. Our politics have always stood front and centre in the way of their main aim of promoting an elite minority to power and keeping it there.

We don't go for influential positions, we don't take bribes and we're not in it for the perks. Our job, as we see it, is to fight for the working class, promote new, more equal ways of running things, and make sure that when people take action it isn't derailed by careerists and windbags looking for a payday or an ego boost.

If you want to find out more you can stop by for a chat at 84b (E1 7QX), we're open from 12pm-6pm most days (you can call ahead: 07952 157-742), or check our website at freedomnews.org.uk which has a full history of the press, a massive archive of our back catalogue, an online shop and a lot of interesting writing about anarchist goings on you'll not see elsewhere.

56A INFOSHOP: KEEPING ON DOING IN SOUTH LONDON



27 years in the making and still operating from a small shop space in the backstreets of South London's The Elephant & Castle. Started in 1991 as a squatted premises and lasting in this manner until 2003, this collectively-run radical bookshop, archive and social centre now pays rent and rates! But we've managed to survive so far in an ever-gentrifying neighbourhood, keeping on keeping on doing our thing.

What is 'our thing'? Well, although we only have a smallish room in a shared shop, alongside Fareshares Food Co-op and 56a Bikespace, we manage a small but good selection of books and a huge open-access archive of radical material from all over the world. The archive currently consists of 1500+ books and roughly 50,000+ magazines, pamphlets, leaflets, posters and more than 2000 zines. Covering anarchism, feminism, queer and black struggles and politics, squatting, left communism, anti-gentrification struggles and so on it's a great place to come and read stuff or to research.

But the focus always from the Infoshop is to inspire actions and maintain lots of connections to local and London-wide groups, campaigns and activities. Although we have been a bit quiet in the last year, we are keen to host small events, reading groups, practical social solidarities like advice drop-ins and just to generally use the space as a resource for ongoing struggles. We still run a fortnightly practical squatting night for those seeking to learn about how to squat and to meet others looking for places to open up.

We are always seeking new volunteers to be involved in the everyday running of the Infoshop. We are especially looking for nerds to help out with the archive or reliable people to cover the four afternoon shifts each week.

56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton St, Walworth, SE17 3AE

Email: 56a@posteo.net

Twitter: [@56aInfoshop](https://twitter.com/56aInfoshop)

ABOUT REBEL CITY

Rebel City aims to cover all issues of importance to working class Londoners. We argue for a radical transformation of our city. Rebel City is collectively produced by a range of groups and individuals. 16 pages of quality anarchist reporting and analysis. Get it at Housmans and Freedom Bookshops, your local social centres, or from a friendly anarchist in the street or contact us and we'll mail you a copy! Get involved. Contribute articles and information. Take bundles and distribute them among your neighbours and workmates.

Contact: rebelcitylondon@gmail.com

Thanks to Aldgate Press for printing and Dave A. for lay-out.

DIRECTORY

Get involved!

Here is a selection of campaigns and groups that are helping to make London the Rebel City.

LONDON-WIDE

Anarchist Communist Group - London: <https://londonacg.blogspot.co.uk>
Anarchist Federation: <https://aflondon.wordpress.com/>
Angry Workers: <https://angryworkersworld.wordpress.com/>
Anti-Raids Network: <https://www.facebook.com/antiraid/>
Advisory Service for Squatters: <https://www.squatter.org.uk/>
Black Lives Matter: <https://www.facebook.com/BLMLondon/>
Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union: <http://caiwu.org.uk/wp/>
Community Food Growers Network: <http://www.cfgn.org.uk/>
Disabled People against Cuts: <http://dpac.uk.net/>
Empty Cages- campaign to abolish prisons: <http://www.prisonabolition.org/>
Feminist Fightback: <http://www.feministfightback.org.uk/>
Industrial Workers of the World: <https://www.iww.org.uk/londongmb>
London Anti-fascists: <https://londonantifascists.wordpress.com/>
Radical Housing Network: www.radicalhousingnetwork.org
Reclaim the Power: <https://reclaimthepower.org.uk/>
Sisters Uncut: <http://www.sistersuncut.org/>
Solidarity Federation: <http://www.solfed.org.uk/local/south-london>
United Voices of the World: <https://www.uvwunion.org.uk/>

LOCAL GROUPS AND CAMPAIGNS

Friends of Queen's Market- Upton Park: <http://www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk/>
Haringey Solidarity Group: local group that campaigns on a variety of issues, such as workfare, as well as producing a regular paper: <http://www.haringey.org.uk/content/>
Haringey Housing Action Group: <http://haringeyhousingaction.org.uk/>
Stop HVD- against the sell-off of public land: www.StopHVD.com
Housing Action Greenwich and Lewisham: <http://www.housingactiongl.com/>
Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth: <https://housingactionsouthwarkandlambeth.wordpress.com/>
North East London Migrant Action: <https://nelmacampaigns.wordpress.com/>
Reclaim Holloway: <http://reclaimholloway.strikingly.com/>
South Essex Working Class Action: <https://www.facebook.com/southessexwca/>

BOOKSHOPS AND SOCIAL CENTRES

56a Infoshop: <http://56a.org.uk/>
Freedom: <https://freedompress.org.uk/>
Larc: <http://larc.space/>
Housemans: <http://www.housmans.com/>
DIY Space for London: <https://diyspaceforlondon.org/>

Check the different organisations and campaigns for more events and actions.