



# EUROMANIA INTENSIFIES

## Deal or no deal?

So, as we go to press, it's probably no deal then. Theresa May's much vaunted Brexit deal was shot down in flames. Two years in the making and, as was made clear by the European Commission, the only one on offer, it was too Euroey for the Brexiteers and too Brexit for the Euromaniacs. MPs from both Tory and Labour parties can't agree within their own organisations, let alone each other, and a No Deal Brexit seems on the cards – 'with all the chaos and uncertainty that entails' as pundits often remind us.

What is behind the seemingly endless rounds of talks, the quibbling over minutiae, the rejection of all attempts at compromise? Could it be that the government, the capitalist organ grinder's best monkey, really doesn't want the UK-EU split at all? After all, there's a lot of big money at stake here. Given that the No Deal Brexit is likely to be unworkable and that the Commission is willing to put



off or terminate Article 50 as required, the most likely scenario is that, with or without a general election, a new referendum is in the offing. Which this time, after two years of jolly funny jokes about the Post-Brexit Dark Age, is likely to deliver the required status quo result.

In the meantime, the government must be seen to be making an effort. Not just to appease its own, mostly Brex-

it happy, voters. But because, otherwise, the whole notion that we live in a democracy, that our opinion counts, that we, the people, rule, would be brought into doubt. If what we said was blatantly disregarded, the discrete veil which is the circus at Westminster would be irrevocably torn and the brutal reality of class rule would be made plain for all to see.

*Continues on back page*

## INSIDE

- *Universal Credit*
- *Con of Full Employment*
- *Fat Cat Friday*
- *This Septic Isle*
- *Greenhouse Gas*
- *And more...*

**"We do not give a damn for Brexit. 'Take back control?' Don't make us laugh. The good old British billionaires, regardless of political colouring, have no interest in our welfare"**



**Jackdaw issue 4**

*Jackdaw* is the bulletin of the Anarchist Communist Group, which we aim to publish quarterly. Copies can be found in various radical bookshops and social centres or are handed out at meetings, demos or street distributions. If you missed issues 1-3, you can download these from our website as pdf documents.

**EDITORIAL**

Just over a year ago, a handful of libertarian communists left the Anarchist Federation and went on to found the Anarchist Communist Group. Our aim has been, and continues to be, the building of an outward facing class struggle anarchist communist organisation that looks towards the wider working class rather than inwards to a small, fractious anarchist scene.

Since then, we have welcomed a number of comrades, old and new, into the ACG and have doubled our membership since our founding conference in February 2018. We are on the fourth issue of this bulletin, *Jackdaw*, have produced a number of pamphlets and podcasts and members have been active in various campaigns, including that around Universal Credit.

This is all highly positive but we are still an embryonic organisation with a long way to go. And, let's not mince our words, the task for revolutionaries inside and outside the ACG is massive.

Currently, our class is divided and demoralised in these uncertain times of pre-Brexit Britain. The level of class consciousness and any sense of class unity is low, while racism and xenophobia are sadly on the rise. Ongoing austerity, poverty, the housing crisis and homelessness barely register a blip in the media (and consequently in many people's minds) compared to the insecurity of Brexit. Meanwhile, the global tendency towards right wing populism is almost as strong in this country as it is in others where populist leaders have come to the fore. Meanwhile, the supposed 'antidote' of a Corbyn led Labour Party is in reality just more placebo, a palliative and ultimately a dead end for the working class and for any hope of moving in a revolutionary direction.

Despite all that, we in the ACG remain positive. We see examples of struggle such as the work done by members of some of the newer 'base unions' in this country. We also see positive examples overseas, such as, around 160 million workers on strike in India, the strikes in Sudan, protests against the far right Orbán government in Hungary, as well as elements of the Yellow Vest (Gilets Jaunes) movement in France – although we are still mindful of that movement's more reactionary aspects.

Our aim for this year then, is to continue the spreading of revolutionary ideas and propaganda within our class and the building of an active, vibrant revolutionary anarchist communist organisation. But we need new anarchist communists to help us achieve this.

Are you with us?

**“our aim for this year is the spreading of revolutionary ideas and propaganda within our class and the building of an active, vibrant revolutionary anarchist communist organisation”**

**Fat Cat Friday**

January 4th 2019 was the day by which the average chief executives of the top one hundred firms in the UK earn more in three days than the average UK worker earns in a year.

The figures were gathered by the High Pay Centre thinktank and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The average chief executive Earns 133 times more than the average worker. Expressed differently, that's £1,020 per hour or £3.9 million per year. This is a rise of 11% on last year!

It means the average salary of a chief executive is equivalent to that of 386 workers on the minimum wage.

It's not just in Britain that this is happening but around the world with bosses in the USA enriching themselves in a similar fashion. The gap between rich and poor is widening more and more. Time for a revolution that will sweep these parasites away.

**Reclaim Holloway**

The Holloway Prison for Women closed in 2016. The Ministry of Justice which owns the land, hoped to flog it off for up to £200 million to a property developer. However no buyer has come forward and the 10 acre site remains vacant. An ongoing campaign, Reclaim Holloway, are pushing for the site to be used for a 50 metre swimming pool, a gallery space, auditorium and museum as well as a women's centre and social housing and roof gardens. This bold and visionary scheme is in stark contrast to the greed and avarice of the property developers currently rampaging through London. We can stop them, and we can transform the city if we build up a mass movement against these social vampires. More info at:

[reclaimholloway.strikingly.com](http://reclaimholloway.strikingly.com)



# This Septic Isle (part 1)

More than 250 patients waited 12 hours or more in accident and emergency departments in November 2018 according to NHS figures. More than 54,000 people waited longer than the target maximum of 4 hours, meaning only 87.6% of patients were seen within that time span.

Wages are still a third lower in parts of the UK than they were in 2008. A TUC research department reports that the average worker has lost £11,800 in real earnings since 2008. Worst effected were parts of London, Surrey, North Yorkshire and North Wales.

Meanwhile homelessness in England went up 120% with more than 24,000 people sleeping rough over the Christmas period. This number has gone up significantly over the last five

years. 12,300 people are sleeping rough on the streets whilst 11,950 are sleeping in cars, trains, buses or in tents. The homeless charity Crisis said the number of people sleeping rough in England was more than double the official statistics.

Another homeless charity, Shelter, reported that 1 in 200 people in Britain were now sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation, with homeless figures soaring by 1,000 a month. The rollout of Universal Credit and the freezing of local housing allowances has put the cost of basic accommodation out of the reach of many. Combined with the lack of social housing, rents that have risen massively and cuts in social welfare, a perfect storm of homelessness is developing.



This is not some sort of abstract problem, many if not all of us have walked down a street and seen one homeless person after another sleeping on the pavement or in doorways.

In places like France and Hungary, there have been mass protests against this Age of Austerity. Isn't it about time it happened here?

**"In places like France and Hungary, there have been mass protests against this Age of Austerity. Isn't it about time it happened here?"**

## Slaying Goliath!

Ralph Percy, the 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland, has a fortune of £370 million. He planned to build 119 flats and eight houses on land used for 40 allotments for over 100 years next to Syon House in Isleworth. Allotment holders have been organising against this move since 2015 and in early December 2018 a planning inspector threw out an appeal by the Duke against a decision by Hounslow Council blocking the scheme.

The Duke has been letting the allotments run down over the last few years and had not renewed leases. Now hopefully he will be forced to renew the releases. The Duke wanted the new housing development to pay for £13 million to repair and restore Syon House, London seat of the Percys. He also owns Alnwick Castle in Northumberland. One local cam-



*A parasite*

paigner described the happy news as 'like we've slain Goliath'. The allotments had originally been made available by the Percys in 1917 and were seen as a wildlife haven and a 'little piece of paradise' according to one allotment holder.

These are the sort of people owning most of the land in Britain. Speed the day when they are swept away and all land is held in common!

## Toxic Port Stymied

The property developer Morgan Stanley planned on building a terminal for cruise liners at Enderby Wharf on the North Greenwich Peninsula, opposite Cubitt Town in London. It was halted after a petition signed by 10,000 objectors. Greenwich Council (see Turn The Flat Iron Off!) had in its usual manner already approved the scheme. If the terminal had been built it would have meant liners running their diesel engines while anchored, due to lack of provision of shore to ship electric supply. Fumes would have blown across the river to Cubitt Town.

The No Toxic Port campaign was set up by people from both sides of the river. Morgan Stanley has now said that a cruise terminal will not be built. This follows a three year battle to stop the terminal. This shows that victory is possible if enough people mobilise.





# Universal Credit and

Coincidence? On the same weekend the BBC finally screened Ken Loach's harrowing 'I Daniel Blake', the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced she was re-viewing the roll-out of Universal Credit, the Government's notorious new benefit system. Looking at the mainstream media coverage you would be forgiven for thinking that a new and more humane DWP Secretary was finally listening to the public and killing off Universal Credit.

Far from it. Amber Rudd has simply realised that denying any income to 3 million disabled claimants for 5 weeks or more in what could have been the run-up to a leadership contest and general election was politically not a good idea. Despite the fluffy noises in the press, all she's done is delay until 2023 the complete transfer of all

benefit claimants to Universal Credit.

Universal Credit, and its delays in payment, vicious sanctions and harsh conditionality rules, is still very much alive for 1.3 million claimants, and anyone else signing on from now or in the future.

You might also think from comments by its leadership that the Labour Party will end Universal Credit if it becomes the next Government. But there's no such commitment on paper. The Labour Party has no alternative policy for 'welfare reform'.

Like the Greens, some Corbynistas are excited by Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a suitable replacement for the welfare benefits system. UBI is a straight cash payment made to everyone, regardless of income, contribution record or employment status. Four Scottish local

authorities are already looking at pilot schemes.

The World Bank and billionaires like Branson and Zuckerberg are also showing a keen interest in Basic Incomes. The disabled rights action group DPAC has published an excellent summary and analysis of UBI. This shows how and why it appeals to the big corporations. UBI supports and extends the neoliberal capitalist agenda by perpetuating low wages, zero hours job insecurity and inequality, all in the name of "flexibility". See:

[dpac.uk.net/2018/03/the-folly-of-left-wing-support-for-the-neoliberal-trap-of-basic-income/concerns-with-ubi/](http://dpac.uk.net/2018/03/the-folly-of-left-wing-support-for-the-neoliberal-trap-of-basic-income/concerns-with-ubi/)

In the society we want to see, a basic universal income would be irrelevant. In the meantime, as anarchist communists we'll carry on working with claimants in the struggle to

**"Despite the fluffy noises in the press, all Rudd has done is delay until 2023 the complete transfer of all benefit claimants to Universal Credit"**

## The Con of Full Employment

We keep being told that employment figures are more or less full in the UK and that inflation is at a low with an encouraging growth in the economy. In fact productivity is very low, 90% of households had

seen no increase in income for ten years and there was no sign of an upward surge in investment.

In fact these false figures of "full employment" are based on the gig economy with a

"flexible" labour force, low wages and job insecurity. In 2017 there were 1.8 million zero hour contracts with no guarantee of a minimum number of hours. This was four times higher than in 2007. One in three of these gig economy workers has to hold down two jobs in order to make ends meet. 32% hold down two jobs, whilst 7% have to work at three or more jobs. One in ten take on temporary jobs in the holiday season to earn a living. These are all jobs without sick pay, maternity and paternity leave, holiday entitlement and pay, voluntary overtime rather than forced overtime and pensions.



# Basic Income

maintain working class living standards in the face of collapsing state welfare and the threat of another economic recession. We have to support and defend one another, in our communities and our workplaces. This can only be done by acting collectively. For example, we can challenge the power of landlords by pooling rent payments and resisting evictions. We can reduce living costs by organising the joint purchase of food and energy. We can support ourselves through our own community kitchens, advice centres and clinics.

If you are facing a problem with Universal Credit you can get on-line advice (or in person if you live in Central London) from Boycott Workfare. [www.boycottworkfare.org/boycott-workfare-universal-credit-welfare-rights-advice/](http://www.boycottworkfare.org/boycott-workfare-universal-credit-welfare-rights-advice/)



Image: Matt Brown via Flickr

## Switch off the Iron!

*“An icon of social division and corporate greed.”*

John Edwards of Speak Out Woolwich

Campaigners are fighting to stop the construction of a skyscraper in the shape of a flat iron in Woolwich. The 27 story tower is the scheme of the property developer Meyer Homes and the tower would include 206 flats all for private sale and NO SOCIAL HOUSING. Greenwich Council, controlled by Labour, has already approved a 245 homes scheme with no social housing in Abbey Wood, and another in Woolwich with 300 homes and only 6% social housing.

### Labour as much to blame as Tories

Labour is just as much to blame as the Tories for the spiralling housing crisis with more and more people being made homeless. The previous Labour leader of Greenwich Council, Chris Roberts, is now a lobbyist for developers and under his leadership many property developer-friendly decisions were made.

On top of that, the tower will block the light from many homes and overshadow General Gordon Square in the centre of Woolwich and would increase the demand for parking spaces. Under pressure from local group Speak Out Woolwich the council rejected the proposal from Meyer Homes.

### Residents Mobilising

Meyer Homes will now appeal to a planning inspector to overturn the decision. Meanwhile, in nearby Lewisham, Meyer Homes has plans for a 34 storey block. This was rejected by Lewisham Council. Meyer Homes then submitted a slightly modified new proposal whilst at the same time appealing to planning inspectors about the original scheme. Local residents are mobilising against this. Meyer Homes must be strenuously confronted by local people in both Woolwich and Lewisham. The ongoing devastating attacks on the London working class must be halted.

**“The previous Labour leader of Greenwich Council, Chris Roberts, is now a lobbyist for developers”**

### At the Café: ACG's New Podcast Series



The ACG is proud to present its new podcast. *At the Cafe* is a series of informal discussions about the key issues and ideas related to Anarchist Communism.

These are on topics such as: *What is Anarchist Communism? Why Work? Crime, War, historical examples of anarchism and how might anarchist communism happen?*

You can listen to these by going to the ACG website at [anarchistcommunism.org](http://anarchistcommunism.org) and following the podcast link.



## Childcare work—first steps to resistance

**“If you work in childcare, you will have been told countless times how important your work is, sadly, this importance isn’t backed up financially”**

If you work in Childcare you will have been told countless times how essential you are, how important your work is and how so many people couldn’t do your job. You will have been told this by parents of your key children, friends, the government and business owners. Sadly, this perceived importance isn’t backed up financially with the average pay packet of a childcare worker falling well below the salary scales of equivalent practitioners in schools and colleges.

Unite the union says, “A big step towards better wages would be for early years educators to unionise. Unionised employees earn on average 10% more than non-unionised colleagues” If that’s so, why haven’t they?

### Pathways into

#### Early Years Education

Whether taken on as an apprentice or as a student at college, workers’ rights and the option to join a union are not taught to prospective workers.

Two common pathways into early years work are apprenticeships and further education college courses. Both sets of students have coursework and placements to complete in order to achieve the right qualifications. Both sets of students rely on input and support from management or senior colleagues to complete their training and coursework. Under these circumstances it is unlikely they would be seeking to

fight to improve work conditions, for fear of ruining their chances of employment before even qualifying.

### Divided by the Limitations of Trade Unions

Trade unions, while they may be a useful tool for workers to fight for better conditions, they can also be problematic.

Whilst the merger of teaching trade unions into the National Education Union (NEU) may in some ways be a positive step for teachers, who now find themselves members of a bigger union, such mergers generally lead to increased top-heavy bureaucracy. That aside, the nature and role of trade unionism is also problematic for a number of reasons such as: the union’s need to control its members and push back militancy in order to better deal with management; having leaders whose interests are different to those of the members; having to play the bosses’ game and go along with every bit of anti-union legislation there is; dividing workers according to profession, trade, skill, etc. That said, it is true that workers are better off in unionised workplaces but, as anarchist communists, we realise that, as workers, we need to go beyond trade unionism.

### Failed by Major Unions

The consequences of the absence of union structures linking together workers in childcare are shown in the recent history of industrial disputes in this sector. In Scotland, between 2003-4, public sector nursery nurses, members of Unison, were fed up with the Labour Party adding to responsibilities without pay increases. On March 1st, 5,000 mainly female nursery nurses began an indefinite strike action demanding a national settlement on pay rises in line with their current job requirements and the importance of their work. Though there was a lot of popular sup-

port, and of course sacrifice on their part, Unison let them down, settling for a pledge of a national review of pay and working conditions for at ‘some point’ in the future.

### Considering the future

Could the alternative and more radical member-led unions such as the IWW, the UVW and the IWGB take on the cause of Childcare/Early Years workers? These Unions have seen success after success in organising other areas neglected by major unions, with victories in support of couriers, outsourced cleaners and video game workers.

### Childcare in Anarchist Communist Society

It takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes. Without capitalism and wage slavery there wouldn’t be the same pressures for parents to place working before raising a child. Parents and carers wouldn’t be dragged away from their young to make money for bosses and businesses. Traditional and alternative family units would be supported by their community with the best interests of children at heart. However it is highly likely that folk would want to contribute to their local community in whatever form that may take. Childcare could be as simple as villagers supporting each other by taking turns or working together to care for the children while others worked. Children may even accompany their parents or carers to work were it not unsafe or unpleasant. A community might choose to have some slightly structured early education, led by those with skills and love to share. The focus would likely be on following the interests of the children, developing awe, wonder and useful skills. With no need to separate learning into isolated and formal subjects.



Scottish childcare workers’ strike, 2004



# This Septic Isle (part 2)

The UK is the centre of money laundering and tax evasion. Limited liability partnerships and Scottish liability partnerships have acted as vehicles for this with one UK limited liability partnership with links to the family of Vladimir Putin and to the Russian intelligence services. Official estimates of hundreds of billions of pounds from these 'dirty money' sources flow through the UK every year.

Deutsche Bank, JPMorgan and Bank of America are heavily involved in these operations with Deutsche Bank alone converting €150 billion into dollars.

Since the poisoning of the former Russian spy and his daughter last March there has been much talk about curtailing the flow of this dirty money by

the British government - much talk but no action. The UK is the top centre in Europe for these corrupt practices.

Everywhere in the world we see signs of this corruption with the chairman of the Japanese car firm Nissan, Carlos Ghosn, under arrest for falsifying financial documents, dipping into Nissan's coffers to pay for his own residences and family holidays and shifting huge personal losses to Nissan. At home, the auditing of the Patisserie Valerie chain for the years 2015 to 2017 by the firm Grant Thornton has come under scrutiny. Financial 'irregularities' led to the resignation of Patisserie Valerie's chief executive and chief financial officer.

Meanwhile Royal Mail seems more concerned with international investment than running



an effective postal service. It invested in two US parcel delivery businesses Golden State Overnight, bought by royal Mail in October 2016 and Postal express bought in April 2016. Royal Mail paid \$103 million to acquire these companies and then had to write down their value by £68 million. Royal Mail continues with this line of business buying another postal service, Dicom Canada, for £213 million.

## Greenhouse Gas

Levels of greenhouse gas reached its highest mark in 2017 and experts claim that this has not been seen for 3.5 million years!

Carbon dioxide concentrations reached a high mark of 405.5 parts per million in 2017, rising from 403.3 parts per million in 2015 and 400.1 parts per million in 2016.

In addition to this, other greenhouse gases methane and nitrous oxide, saw rises as well, according to the World Meteorological Association. This will accelerate the rapid development of climate change with horrendous results for humanity and the other species that share this planet.

We can't expect any of the employers organisations, tycoons or governments of the world to do anything significant

about these rises. They're only concerned with the smooth running of capitalism and the pursuit of ever more profit. It is capitalism itself that is responsible for climate change and global warming and there is no interest in the long term consequences, just a short term obsession with the creation of

profit. The need for a completely new society based on need and not profit, where humanity acts in harmony with nature, is now not just desirable but a pressing necessity if we don't want extinction of the human race.

Change The System Not The Climate!





**ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP**

75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB  
info@anarchistcommunism.org

[www.anarchistcommunism.org](http://www.anarchistcommunism.org)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

*ACG groups meet regularly. See the events page on our website for more details or get in touch directly with your nearest local group.*

**Saturday 26th January: Dorking – No War But the Class War meeting,** 1pm-3pm, Lincoln Arms pub. Hosted by Surrey Libertarian History Society with talks from ACG and CWO members. See: [www.facebook.com/events/480618269013061/](http://www.facebook.com/events/480618269013061/)

**Monday 28th January: Nottingham – the meaning of anarchism, part 1.** Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham NG1 2DH, 7.00-8.30pm. Founding Fathers, 1840 to 1940: Proudhon; Déjacques; Bakunin; Malatesta; Kropotkin; Rocker. £3 on the door. Info from [www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk](http://www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk)

**Saturday 2nd February: ACG at Leicester People’s University,** 1.30-5.30pm. Visions of a society without a government. Session led by an ACG member, explores history of radical anti-statist movements and looks at the potential these movements and ideas have in our society today. 1.30pm, Exchange Bar, 50 Rutland Street, Leicester LE1 1RD. Organised by LPU.

**Monday 4th February: Nottingham – the meaning of anarchism, part 2.** Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham NG1 2DH, 7.00-8.30pm. Founding Mothers, 1840 to 1940; André Léon; Louise Michel; Lucy Parsons; Emma Goldman; Voltairine de Cleyre; Marie-Louis Berneri. £3 on the door. More info from [www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk](http://www.fiveleavesbookshop.co.uk)

**Wednesday 20th February: Leicester ACG meeting with “People and Planet”.** 7.30pm at the Regent Club, 102 Regent Road, Leicester, LE1 7D. Ask for the “Libsoc” event at the bar. A People and Planet speaker will be updating us on the “48 hours of Action Against Samsung” anti union-busting campaign and its plans for the future.

**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.

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.

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](http://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](mailto:info@anarchistcommunism.org) or, if contacting us by post, just fill out the form below and post it off to us.

**Euromania Intensifies**

*From front page*



We do not give a damn for Brexit. And neither should you. ‘Take back control’? Don’t make us laugh. The good old British billionaires, those who through their taxes pay the government, regardless of political colouring, have no interest in our welfare. To them, we are just hands and brains to be used to make money.

The European Union seems some sort of advance on a stand-alone UK. Free movement of people exists within its borders. And its laws offer some limited but nonetheless real benefits to working people. But how long will these benefits

last? Given the pasting given to Syriza in Greece and recent threats of the same treatment to Italy, the answer is ‘not long’. And such freedom of movement applies only to Europeans – the EU’s whites only Fortress Europe policy accounts annually for the deaths of thousands of helpless migrants.

Why should we be interested in their trading arrangements, the relations between their governments, the ‘deals’ they make between themselves? Our business is what concerns us, our lives, where we live and where we work. In or out we will still be under the thumb of our bosses. In or out, the destruction of the National Health Service will continue. In or out, sickness and unemployment benefit will continue to be eroded. The only fair and sane deal is the destruction of capitalism and all states – including potential super-states such as the European Union. We should settle for nothing less than this.

**Join the ACG!**



*If you’re not online and need to contact us by post, simply cut out and fill in the form. Then send it to ACG, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Phone.....

Tell us a bit about yourself!.....

.....

.....

.....