

JACKDAW

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS



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Big Copper is Watching You!



NOTICE
You are under CCTV Surveillance

The increasing use of facial recognition by the police is a serious cause for concern. South Wales already uses it with police able to use this intrusive technology via their phones. In London, the Metropolitan Police are also rolling out live facial recognition cameras in a number of “small targeted

areas” for five or six hours at a time. This all fits in well with Boris Johnson’s election pledge to encourage police use of new technology. But then it’s not just the Tories as London’s Labour Mayor, Sadiq Khan, has also given the nod to this attack.

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VOICE OF THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

Jackdaw - Issue No. 7



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 1-5, you can download these from our website www.anarchistcommunism.org as pdf documents.

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BIG COP ISWATCHING YOU CONTINUED

This kind of Orwellian behaviour is nothing new of course. Anyone involved in even the most peaceful of demonstrations would have encountered the Forward Intelligence Teams (FIT), filming all and everyone, in an attempt to menace and disrupt protests. This also ties in with the linking of left and environmental groups with the far right and Islamists (see "State of Terror" article in this issue).

Resistance to this attack on everyone's privacy is becoming increasingly difficult - the Fitwatch group, which monitors and advises against increased police surveillance, had their website

shut down a few years back after giving advice to student protesters (although they still have a Facebook page). But beyond permanently masking up and covering your face (plod tends to frown on this) or wearing facial camouflage make-up, it's becoming increasingly hard to avoid the ever-present cameras on every high street and worn as the latest accessory by the police.

Although public opinions to this latest surge in police powers have been mixed, one of the difficulties with fighting increased State surveillance is the wider acceptance of such technology - e.g. "it helps prevent crime... terrorism... if you've got

nothing to hide, then there's no problem..." This reflects the lack of political and class consciousness, which has been chipped away at over the years, as well as a lack of any widespread culture of resistance in society. All too often, much of the population are only too willing to give away basic privacy in exchange for "protection" from perceived "danger" (which is generally exaggerated by the capitalist media) or something as paltry as a profile on social media.

As anarchist communists, it is this passive acceptance of an imagined *benign* State that we need to challenge and resist as a class.



State of Terror



The recent appearance of the ACG in an official government counter-terrorism document (The Guardian, 17 January, 2020) aimed at police, schools, doctors, social workers, legal professionals and others, is both disconcerting and humorous but not particularly surprising. The fact that the ACG appears alongside various anarchist and left groupings, environmentalists such as Greenpeace and Extinction Rebellion, single-issue campaign groups, for example, those opposed to fracking and the arms trade (you see the particular irony with the last example), makes it very clear that none of this is about terrorism, “radicalisation” or anything else that might be a danger to the majority of people.

It’s also interesting to note that we appear on a document that lists a range of far-right, nazi and fascist groupings that are more likely to fit the bill as far as any terrorism goes. Again, you have to see the irony here, seeing as it’s pretty much these kinds of politics that the current Johnson government is travelling towards.

This mislabelling by State forces indicates, despite its parliamentary majority, the Westminster Government’s nervousness. This can be seen by the way the government has moved from visibly re-assuring the public about “terrorism” (e.g. pairs of armed cops at airports) to blatant intimidation of the public through campaigns such as this, wider use of facial-recognition technology, the recent arrest of pickets at St George’s Hospital, etc. This is clearly an authoritarian shift which moves away from governments ruling by a superficial consensus.

As anarchist communists will tell you, the State is keen to maintain its monopoly on violence – through the police, the military, the judiciary, prisons and various other institutions. It does this as it seeks to maintain a system based on the exploitation of working people to the benefit of a tiny minority of capitalists. Any opposition to capitalism is seen as a threat and today’s government is eager to criminalise such opposition with the tag of “terrorism”. But not just those who hold revolutionary anti-capitalist views, as even the most reformist solutions are now being treated as terrorist fellow-travellers. It goes without saying, that organisation such as NATO and the UK government itself are not listed, yet these are the real terrorists, responsible for millions of deaths through wars and

bombings, as well as punishing and starving the poorest members of society.

We in the ACG are opposed to both capitalism and its political wing, the State. But we don’t believe you can blow up a social system like capitalism any more than you can reform it. The abolition of the present system can only come about through the actions of a class conscious, united, organised and combative working class. We appear to be a long way from this happening but the government’s actions tell us that they are still scared of anyone holding even the mildest of oppositional ideas. It might be said that the government itself has become “radicalised” and once we get to a situation where anyone with the even slightest original idea is labelled as a terrorist, then that is when we are living in a real state of terror.

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French workers show the way!

French President Emmanuel Macron kicked off his attacks on the working class with his plans to change the pensions schemes. Over fifty days have elapsed since then, with hundreds of thousands out on strike and a massive strike day on December 24th.

This was the seventh national day of action, after indefinite strikes, which started back in September, ended on the public transport system in Paris (RATP) and the railway network (SNCF). This was after 45 days of strikes. But both sectors came out on strike again on the 24th. They were joined by dockers, health workers, teachers, refinery workers and many others. A huge demonstration of between 350,000 to 400,000 demonstrated on that day in Paris. In Le Havre, 60,000 demonstrated and power workers launched power cuts against businesses. Students have also started to join the actions.

Alongside the actions of power workers, which hit businesses while

at the same time restored electricity supplies to those cut off because they were too poor to pay bills, have been the mobbing of government ministers and union bureaucrats, who have tried to put a break on the mass protests.

Anger at the behaviour of the union leaders was shown with the tearing up of membership cards of the CFDT union by one group of workers, disgusted at the lack of action.

An eighth national day of action was due to take place in early February but the strike movement needs to go beyond this and more indefinite strikes need to be launched.

This massive movement has shown that class struggle is still on the agenda, and indeed the pundits are beginning to talk about such a notion again. It has put fear into the employers and the political establishment. But at the same time the movement has been too slow in extending the strikes beyond the RATP and SNCF workers. Yes, blockades, the tactics employed by

power workers, Saturday demonstrations and riots have been useful in building the movement but they are not enough.

This, in part, is due to the loss of class consciousness over the last few decades. Workers have lost the idea of going on strike, of solidarity, of direct action, and as a result many workers have not come out on strike despite official calls for such action. As a result, the response to the movement has been patchy.

A shining example of the rebirth of class consciousness has been the development of the strike movement among the employees of the City of Paris. This includes tree surgeons, gardeners, road sweepers, bin collectors, sewer workers, childcare assistants, drivers, upholsterers, lock keepers, road workers, water technicians, administrative workers, social workers and so on. There are sixty thousand workers in 350 trades employed by the City of Paris.

The workers acted jointly, despite being divided into at least four

different unions. A regular general assembly was set up, attended by between 100 to 300 people. There was solidarity between those in unions and those not unionised. This central general assembly was seen as not enough, and local general assemblies were organised in different boroughs and departments, leading to direct involvement of many strikers, sustaining the strike and acting as a co-ordination with other striking workers.

The Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) has reacted by getting private agency workers to clean the streets at night. They lied about the closure of many libraries, gyms, swimming baths and nurseries, stating that this was due to the transport strike rather than workers in those establishments coming out on strike.

The result of joint actions of these workers across many trades has fostered a feeling of belonging to a class and that class interests are shared. In addition, the appearance of public transport workers, teachers,

and rail workers at the City of Paris general assemblies reinforced this feeling of a common struggle. As a result, City of Paris workers reinforced the SNCF pickets. As a result, the feelings of isolation, of individualism, are eradicated and the common cause is advanced.

Of the 60,000 City of Paris workers, 17,000 are on temporary contracts. A collective of temporary workers was formed, starting in the municipal museums and spreading out to other sectors. This reinforced the strong and united strike movement in Paris.

The strike movement has been going on now for over fifty days. The development of general assemblies, already taking place, has to be extended, leading to better participation in the strike movement. The RATP and SNCF workers are still determined, as are energy workers and teachers.

A fright has been put into Macron and his cronies. "Public opinion" has held steady and is still massively on

the side of the strikers, because this "public opinion" is the mass of the population who have to sell their labour power, those who will be affected by any pension changes. In response, the press slanders the strike movement, whilst the State employs its armed mercenaries, the police, to attack strikers with batons and tear gas. And yet Capital and the State are appalled by the determination of the strikers.

This movement has received very little coverage in the British media. Why? Because the example of France could be seen as a beacon, as an example of what to do. We should do like French workers, not wait another five years for a Labour government to be possibly elected (and continue to prop capitalism). We must start now and organise in the workplaces and neighbourhoods. We too can give the State and Capital a fright if we put our minds to it.

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This land is our land: Johnson initiates crackdown on “unauthorised encampments”



The Johnson government, despite making noises about ‘one nation’ and support for the NHS, is already showing its true colours - protecting the property of the ruling class from those who dare question the rights of landowners and insist on their right to roam. In the supposed ‘consultation’, biased questions are asked such as: “To what extent do you agree or disagree that

knowingly entering land without the landowner’s permission should only be made a criminal offence if it is for the purpose of residing on it?” The question is a loaded one because there is no opportunity to answer that it should not be a criminal offence at all! Though supposedly aimed at Roma and Travellers it will also affect the homeless. Already squatting

residential properties is a criminal offence. Even 75% of police commissioners and forces are against this law, saying they already have enough powers.

If passed, the law could go much further and affect others such as protest camps and our right to roam in general. As the law may seem to affect only a minority, it might be ignored or even supported by some of the working class. Even if the

amount they own is miniscule in comparison with the large landowners and farmers (a small plot of land with a house and garden for which they owe the bank) many have bought into the ideology of the sacredness of private property and don't see that their interests are completely at odds with those few who in fact own most of the country.

Scotland, as a result of mass campaigns, introduced a comprehensive right to roam, enabling people to venture on to almost all uncultivated land except gardens, sports grounds and the land immediately surrounding houses, schools and other buildings. The right to roam in England covers only about 10% of the land and most of this is far from where people

live. We need to be fighting for a more complete right to roam and not going the other way and making it more difficult to access land.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-police-powers-to-tackle-unauthorised->



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An ACG postal worker writes...



Postal workers at several sorting offices are going to start ballots for local strikes after Royal Mail bosses announced executive action in 15 offices across the country.

At the moment no London offices have been selected by Royal Mail for executive action. The sorting offices going to ballot include Southend, Llanelli, Warrington and Fareham. The types of executive action the bosses want to impose would mean some postal workers being fired, and others made to work harder for longer for the same pay. Some sorting offices would be closed down and some sorting machines taken out of action, resulting in job losses. Executive action is Royal Mail introducing their plans or revisions without agreement. The head boss, Rico Back, wants 20,000 workers to be made redundant, in order to maximise profits.

In addition, Royal Mail informed the postal workers union, CWU, that they will be introducing a trial of parcel separation in the Swindon catchment area. This means that all larger than shoe box parcels will move to later in the day. In Swindon they previously made all LAT (Latest Acceptance Time) duties full time by making the front part a normal

delivery and the back part delivering LAT products. Royal Mail's executive action means that the LAT duties will now deal with all the larger parcels for the Swindon Office Catchment area and the delivery routes they are currently performing then gets absorbed by the walks which no longer have the larger parcels to deliver.

If Royal Mail believe this trial works, their plan is to roll it out in other areas. The difference being is that one duty in six will become a late driver delivering parcels above shoes box size and the remaining five duties would be asked to absorb the workload of the duty which was now delivering larger parcels.

In addition Royal Mail have announced they will be introducing Automated Hours Data Capture by executive action. Their aim on this is that it records all hours from when you enter your office, every time you leave the floor and when you return. We understand Royal Mail want to link it to what you are paid in both pay and overtime. This Christmas, they did a trial of agency staff at the Greenford Christmas Outhouse and believe it saved them hundreds of hours by only paying according to the data linked from when you enter and when you exit the building according to your actual duty and overtime times.

They are also looking at moving all delivery workers to a 0700 start time and removing improved attendance patterns. Royal Mail have clearly decided to improve their communications and now have almost daily updates in the way of videos. They are also paying money to Facebook and supplying employees' data to ensure their message gets on their timelines.

The CWU leadership has tried to discourage wildcat unofficial strikes. It is up to postal workers at grassroots level to take over resistance to the bosses' attacks and not allow the CWU leadership to sabotage a fightback. Already they are dragging their feet on another national ballot that would mean national strike action.

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Workplace Notes

Carpent workers plan to beat bosses

Seventy workers at Westex Carpets based at Cleckheaton and Dewsbury in West Yorkshire have now been out on strike for 3 months. The bosses refused to give a 3 per cent pay increase despite making £5 million in profits. In addition, the bosses have increased the work load, forcing workers to look after two machines each.

Security Guards

Security guards organised in the grassroots union United Voices of the World (UVW) at St. George's Medical School went out on strike in January for 15 days against outsourcing. Police went in heavy and threatened to arrest the whole picket line, but backed down.

Scottish council workers

Maintenance workers for East Dunbartonshire council in Scotland (electricians, joiners and plumbers) have voted to take strike action by 98% against changes in shift patterns.

TFL Workers To Strike

600 workers for Transport for London are planning to strike after

being offered a 1% pay rise. The TFL workers include those working for Dial-a-Ride, revenue protection officers, road transport enforcement officers and compliance officers. They will strike for 24 hours on 31st January, 28th February, 27th March and 24th April.

Woolwich Ferry Workers

Workers for Woolwich Ferry plan to strike on Friday 28th February and Friday 13th March. The ferry is operated by Briggs Marine Ltd. They have failed to pay the London Living Wage and have made changes in overtime.

Belfast Hovis Workers

Hovis workers at the Boucher Road bakery in Belfast were due to strike on 28th January after they were offered a 3.2 pay increase, way below the 5.1 increase demanded. The bosses, faced with strike action, backed down and offered a 4% increase.

Northern Ireland Health Staff Strike

20,000 nurses and ambulance workers went out on strike in November because they were not

being paid the same rate as their colleagues in the rest of the UK. Strikes continued on January 8th and 10th. On January 14th NI health minister Robin Swann promised a pay offer to restore parity with NHS staff in the rest of the UK. Workers are considering this offer.

Newham School Workers

Education workers at St. Angela's school in Newham, East London went out on strike against their school being privatised into an academy. Management backed down and the workers have won a five year reprieve. Elsewhere, strike action took place at other schools in Newham. At St Michael's, workers came out on strike for three days. Parents are supporting the workers at these schools.

UCU set for 14 days strike action

As we go to press, the **University and Colleges Union (UCU)** has called **another fourteen days of strike action over pensions, pay, equality, casualization and workloads. Since UCU the strike action towards the end of 2019, a number of UCU branches which hadn't met the government's vote-rigging 50 per cent participation threshold (even though they had all voted overwhelmingly for strike action) re-balloted with 14 extra universities added to the strike. That now makes 72 universities participating in the coming actions which will be spread over four weeks between February and March.**



Workers and Students Joint Action at SOAS

Management at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University in London announced in January that they would suspend research leave for permanent staff, thus increasing their teaching time. There would be fewer teaching hours for fractional workers, those employed on a fraction of full time contracts.

As a result some workers, including those on permanent contracts, went out on unofficial strike, joining a big rally outside SOAS of workers, including both administrative and academic staff, and students protesting against the management decision.

Many of the workers targeted are female and from black and Asian backgrounds.

The rally was followed by a general assembly to decide the response to the bosses' attack.

Meanwhile, SOAS are setting about hiring a new director on a salary of £400,000. This obscene behaviour underlines the arrogance and bullying

of SOAS management. As if to further aggravate the situation, management and their security flunkies were filming the rally. Workers and students are not intimidated and plan to carry on the struggle.



Iraq and Lebanon

The mass movements against austerity in both Iraq and Lebanon continue. In late January protests broke out again in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities. Five protestors were killed by State forces who fired on the crowds. So far more than 500 people have been killed by government forces, as well as 25,000 wounded.

Blockades of highways and bridges continued. The caretaker government run by Adel Abdul Mahdi, who supposedly resigned two months ago, is using brutal repression against the protestors, labelling them "outlaws". In neighbouring Lebanon, similar protests continue. The government in

panic put up razor wire around the parliament building and brought in special operations troops. They put snipers on rooftops and fired rubber bullets and tear gas at the protesting crowds.

The economic situation there is deteriorating. Meanwhile anger against the system is being shown by 300 attacks on banks and ATMs. Many people's savings have been wiped out whilst the banks impose limits on cash withdrawals whilst turning a blind eye to the rich doing this.

Bank workers have gone on indefinite strike. Meanwhile food prices have soared astronomically and real wages have been halved. Petrol is rationed and many hospitals have run out of essential medicines.

The government so far has refused any of the demands of protestors. On January 28th, parliament met to pass a new budget to reduce the deficit to around 7 per cent of gross domestic product. This is in a situation where thousands of workers have been laid off. Only 70 of the 128 members of Parliament attended, with only 49 voting for the budget. What a travesty!

The Lebanese masses need to create their own general assemblies and action committees. They need to oppose the repression with escalating mass action. There is no other solution to the problem but social revolution.

Derry Radical Bookfair

The Glasgow Anarchist Communist Group (GACG) recently participated in the annual Derry Radical Bookfair. It was great to see a diverse range of groups present such as the IWW, Alliance for Choice, Organise! Ireland, Black Fox Boox, Anomie and our hosts Derry Anarchists. A steady stream of people enjoyed taking their time browsing the many excellent publications available and stopping at different stalls for a chat.

The wealth of history and imaginative ideas for social change provided an interesting theme of conversation for those that spent time at the Pilot's Row venue. The importance of understanding the past resonates strongly with many people in Derry, a city commemorating the tragic events of Bloody Sunday which took place on the 30th of January 1972. Some of us took a walk about the Bogside and stopped at some of the well organised museums that are run by dedicated people from this

community. The passage of time has done little to dispel the anger and sense of injustice that many feel, and the terrible events of that day serve as a stark reminder of the power of the State to defend its own interests and prevent any meaningful justice on the victim's terms.

At GACG's table we handed out many flyers and spoke about anarchist communism to a variety of folk, some quite new to the ideas and others who wanted to discuss how anarchist politics can be made more accessible in today's world of information overload; there are no easy answers. One GACG comrade also took part in a talk about the history of anarchism, no small feat covering the bones of 170 years of history in a matter of minutes! What's clear from today's well organised event is the continued need for a radical presence wherever and whenever possible. As we move into 2020, the need for radical social change could not be greater. Anarchism has been called the 'slow burning fuse' before and it's aptly named. The idea is too strong to die, and as long as there are people who care in this world then we will always

have anarchists somewhere, doing what they can to help others, doing what they can to promote ideas of self-organising and Mutual Aid.

As a group we were glad that we could travel and refresh our contacts with comrades from the past whilst being open to the new. We are sure that some of the many people in Derry for this important weekend will not only pay homage to the past, but give a thought for what can be achieved if we think differently about our future.



The importance of understanding the past resonates strongly with many people in Derry, a city commemorating the tragic events of Bloody Sunday which took place on the 30th of January 1972.



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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

Then if you think the ACG is politically the right place for you, simply drop us a line at info@anarchistcommunism.org or, if contacting us by post, just fill out the form below and post it off to us.

ACG Pamphlets

Check out our website publications page - <https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/publications/> - for info on ACG pamphlets for sale.

- Our NHS? Anarchist Communist Thoughts on Health
- Land and Liberty
- Is Class Still Relevant?
- Towards a Fresh Revolution - Friends of Durruti
- Italian Factory Councils and the Anarchists
- Whatever Happened to the Revolution?
- The Wilhelmshaven Revolt

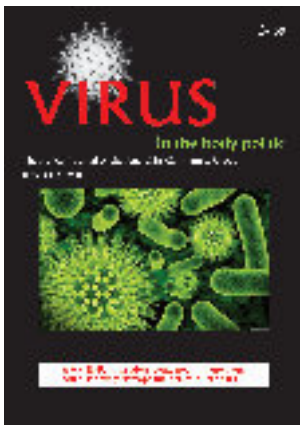
At the Café - ACG's Podcast Series

The ACG's podcast, *At the Café*, 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 and following the podcast link.



Virus: in the Body Politic - Issue 1 out now!

Virus is the ACG's theoretical magazine. It's 56 pages with articles on : Beyond XR: The Limits of Extinction Rebellion; Capitalism, Land and Climate Change; The Yellow Vests: Where Now?; Anarchy, Punks, and Sweatshops; Organising To Win; Dossier 1919, with articles on Unrest in Britain, the 1919 Police Strike, the Seattle General Strike, the Winnipeg General Strike, and Soviets in Ireland; Anarchist Communism and the Struggle Against Oppression; What Is Fully Automated Luxury Communism; The Socialism of the Intellectuals: Jan Waclaw Machajski; plus book reviews.

Friends and Neighbours

Angry Workers World: angryworkersworld.wordpress.com

Revolutionary Anarchist Group (Birmingham): www.facebook.com/RAGBirmingham

Let us know if you want your group listed here.

Join the ACG!



E-mail: info@anarchistcommunism.org
 Or 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

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REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS