



# Rebel Rose



## West Yorkshire Anarchist Communist Groups newsletter


Issue 5 C-19 Special: May/June 2020. E-Version/PDF.

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**LS26 housing fight continues – latest.**  
 The latest from the LS26 Resident Group is that Pemberstone have appealed the decision not to grant them planning permission.

In a tweet by the Resident Action Group they say: Well its official [#Pemberstone](#) appeal has been logged and we have officially been informed. How heartless and greedy are they to not only want us 70 families [#Homeless](#) but to do it in the midst of a pandemic just shows what sort of company they are. [#saveourhomesLS26](#)

So even at a time when people are worried about their homes and being able to afford bills and rent while forced to be at home due to the Covid-19 pandemic scum landlords are still trying to take advantage.  
 Join the campaign and support the residents – [#saveourhomesLS26](#)



**The ACG wants to hold employers to account during this crisis.**  
 If your employer is putting your life at risk, by breaking social distancing guidance and failing on PPE, then please get in touch and let us know. We are also looking for people who are willing to write anonymous articles about their work place letting people know how the working class are being treated in the workplace.

To get in touch please email:  
[info@anarchistcommunism.org](mailto:info@anarchistcommunism.org) (please put 'whistleblower' in the subject line). We will always respect your anonymity and if you choose to pass your details on to us, we will never share that information without your consent

### Domestic violence fears in Yorkshire in light of the Covid-19 lockdown!

**There has been a reported increase in cases of Domestic Violence during the lockdown with many people have no escape from violent partners and abusers.**

Leeds Women's Aid and the police say calls to report incidents have dropped as people are trapped in their homes with their abuser and feel unable to ask for help yet the lockdown will have led to more incidents.

In the last few weeks, while there has been a 50 per cent increase in people contacting Leeds Women's Aid, concerns have been raised for the many women, and men, who will still be experiencing harm but daren't speak out.

A Women's Aid spokesperson said "There was a 50 per cent increase to the helpline compared to when lockdown started and there has been an increase in requests for refuge provision. The majority of women that are experiencing violent abuse are not getting in touch. There is no way we can be working with everyone. It is the tip of the iceberg and we are very concerned that some women are not making contact at all."

Calls are also coming in, not from people in the same house, but those that are being stalked or manipulated by abusers finding a way around the lockdown restrictions.

Leeds City Council is working with Leeds Women's Aid to arrange accommodation whether that be emergency rooms in hotels, a refuge or safe houses and just last week, someone from Glasgow called it recently as they were struggling to find anything open locally.

The helpline for Leeds Women's Aid is open 24 hours a day and is 0113 246 0401. (YEP article dated May 2020)



## **Mutual Aid vs Lord of the Flies**

When I was at school in the year Nineteen Hundred and Freezing to Death, one of the teachers was always banging on about the book *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. This was to justify his Catholic beliefs about original sin, because the book, later turned into films on three different occasions, was about the thin veneer of civilisation that supposedly vanishes in desperate situations. Some public-school kids are the only survivors of a plane crash on a desert island. Despite ending up in a plentiful paradise, many of the boys soon descend to savagery, and by the end of the book, and the arrival of the Royal Navy, three of the boys are dead.

The teacher used this book to illustrate how flawed human beings are, and how badly they need the State and a complex legal system, to hold the beast in humans at bay. It is no surprise that it has been a set book in British schools for a long time. Of course, when discussing anarchism with others, one of the objections is the imperfect nature of people and *Lord of the Flies* is often held up as an “example”.

Well, the events in *Lord of the Flies* never happened, but a similar event did happen in real life but with a different outcome.

In 1965 five boys, all between 13 and 16 years old, bored with being at boarding school on the island of Tonga, stole a boat and sailed off into the Pacific for a lark. After their boat was wrecked in a storm, they ended up on a desert island (a desert island because its original inhabitants had been seized by slavers in 1863). There they remained for fifteen months. But instead of descending into tooth and claw survival of the fittest, they survived by cooperating.

The boys created a garden to grow food, built chicken pens, hollowed out tree trunks to collect water, created a badminton court and a gymnasium, and had a fire burning permanently. They collectively worked the garden, and had a roster for kitchen and guard duties. They ended each day with a music session, and any arguments were dealt with by time out. When one boy fell down a cliff and broke a leg, the other boys successfully put the leg in a splint which was successfully set and healed.

In the end the boys were rescued in 1966. This event forms an important part of the book that that just been published, *Humankind: A Hopeful History* by the Dutch historian Rutger Bregman. He questions the premises of the much-touted *Lord of the Flies* and points to the little-known story of the Tongan boys. He goes back to the start of human history and before, and shows that the cooperative instinct has a basis in evolution. This is the same cooperative instinct that the anarchist communist thinker Kropotkin describes in his work *Mutual Aid*.

At a time of lockdown, this book makes a welcome appearance and justifies what we anarchist communists have been talking about for the last century or so. As Brian Eno, in writing about Bregman’s book, says: “Every revolution in human affairs – and we’re in one right now – comes in tandem with a new understanding of what we mean by the word “human”. Rutger Bregman has succeeded in reawakening that conversation by articulating a kinder view of humanity (with better science behind it). This book gives us some real hope for the future”.

From an article on the ACG website <https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2020/05/15/mutual-aid-versus-lord-of-the-flies/>

## **The state of social care, key workers and Covid-19**

Taken from the ACG article "an ACG care worker writes -

<https://www.anarchistcommunism.org/2020/04/11/an-acg-careworker-writes/>

Working as a support worker in social care is often viewed as being unskilled and is held in low regard by both local authorities and the government and until recently had been described by national politicians as being 'low skilled'. Historically this is because in the past it was seen as 'women's work' and shows that there is still massive gender inequality in the workplace.

Support workers are often overlooked. The idea of 'skilled' and unskilled work only serves to prop up wealth inequality and lessens the human value and beneficial impact of what they do. For much too long they have been described as low skilled and have remained some of the lowest paid workers in the country. Social care is a mainly made up of female and migrant workers and this has a lot to do with the exploitation they have been subjected to. This pandemic has shown that they are essential and dedicated to what we do, whilst the bosses and those in positions of authority have demonstrated again just how incompetent and cowardly they are with CEO's, directors and senior managers working from home whilst frontline staff are expected to take all the risks often without proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

It is well known by people who work in social care how much employers in this field exploit their workers and how badly workers can be treated. This has also started to come into public awareness with the Covid 19 outbreak as many social care organisations show a complete lack of regard for their workers safety and those who use their services.

A high percentage of care workers use public transport as many cannot afford to run a car. Public transport however is often geared around peak times (9-5) and does not factor in those who work shifts or unsociable hours. Many care workers can start work as early as 0700 and finish as late as 2200. Some support workers during the Covid 19 outbreak have shown their dedication and even moved into their places of work leaving behind their families to try and shield those they support from the virus.

On the other hand, though care organisations have shown their usual 'commitment and passion' to their workers by treating them as badly as possible in order to protect their profit margins. Most care workers have never been eligible for contractual sick pay as most care organisations do not offer it, so they only get SSP. A number of care homes are refusing to give sick pay to workers who have been told by the government to stay at home because they are at high risk during the coronavirus pandemic.

When this crisis is over it is obvious that the health and social care sector needs to be completely transformed to work for the people who use its services and for those who provide those services, rather than run in the interests of profit. It is clear that the way the health and social care sector is now simply cannot continue as it has.

No going back!

## COVID-19 in Yorkshire

The COVID-19 situation has laid bare just how little the government and bosses care for people.

A decade of attacks on, and privatisation of, public services has left the NHS, care, education and transport sectors in a weakened position to respond to the crisis. Due to this underfunding the UK has fewer intensive care facilities than other European countries and there is less protective equipment for workers both of which are directly leading to a higher number of deaths. Work by the Financial Times estimates that there were 60% more deaths in the UK this year compared to the average of the last five years (to 1<sup>st</sup> May), significantly worse than France, Germany, Portugal and Denmark (see <https://www.ft.com/content/a26bf7e-48f8-11ea-aeb3-955839e06441>).

But it is not only the actions of the government prior to the crisis that have cost lives, at every stage the government response has been to prioritise the economy over people's lives. The lockdown came about as much from the actions of the people, who refused to put themselves in danger and fought against demands to go into work, as an initiative from the government. And now with the lessening of the lockdown measures the government in Westminster has failed again, the moves they are making being confused, unclear and dangerous. People are being pressured to go back to work and at the same time told to avoid public transport. Many workers have no choice but to use public transport to get to work, meaning they have to make a choice of putting either their job or their health (or even life) at risk. Homeless people given temporary accommodation during the first month of the crisis are now being forced back onto the streets.

The governments of the devolved nations have made plenty of mistakes, but at least they have kept some of the lockdown restrictions in place and are not pushing people back to work when  $R$ , the infection reproduction number, is still so high. The danger is even more acute in Yorkshire than other parts of the country, as (at the time of writing)  $R$  is as high here as in any region in England (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/15/regional-differences-in-covid-19-transmission-rate-emerge-in-england>).

The actions of the "opposition" parties has been woeful, all too often refusing to challenge the government. The refusal of Kier Starmer, the new leader of the Labour Party, and his Shadow Cabinet to back a "cancel the rent" policy shows how the Labour Party is prioritising the welfare of landlords over renting tenants. However, at least the mayors of Liverpool and Manchester have shown a little fight, pushing back against Johnson and the government in London by refusing to open schools prematurely, here in West Yorkshire local councils seem unwilling to even go that far.

We in the WYAG believe that it is not for out of touch politicians playing roulette with people's lives to decide when workers must go back to work. Instead we as a community must make such decisions for ourselves. Despite the challenges it is important that we organise now, not only to resist the dangerous and immoral decisions the government is making when opening up the lockdown, but also for the next stage as society learns to live in a new COVID-19 world. Already there are calls for pay cuts and freezes, but this time we cannot pay it must be the rich and the bosses that pay for the mess they have, and are, causing. (UPDATE: 19/5/20 Calderdale Council are now advising its schools not to open on 1st June 2020 as per the government agenda).



**Book Review:**

**Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen** by Guy Standing.

Pelican Books, ISBN 9780141985480

The current COVID-19 crisis has resulted in greater publicity for the idea of a (universal) basic income (UBI), a small income given to all people regardless of their employment status. In this book Guy Standing, a long-time champion of basic income, provides an outline of what BI/UBI is, how it could work, a review of some of the trials of UBI and the advantages of UBI.

Like most of the Pelican Book series this is a relatively easy read giving a good introduction to the subject of UBI. The book does read more like a manifesto for UBI than a disinterested primer but Standing is upfront with his views.

The biggest weakness of the book is that Standing does not seem to understand that UBI can be used against (as in Finland), as well as for, the interests of the working class. UBI will only benefit workers if it occurs as the result of the actions of the working class.

**Mutual Aid!**

Looking around me I can see,  
Scared and desperate communities.  
Poverty, disease are very real fears  
Selfishness & greed from capitalist ideas.

A killer pandemic, what should I do  
Panic buy soap so there's none left for you.

Scare mongering, lies don't let them hold sway.

Don't let them divide us, seize the day.  
Think first, be kind open your heart  
Solidarity mutual aid let's make a start.  
Helping each other we are stronger as one.

One people one tribe under the sun.

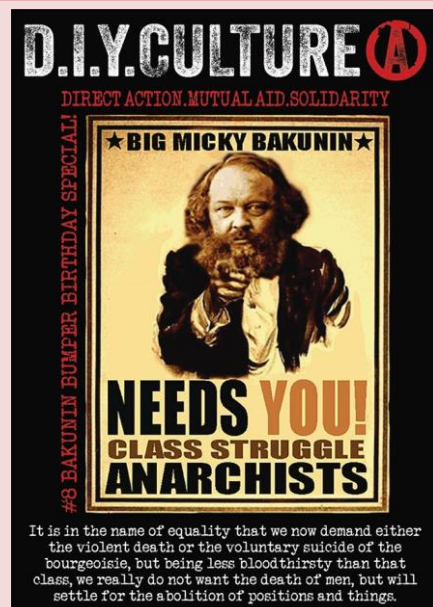
By Comrade Grumpaloe



**Choice (A Covid-19 poem).**

Choose Covid-19,  
choose confinement,  
choose BBC,  
choose ITV.  
Choose shite. PPI over PPE.  
Empty shops and overt surveillance.  
Aps and trackers free to you.  
Homeless homed then homeless again.  
MPs make millions on the death of the old,  
this virus comes in handy,  
makes a change from the cold.  
Watch the chaos on a government graph,  
as money men make money,  
the rich sit back and laugh.

By Comrade Husker Durruti



PDF available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/7bevyq02ygajrfne/>

West Yorkshire



### Contact us:

West Yorkshire ACG can be contacted via Facebook - [www.facebook.com/West-Yorkshire-Anarchist-Communist-Group](http://www.facebook.com/West-Yorkshire-Anarchist-Communist-Group)

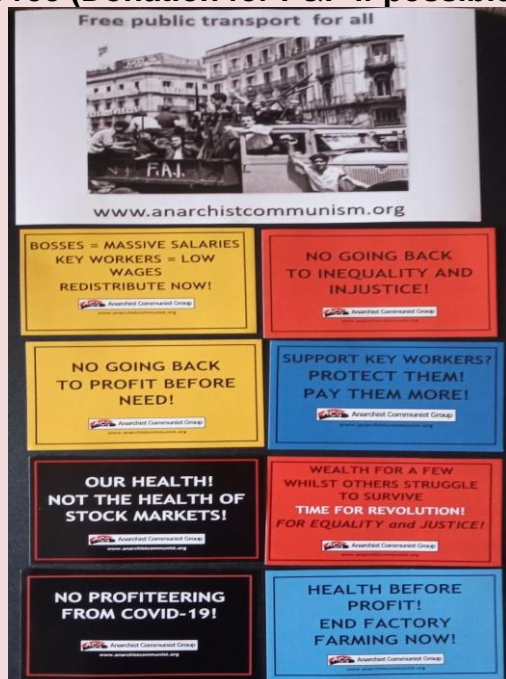
Or via email at [westyorksacg@virginmedia.com](mailto:westyorksacg@virginmedia.com)

### 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.

### Sticker available.

Free (Donation for P&P if possible)



### A House, a home a right to squat:

All we want is a place to stay  
But Greedy Landlords never go away  
A right to squat so we're not out on the street  
A place to rest where we can put up our feet  
But the state doesn't care if you don't have a place to stay  
They'll send police and bailiffs to get you out of their way  
A £5000 fine or six months in prison  
Because a right to warmth and comfort is strictly forbidden

There's too many landlords who leave buildings to rot  
All we want is A Right To Squat  
The Housing Crisis exists because rents are Too High  
I'll never get on the housing ladder, so much for Right To Buy  
You conned so many and preyed on aspiration  
Which led to years of shady landlords, poverty and deprivation  
No more greedy landlords, not one more eviction  
No more tenants who are afraid of prosecution  
No more threatening letters, not one more police raid  
No more mountains of debt that have to be paid  
Call me an Anarchist, call me a Trot  
But all we want is a right to squat!

By Tatty Hoggarth

### Class War!

All the inequality you see  
It's not generated by you and me.  
The system is designed to be unfair  
Capitalist values danger beware  
Folks in big mansions with more money than sense.  
Whilst others are starving and living in tents  
A lack of compassion no one cares,  
they are lazy uneducated the choice is Thiers.  
It's brutal, violent and built on lies.  
It's a class war so open your eyes!

By Comrade Grumpaloe