

JACKDAW

FOR REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

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RESIST!



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VOICE OF THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

Mobilise for Land Justice: Now more than ever!

The Land Reform Act 2025 was passed in November by the Scottish Parliament, the latest in a series of land reform acts. However, land justice campaigners do not think it will make much of a dent in the concentration of land ownership, which is only getting worse, with 421 landowners owning 50% of the private rural land, compared to 440 in 2012. Land being in the hands of so few in Scotland has resulted in a rural housing crisis, inflated land prices, depleted biodiversity, an unsustainable industrial forestry sector, an inequitable food system and an agricultural sector which is growing more consolidated.

According to Josh Noble of Community Land Scotland: "...we must also recognise that the bill does not go far enough to bring about real land reform and change Scotland's unequal land ownership pattern. It does not intervene structurally



in the land market. It does not assess who is buying land in Scotland. It does not provide routes to challenge existing ownership. It does not change the financial incentives that encourage land accumulation." (<https://www.thenational.scot/news/25668145.land-reform-pathway-to-building-true-people-power/>)

The structural issues in the land market, together with the way money is to be made from 'natural capital' (e.g. trading for carbon credits), means that we are seeing a massive increase in 'mega-lairds'. Most of these are

absentee landowners: investors, billionaires and corporations. They often claim to be managing the land for nature, but their main aim is profits for themselves and marginalisation of local communities.

For example, the Dane, Anders Povlsen, is the biggest private landowner in Scotland totalling

around 88,406ha, largely in Sutherland, the Cairngorms, and Lochaber. Strathconon Estates in Ross-shire are another rapidly growing mega-laird, headed by Lego heiress Sofie Kirk Kristiansen, with land totalling 42,730 hectares. Another meg-laird is Oxygen Conservation (OC), an Exeter-based company with a publicly stated aim to 'help save the world'. They have taken control of 13 estates across the UK from Cornwall to the Highlands over the past four years. They have quickly acquired five estates in Scotland which



buildings that were stolen and are now used to make some extremely wealthy and others to struggle? How do we reclaim our past and future, through our actions in the present? How do we build trust and solidarity across our differences, so that we can finally end the system of domination?"

total over 48,000 acres. This includes the 12,000-acre Invergeldie estate in Perthshire, over 15,000 acres of Dorback Estate in the Cairngorms, 11,366 acres near Newcastleton in the Borders, 523 acres of the Firth Tay and the recent purchase of the controversial 9,301 acre Kinrara Estate, west of Aviemore, from BrewDog. (<https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/scotlands-new-mega-lairds-now-controlling-huge-areas-of-scotland/>).

The Alternative

Land justice campaigners walked from Skye to Glasgow to highlight the issues faced by communities as a result of the long history of dispossession. They made clear links between what has happened in Scotland and elsewhere around the world.

"Communities were cleared from their

lands by an empire that mostly turned those evicted into labourers working at the furnace of empire's factories in Glasgow, or into colonisers sent from the quaysides to evict other communities from their lands elsewhere."

Their goal is to fundamentally change the system, implying that we need a revolution that overthrows capitalism, even if they do explicitly say this.

"In the hills and the cities, in the global north and global south, how do we reclaim lands and

They made sure to engage with local communities, listening to people's stories and sharing experiences of land injustice. Such actions, linking people in the city with communities in the rural areas, are vital as they show that land justice is needed everywhere: land needs to be used for the needs of people and nature, and not for profit.

(The full story of the walk can be found at: <https://www.grassroots2global.org/land-justice-walk>).



Women's Struggles Today



The fight against women's oppression is as relevant today as in the past. Despite many years of feminist struggle many aspects of women's lives are still hard, unequal and oppressed. For all the female prime ministers, presidents, CEOs, judges, party leaders, media stars (often quoted as the achievements of feminism) the majority of women are still significantly worse off than men, both in the West and the Global South. Gender inequality and social class and poverty are inextricably linked.

In the UK we have seen many 'advances' in protective legislation to protect and enfranchise women (including LGBTQ+) at work, in the home and in wider society. However the nature of patriarchy ensures that these protections are a very mixed blessing. Currently we are experiencing

the TUC reports that BOPC women are far less likely to report sexual harassment at work or domestic abuse because of the fear of repercussions and being picked on and ostracised. Just being believed by representatives and authorities is the first hurdle along with closing of ranks and mutual support of male perpetrators and their colleagues. We have seen this many times in recent cases of police rape and harassment. My experience as a shop steward in the 80s and 90s of pursuing sexual harassment at work cases, was that you needed to be a brave and determined woman to follow through on a grievance of this nature, and winning your case could just be the beginning of further abuse and misogyny. One in three women worldwide has been subjected to physical, sexual or domestic violence, despite all the improvements in legislation to protect

them. Just one of the many outrageous stances of the new right wing, neo-fascist movements is that they pose as protectors of 'our' women and girls, although many are convicted abusers and paedophiles and publicly encourage sexist and abusive behaviour.

At work, low paid, low status jobs are still the norm for working women, where risk is compounded by the prevalence of lone and isolated work (home care, social work, health visitors)

adding to physical and psychological danger. This work, however, is some of the most vital to society, yet women are not given the recognition or the rewards. Women make a major contribution to world food production. Worldwide,



Image by **Luke Norov**

a dramatic rise in private and public misogyny which is widespread, vicious and alarming. For BOPC (black and other people of colour) women this is considerably worse. In a recent survey,

50% of food is produced by women (although these figures do not include subsistence and community farming, only paid work). In sub-Saharan Africa this rises to 60 - 80% of food production, but these women often lack access to markets, technology, finance, and rarely own the land they work on. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reports these figures and talks of the 'feminisation of agriculture': where menfolk have out-migrated to towns and industrial centres leaving women in charge of food production and family. Thus female-headed households are increasing rapidly - between 10% and 72% in different countries of the Global South. In Latin America and the Caribbean 34% - 55% of households are female-headed, leading to greater hardship and deprivation. Even in Europe the trend is towards women running agriculture. Despite this women and girls face higher levels of malnutrition and hunger.

There is a Eurocentric view that the movement for women's liberation is not indigenous to Asia or Africa, but has been a purely West European and North American phenomenon, and that where movements for women's emancipation or feminist struggles have arisen, they have been merely imitative of Western models. However, Kumari Jayawardena in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* has shown that this is not the case. She presents feminism erupting from the specific struggles of women fighting against colonial power, for education or the vote, for safety, and against poverty and inequality.

Currently there are many examples of women's collective struggle in the Global South, for example women's struggle against the straitjacket of religious fanaticism in Iran. Also there is a growing movement of women's farming collectives that

use innovative methods, for example in the Philippines. We need to support such movements, whether that be in the struggles for women and girls to access education, or in the fight against violence and abuse or the struggles for autonomy in the workplace, or against religious fanaticism and the subjugation of women to patriarchal menfolk.

However the one thing we have learned and continue to develop is the importance of self-organisation. In the unions women have fought for the space to meet and organise as women. Where we may not have confidence that male stewards/ union officers will be able to understand and support us - however well-meaning, when we organise collectively together, not only do we defend ourselves but we build a collective consciousness and practice that benefits all workers. Unions like the UMW have shown us the importance of collective action by the lowest paid, often BOPC or migrant women workers. Where a woman is victimised, it is sometimes more successful to gather with other women and take action, than to pursue a formal grievance process in isolation. In the community many campaigns around housing, food and the right to grow, fighting fascism and racism, supporting refugees and asylum seekers, defence of education, health and supporting survivors of domestic abuse, have been led by or organised by women. There is no substitute for active organisation amongst ourselves. Women hold up half the sky.



Your Party: another nice mess

Back in 2019, after Corbyn's defeat at the election, many of the Corbynistas hadn't given up hope for the transformation of the Labour Party. They spent their time struggling to oust more Blairites and pushing for a more radical programme at Labour Party conferences.

When this failed, some of them had to rethink, whilst others have remained inside Labour, despite that Party's increasingly obvious anti-working class, pro-war, and racist nature. Some maintained the illusion that they could radically change Labour, whilst others tacked to the right and fell in behind Starmer.

Corbyn had refused to resign as Labour moved further to the right. His suspension and determination by the Starmer leadership that he would not be re-admitted, forced him to reluctantly stand as an independent four years later. Corbyn remains a firm supporter of old-style Labourism.

One of his associates, John McDonnell, who remains inside Labour, admitted that "Jeremy Corbyn and I are the stabilisers of capitalism." When Corbyn was Labour leader, he offered a package of mild reforms, whilst promising big business that they have nothing to fear. Whilst having a long record of supporting anti-militarist and nuclear disarmament initiatives, when he became



leader he capitulated to the Labour right, and committed to NATO.

In July 2025, another suspended Labour MP Zarah Sultana, announced that she would, with Jeremy Corbyn, "co-lead the founding of a new party." Corbyn's hand was forced by this, and after keeping schtum for some time after Sultana's announcement, was forced to agree to the formation of the new party, called Your Party (YP). More than 850,000 applied for membership of this new party.

Many on the Labour left were expelled or resigned in disgust over the last few years. They are desperately seeking a new home, whilst being in the main still wedded to reformist politics.

The last few months have proven to be a fiasco for Your Party. The embarrassing mess around membership dues, and the ongoing internal war between the Corbyn circle and Sultana, has resulted in only 53,000 out of the initial figure of 850,000 becoming members. Many of those at first enthused

by the appearance of Your Party are now reluctant to join, whilst Zack Polanski's leadership of the Greens, posing an alternative reformist alternative to Your Party, has meant an increasing number have chosen to join the Greens and not Your Party.

Zarah Sultana is another career politician who came up through the old Labour career channels of the National Union of Students and Young Labour. She wanted to sit on the throne next to that of Corbyn, as 'co-leader,' as she explicitly made clear, with no reference as to whether the rank and file of Your Party thought that this was a good idea. We have now been subjected to hissy fits between the Corbyn clique and Sultana, which the ruling class media has gleefully seized upon.

This was all crowned by the recent Your Party national conference, which the Socialist Workers Party and Counterfire were banned from, and where Sultana refused to attend the first day, only to make a barnstorming and demagogic speech on the second day. Sultana poses as the champion of the Party rank and file. Sultana still wants to be co-leader, although the decision at conference to have a collective leadership goes against this.

As to the SWP and Counterfire, barred from

the conference, this decision was made by the Corbyn clique, with no consultation with members in an undemocratic way. But for outfits like Counterfire and the SWP to bleat about lack of democracy, when we know the history of these groups, is a bit rich. Comrade Delta, anyone? The SWP think they can be a major player in this new party, when all previous evidence shows that they will attempt to control it and recruit to their own organisation. If this fails, and the returns aren't worth their investment they will stay and wreck it if they can or leave. This goes for the other Trot groups buzzing round YP like flies around a cowpat.

That's what conference looked like, an array of these various left groups, with

little involvement from the 53,000 members. A thousand attended, but these were decided by sortition by the Corbyn clique (sortition being selection by lottery, where a random sample of people is chosen as 'delegates'). Many motions put forward by branches were not even considered, or ruled out of order, and the Corbyn clique manipulated the conference.

Only around 20,000 members have taken the trouble to verify their membership, indicating a general unease, and of these only 6,000 voted online. Of those at the Conference, there was widespread disgruntlement that they had spent a lot of money on fares and accommodation but had little say on which direction YP is going.

It is unlikely that YP will mobilise in the workplaces and neighbourhoods, increasingly engaged in internal warfare, and in obsession with elections. It will to some extent draw people involved in grassroots campaigns away from meaningful work, as happened with the previous Corbynmania.

Grassroots groups and campaigns should look towards common class interests and unity, and meaningful alliances and coalitions, based on self-organisation, autonomy, and the need to create new forms of social organisation. This is obviously a hard task, involving much work, but when we look at the car crash of YP, it must be seen as the only real alternative.

Higher Education Workers Face Massive Attacks

Workers in the UK higher education sector are facing the most severe attacks on them in many decades. Nearly all UK universities are cutting jobs and/or courses. Over 10,000 jobs will be lost in two years, and there is a probability that one or more universities will no longer exist within the next year or so. Institutions are seeing workforces being reduced by 20% or even more. The UK higher education (HE) sector is falling apart, and like so many other sectors this point has been arrived

at via a deliberate strategy from the bosses and government. Like with the steel, water, bus and train industries, or the NHS, the focus on the creation of competition, markets and privatisation has led to a situation where the HE sector is no longer able to survive, let alone function as a genuine public service.

The current funding model of linking HE funding to fees for teaching students has failed. Even charging UK students more than £9,000 per year does not

generate enough income for most institution bosses (in Scotland students themselves do not have to pay these fees but ultimately the same payment model is still in effect). Until the last couple of years, the 'shortfall' was made up from charging international students exorbitant teachings fees. But anti-immigration policies pursued by multiple governments put international students in the firing line, and new restrictions were introduced on student

visas. This has meant that many universities have seen a big drop in international student numbers in the last two, with a resultant significant drop in income.

The response from university vice-chancellors and their underlings has been to attack workers and harm students. The former by cutting jobs and working conditions, the latter by removing 'unprofitable' courses, forcing students into narrower, ideologically approved, options. The bosses' organisations, UUK and UCEA, argue that keyway to fix the problem is to increase tuition fees for UK students.

Leaving aside any moral argument this strategy is doomed to failure. 2024 saw the first drop in in total number of students in HE since 2014 (where a drop was associated with the introduction of Coalition government's £9,000 fee cap). The cost-of-living crisis, and cuts in salaries/jobs in the UK, means that an increasing number of school leavers are choosing not to go to university. Increasing fees to £12,000 of so would only cause more to question about going to university and so offers no solution to problems of

the sector.

Workers in the sector are attempting to fight back, with local industrial action having taken place The University of Sheffield, The University of Bradford, Bournemouth University, the University of Dundee, Durham University, Newcastle University and many more. And there will be further action at the local level in the coming months. While such



industrial action does deliver some results in mitigating job losses, it is trying to stem a flood with a bucket.

There has been a lack of intention from trade unions (especially Unison, Unite and the GMB) to extend and join up the struggle across institutions to address the symptoms, rather than just alleviate the causes, of the problems. This lack of purpose from union establishment was shown in the recent national ballots for industrial action. UCU and EiS failed to achieve the required turnout on their

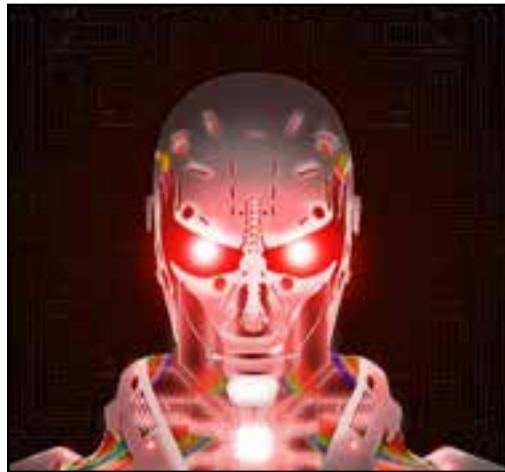
aggregated ballots, while the other unions either did not meet the threshold, or holding disaggregated ballot only managed to obtain authorisation for industrial action in a small number of institutions. Longer term what is required is - as for public transport, water, electricity etc - is the recognition that post-16 education (and this should include further education and adult continuing education not just HE) is a public service and needs to be organised as such. Workers and students in post-16 education need to have control over their workplaces/ places of study.

This is a hard challenge but students and workers in post-16 education not only joining up across different universities and colleges but also combing their fight with workers (and users) in other sectors and not just providing solidarity but acting together wherever possible does provide a path to such a future. In the short-term university workers are going to have to educate, agitate and organise to defend jobs and conditions. Look out for the picket lines at your local university.

The Threat from AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a catch all term for a number of technologies. They are mainly concerned with robots replacing human labour, and data gathering via Data Centres (DCs). These Data Centres are spreading across the UK. It is estimated that another one hundred will be needed over the next few years. These DCs are different from the ones that are used to store photos, social media accounts and work applications. Without going into the technical details they are unimaginably massive! DCs already need huge amounts of electricity to power them and are similarly greedy with the water they need for cooling, boosting climate change. Ireland already hosts many Data Centres which consume 21% of Ireland's electricity. West London is also suffering an electricity shortage thanks to them. The situation will get much worse as DCs to service AI are expanded. Each of the planned DCs will need 500 mw of electricity. This could be used to power 2 million homes! The attraction for the ruling class lies in their potential to replace a lot of jobs, decreasing costs and increasing their control and profits. They

are also a global stock market bubble that is being massively invested in by tech companies and



governments. When the bubble bursts - as they always do - the bosses will try to impose further austerity on us so we pay for their losses.

Starmer's recently trumpeted \$31 billion 'prosperity deal' with the U.S government (\$22 billion pledged from Microsoft, and \$5B from Google) is to build Data Centres and the infrastructure to power them, such as mini-nuclear power stations to provide the electricity they need. At the time of writing the U.S. has put the deal on hold over trade disagreements. Although it was touted as 'great for Britain' the main beneficiaries will be U.S capital. Each data centre built in the North-East England 'growth zone' will employ only 15-20 people when built, meaning a few hundred jobs rather than

the 5000 promised.

AI is mainly used to replace human labour, resulting in unemployment and deskilled jobs, such as warehouses and call centres. It takes away the creativity of human beings whether it be in design, art or writing. AI is used by governments, big tech, and right-wing populist parties to monitor and control people, who are manipulated via misinformation, such as altered images and algorithms.

We need technologies that extend people's capabilities, and that can be controlled by the community. AI does not fit the bill. Very few people understand how it works, leaving us in the hands of the corporations that control AI. In addition, the huge amount of energy and water required for AI, via the DCs, means that it is incompatible with addressing climate change. We want to see a future society with a better quality of life for all, and a reversal of global warming and loss of biodiversity. This society needs to be under our control, not corporations, technocrats and politicians. It is difficult to see how AI is going to contribute to this vision.

Soldier for a Year:

Getting the youth ready for war

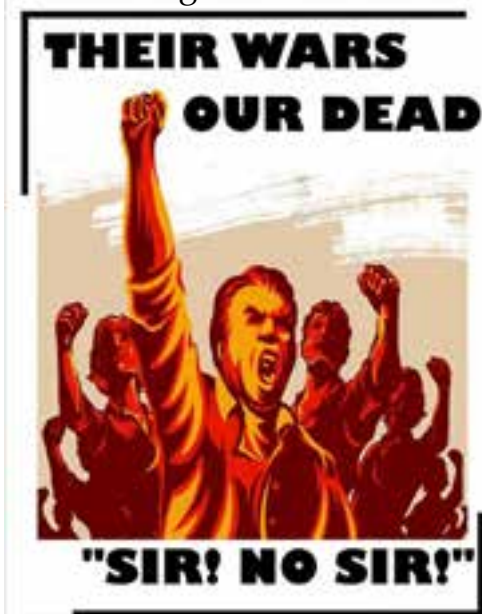
Just before Christmas, it was revealed that the British government will be introducing voluntary military service for young people under the age of 25, starting in March this year.

The scheme is similar to one introduced in France last year aimed at school leavers who are offered basic military training for a 10 month period. The British system is being presented as a paid 'gap year' after which it will be up to recruits to decide whether the military life (Army, Navy or Air Force) is for them. In the interim they will be given 'life skills' and the possibility of 'learning a trade' (in a year?) alongside a good dose of patriotic and militaristic propaganda. Initially the government want to bring in 150 guinea pigs, hoping to quickly get 1000 young people through the system each year. And then, the sky's the limit.

Despite a massive increase in outreach by the Armed Services, particularly towards primarily working class youths as young as 16 (the youngest in Europe), they just aren't getting enough people signing up. This scheme hopes to eventually change that situation with its voluntary and skills-centred approach.

The governments' ongoing 'This Is Belonging' campaign already actively targets the

poorest in society, pouring recruitment resources into regions of high youth unemployment and specific areas where many working class youth leave school with minimal GCSEs and Standard grades.



Whilst the British Armed Forces are not significantly understaffed – the UK presently has more armed forces personnel than firefighters and paramedics put together for example – they have been looking to grow in order to prepare for conflict in Europe and beyond as capitalism thrashes around in crisis and chaotic political instability. Last year General Sir Patrick Sanders, then chief of the British Army talked about a "citizen army" needing built owing to the threat from Russia. This rhetoric concerning the need for a popular mobilisation for defence of the nation

was echoed by Air Chief Marshall Sir Richard Knighton who explicitly talked of how British people must be prepared to make sacrifices for the nation, i.e. accept less and die more for the ruling class.

Defence Secretary John Healey described the voluntary military service as means by which Labour would "...reconnect society with our forces and drive a whole of society approach to our nation's defence." This represents an increasing militarization of society in Europe in preparation for war. The threat from 'The East' has been ramped up even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it is only going to get more hysterical and bellicose.

We have to respond.

And that is why the ACG is part of the newly launched Network of Anarchist Internationalists (<https://international.noblogs.org/>).

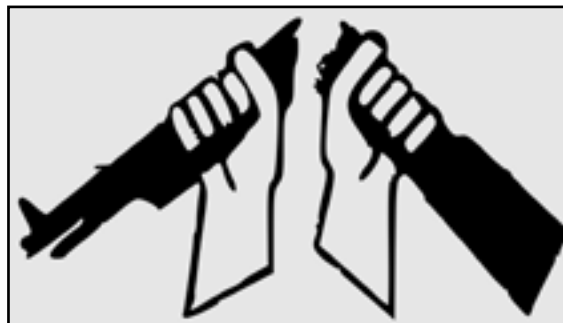
The NAI is a co-ordination committed to supporting war resisters, draft dodgers, deserters, and conscientious objectors and promoting internationalist anti-militarism linking the fight against austerity and the increasing immiseration of the working class globally.

Not one penny! Not one volunteer or conscript for war!

German youth resist conscription

In November 2025 the German parliament backed a move to introduce voluntary military service and allow Chancellor Merz of the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to further plans for militarisation and for the creation of the largest army in Europe. In this, Merz and the CDU were ably assisted by the Social Democratic Party, (SPD) a junior partner in keeping the CDU in power. This indicates once again the complete collapse of social-democratic parties on a global level, as they turn to more openly anti-working class and militarist positions, as with Labour in Britain. As to the deeply-divided German Greens, they voted to back voluntary military service at their December conference just before the vote in the German parliament. In the end, they opposed what they called a “half-baked compromise” that blurred the lines between voluntary and obligatory service. For a party that started out on clear anti-militarist basis, this is still shameful. It is intended to send out a questionnaire to all 18-year-olds in Germany, to check to see if they are suitable for military service. This is mandatory for males, and voluntary for women.

All young men born from 2008 onwards will have to register and be medically examined, starting in 2027. If there are not enough joining the armed forces fast enough, the government reserves the right to bring back compulsory conscription, which was suspended in 2011. Since the end of the Nazi regime in 1945, there has been a persistent stance against militarism in Germany, so this represents a huge shift. It was not surprising that this met with



horror and disgust among young people. In response, there were significant strikes by school students in 90 cities throughout Germany on December 5th. 55,000 walked out of schools: 3,000 in Berlin, 400 in Essen and in Nuremberg, 1,000 plus in Munich, and 1,500 in Stuttgart. This was despite threats by the CDU Minister of Defence, Boris Pistorius, that walking out on strike would be deemed as unexcused absences at schools and would

affect end of year grades, and despite heavy police presences.

Indeed, school students went beyond opposition to this move, expressing opposition to cuts in education and public services, and the decision to rearm Germany on a huge scale.

Both the CDU and the SPD, scoffed at and ridiculed the protests, with the SPD calling this movement “pure populism, or simply nonsense,” and Pistorius producing a sneering video. Pistorius has warned that

if not enough young people are recruited via this questionnaire, then conscription would be introduced.

Many teachers have shown their opposition to these plans, and the demonstrations were

also joined by university students. They brought with them concerns about cuts to university budgets, the increasing shoddiness of their learning conditions, and the flourishing of military research programmes at universities. In response to the CDU/SPD drive to war preparedness, school students, university students, and workers must come together to develop a mass movement against conscription and militarism.



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WHO WE ARE...

The Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) is a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation which is dedicated to seeking 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 do this, we believe it is important to be organised.

We are committed to building an effective organisation that works towards the common goal of anarchist communism, in cooperation with other working class organisations and in grass roots campaigns.

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 want to join the ACG, then look first at our Aims & Principles on our website www.anarchistcommunism.org. You can also drop us a line at info@anarchistcommunism.org

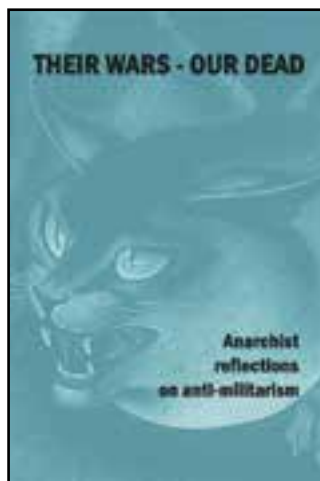


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This book brings together six anarchist responses to war and militarism. Since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a war fever has swept the anarchist movement and a larger section of 'the left'. The essays collected in this book seek to learn from the past in order to put forward a revolutionary yet realistic course of anarchist anti-militarism today.

*Edited by Bill Beech
and Alex Alder*

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