

JACKDAW

FOR REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM



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MAY DAY SPECIAL

“Never be deceived that the rich will allow you to vote away their wealth”

Lucy Parsons - American activist and partner of one of the Haymarket Square Martyrs



Illustration by Luke Norov

**Organised a little we control a little, organise more we control more;
organise as a class we control everything** *Industrial Workers of the World*

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VOICE OF THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

The First of May

"The first of May is the symbol of a new era in the life and struggle of the toilers, an era that each year offers the toilers fresh, increasingly tough and decisive battles against the bourgeoisie, for the freedom and independence wrested from them, for their social ideal."

Nestor Makhno

The Anarchist Origins of 1st May

The idea of turning the 1st of May into a day of action for workers was first proposed at the 4th congress of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). It was decided to launch, starting from the 1st of May 1886, a wide campaign of agitation and struggle focused on limiting the working week to forty hours. The most radical actions took place in Chicago. At that time, Chicago had the most developed workers movement in the USA with a strong anarchist presence.

Following the 1st of May 1886, strikes were still ongoing as the fight with employers became tougher. On the 4th of May, a meeting gathering around 15,000 people was attacked by police. By the end of the day, both sides had suffered numerous dead and wounded. It was a perfect occasion to muzzle the protest. Eight of the main organisers, all anarchists, were arrested and sentenced to death. The sentence was turned to life imprisonment for three of them.

On 11 November 1887, Albert Parsons, Adolphe Fischer, George Engel and August Spies were hanged. Their comrade Louis Lingg committed suicide the day before to avoid execution. A few years later, they were acquitted of all charges and the court admitted that the police and justice system



set up the case to criminalise and break down the workers' movement. The eight accused were declared innocent and the three survivors set free.

The 1st of May is definitely a page of workers' history stained with anarchist blood.

State, Police and Capital

The 1st of May is an occasion to remind us that the fight against capitalism is still going on. Nowadays in Europe, strikes and social struggles are seriously discredited. Yet, the difference between rich and poor keeps growing, the financial markets are back in the saddle and traders are still handling billions of dollars. Are we wrong to ask for more when half of the world's wealth is owned by 1% of the population? Meanwhile, workers are asked to make more and more effort to "save" the economy and put the State back on its feet with its

batch of new taxes (such as the bedroom tax) and cuts in public services. We are heading toward a neo-liberal capitalist system in which the State's main purpose is to maintain social control so capitalism can develop without constraint.

Workers are producing everything and yet they own very little.

Revolutionary politics

Over a century after that first May Day demonstration in Chicago, where are we? We stroll through town with our banners. Then we stand

around listening to boring (and usually pretty meaningless) speeches by equally boring union bureaucrats. You have to keep reminding yourself that May Day was once a day when workers all over the world displayed their strength, proclaimed their ideals and celebrated their successes.

It is important that "once upon a time" it was like that. We can do it again. We need independent working class politics. No collaboration with government and bosses. Real solidarity with fellow workers in struggle, not a blinkered sectional outlook. We need revolutionary politics. That means politics that can lead us towards a new society based on equality, social justice and freedom. A society where production is to satisfy needs, not to make profits for a privileged few. Anarchist communism.

As anarchist communists, we think that human beings shouldn't be defined by the surplus value they bring to capitalism. Work should be the way to produce by

necessity and not to create new needs. Work must be organised so everyone can work less, and for means other than profitability. No capitalist society will ever achieve full employment because it needs a pool of unemployed people so the necessity to work can make us accept bad working conditions. In order to reorganise work, we need a society free from class and leaders, and in which society is managed in a self-organised way. This is what the Anarchist Communist Group is fighting for.

Direct action gets the goods, not waiting for an election in 2029, which just might deliver another Labour government that will continue with business as usual.

The May council elections: What We Think

Reform

The last few years have seen the rise of Reform UK. After his adventures with UKIP, Nigel Farage created Reform UK. In some ways it is a regrouping of the Tory right, heavily laced with populism, fake appeals to 'the people'. This is becoming increasingly clear with the defection of Tory MPs to Reform. Reform claims to speak for the underdog and the disenfranchised and aims to grab working class votes. But a quick glance at that party and its backers shows that it is financed by billionaires with their own objectives, not those of the working class and the poor. Its main backers are Christopher Harborne, a crypto billionaire residing in Thailand, Richard Tice, himself a Reform MP, and

a multi-millionaire, Nick Candy, billionaire property developer, and other billionaires and millionaires. Farage himself is from a privileged background, and an ex-Tory, and many Reform MPs are themselves super rich.

These are the real people behind Reform UK, property developers, City speculators and elite members of the Establishment.

Reform UK is no friend to the working class and the poor. It wants to further privatise the NHS, scrap environmental controls and raise tax thresholds. It despises the poor it claims to represent. One of its MPs, Lee Anderson, another former Tory, sneered at people using food banks, and then later criticised nurses who were forced to use food banks, saying

"they've got something wrong with their own finances."

The media, including the BBC, has fostered the rise of Reform. The cost of living crisis, rising rents, the ongoing collapse of public services, and virtual pay freezes, have seriously affected the working class. Each successive UK government, whether Tory, Tory /Lib-Dem coalition, or Labour, have failed to improve living standards for workers. This, aggravated by Labour's increasingly anti-working class policies, have brought about an increasing disillusionment with the mainstream parties. This developing class anger is being captured and diverted by Reform, which uses migrants as scapegoats and focuses widespread despair and anger on

refugees and migrants, camouflaging the real culprit for growing misery and poverty, the capitalist system.

In this process, both the Tories and Labour have moved to the right.

The Green Party

The Green Party remains a minor force in UK politics, with its environmental and social justice platform. However, its recent more populist rhetoric and disillusion with the Labour Party has resulted in some growth - both in terms of members and representatives. While it has taken a more populist tone its policies remain entirely reformist, advocating for green social democratic capitalism rather than systemic change. While the party plays a critical role in highlighting environmental issues, it is not positioned to challenge the structures of capitalism effectively. It is a party which calls for radical change but won't go so far as to oppose capitalism and its institutions altogether. Even the World Bank and the IMF still have a place in



the Green world. Because such radical change does not go with the grain of capitalism and its media cheerleaders, and because it is so hard to achieve, efforts are made to temper the message and render the organisation more like that to which people are already accustomed. Unfortunately it is precisely the established ways of thinking, acting and organising that have created the ecological and political swamp in which we are sinking. The more this process of adaptation occurs, though it may make for survival within the world of parliamentary and capitalist politics, the worse it bodes for real improvements in our lives. It also diminishes the Greens' claim to have a thoroughly fresh perspective, especially

as other parties, have recently applied a Green gloss to themselves.

Labour has proved how thoroughly anti-working class it is, with its latest attacks on pensioners, WASPI women, and on civil rights. This is not to mention its increasingly strident rhetoric around

war fever, its increased defence budget and its drive towards conscription.

Whether you vote or not for one of the less unsavoury names on your ballot card, the fact remains that a vote cast, either at national or local level, every few years, doesn't seriously challenge the system. What is needed is organising in the workplace and the neighbourhood, to counter austerity measures, closures of hospitals, libraries, youth centres etc. This must lead on to new forms of organisation that empower all of us and looks towards the creation of a new society built on equality and freedom. Some call this direct democracy, others workers' democracy, we call it anarchist communism.

MP (Nigel-never-in-my-constituency-Farage). They blame the housing and cost of living crises - and all other injustices - on immigrants and refugees, rather than the global Capitalist system which is based on wealth and power for the few - bosses and landlords - at the expense of the rest of us.

Reform are currently drafting the green policies needed to keep many of

their supporters and win new ones. For example, they oppose building on the Green Belt and propose stopping the waste and destruction of bottom trawling which destroys seabed life and where much of the catch is thrown back dead. Reform are threatened by the rising popularity of the Green party and anger at the anti-green policies and climate change inaction of the Conservatives and Labour.

However, the biggest Green issue is the global climate crisis, which is already causing heat waves, fires, droughts, storms and floods, with many dead or forced to flee their homes worldwide. Reform oppose all policies to tackle the crisis. Why? - because they are funded by Fossil Fuel companies and the super-rich whose wealth is based on exploiting us: they need business-as-usual.

Crisis in higher education

The financial crisis in UK Higher Education is deepening, and the response of the University administrations is to make their workers pay for it with job losses and the reward of additional workloads for those who have kept their jobs. The response of the University and College Union (UCU) has been underwhelming, though not surprising given the level of disaffection and distrust they managed to create with the way communications and the Marking and Assessment Boycott of 2023 was handled. The low ebb amongst members was echoed in the 2025/6 National Pay Claim last November which failed to reach a 40% turn out and saw the imposition of a 1.4% pay increase. Within the union, recent elections to the National Executive Council saw a miserable turn out of around 10% and the victory

of what might be called the right faction(s) of the union, notably the Commons faction which started life as a vaguely leftist alternative to the Stalinist/Labourites and the Trotskyists of the UCU Left but which rapidly exposed itself by entering into alliance with the right. In the absence of a significant autonomous rank and file movement in the union*, willing to organise at the grassroots and across trade union boundaries, this victory is likely to have a long-term negative impact on militancy.

On the ground, this week has seen strikes in Higher Education in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen in response to threatened compulsory redundancies, involving the UCU and other campus unions, particularly Unite. Dundee is looking to get rid of 180 workers on top of those previously threatened in an

effort to save £10 million. Opposition has been consistent and militant. The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow has been 'reshaping' with focused 'voluntary' severance. A union request to open up institution-wide severance as an alternative has been consistently rejected by an intransigent management that has worked hard to show that they were being super-consultative and ready to listen whilst budgeting not one significant inch. At Glasgow Caledonian University, where the Education Institute of Scotland's University Lecturers Association (EIS-ULA) represents the majority of academic staff, 100 staff jobs have been announced as at risk. A rally of EIS-ULA, UCU, Unison and Unite members this week hopefully foreshadows joint industrial action.

Can Reform go Green?

Reform is a right-wing party led by millionaire-with-five-houses Nigel Farage; it is racist, anti-working class, and funded by the rich. They are Climate Crisis deniers and

oppose Net Zero policies to stop the production of carbon (fossil fuels etc) which cause global warming. Years of cuts and austerity implemented by the major political parties

(Labour, Conservatives and Lib Dems) have rightly made many people angry and disillusioned with politics-as-usual. Reform have benefited with councillors and an

The reality is that the crisis will deepen further, and it will continue to be the workers who will carry the burden. And it will also be the case that

the trade union leaders will look to control and direct the opposition, keeping it within the boundaries of the legislation with regard sympathetic strikes, passive picketing etc. They will not



look to escalate or expand the struggles in individual institutions, but rather allow them to remain isolated, all while talking incessantly about "solidarity". Ultimately, the only way we as workers will have a

chance to successfully halt these relentless attacks will be through our capacity to extend the fight, across union boundaries and across institutions, from below and with a focus on self-organisation. **<https://notesfrombelow.org/tag/university-worker> are going some way to develop this approach.*

The Network of Anarchist Internationalists is: For revolutionary defeatism in every warring state!

(Supported by the ACG as well as a number of organisations across Europe. See: <https://international.noblogs.org/>)

The NAI:

Will: Support war resisters, draft dodgers, deserters, and conscientious objectors!

Calls for: A major libertarian internationalist initiative to counter militaristic propaganda! Nuclear catastrophe approaches! The ruling classes 'East' and 'West' are charlatans whose lust for power and profit is increasingly based on the war industry.

The self-styled West is articulating scenarios of a new world war. For them,

the 'free world' is fighting an existential battle against autocracies increasingly identified with orientalist stereotypes threatening to destroy our alleged 'civilisation'.

Nations in this democratic camp such as Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, are lauded as fighting the same global battle of the 'good guys' against the 'evil'. This logic even enlists Syria's Islamists on the side of the good guys.

On the other side, Russia, China and Iran, totalitarian

states ruled by secret police, party enforcers and clerics. Each violently suppresses our class's struggle against austerity and the march to war.

For a libertarian internationalist initiative against the militaristic propaganda disseminated daily, which presents our supposedly 'good' armed states as if they were a humanitarian enterprise!

We need to offer practical and moral support to war resisters, draft dodgers, deserters, and groups

taking internationalist positions, especially in the war zones.

Supporting refusal, conscience, desertion, and draft evasion on all sides of the war fronts, for revolutionary defeatism, is fundamental. Russia and Ukraine themselves recognise desertion as a major obstacle to their death programmes.

This support within the framework of our internationalism, promotes initiatives to challenge nationalism and borders, territorial sovereignty, the nation-state or its proto-state rivals, building new mechanisms of international solidarity and siblinghood.

The front lines are closer than you think, no further than the nearest arms or components factory, than the nearest logistics depot, transport hub or communications centre.

The war is where the ports and airports are,

the military bases and their reserve barracks. It's the rail networks and motorways, the towns, estates, cities and factories where we as workers pay the price of war in poverty from worsening austerity. And now the threat of conscription.

We cannot move without being at war and when we notice it, the rhetorical guns blaze: disrupter, extremist, traitor! We must be all these things.

It's time to distinguish our movement clearly from those who support 'some wars before the class war'.

We are clear that revolutionaries not only oppose their wars but call for the transformation of war resistance into a social revolution! We do not call for a return to the situation before the war, their 'capitalist peace', which is just their repression of us in preparation for their next bloody enterprise.

What can we do

practically, individually and collectively, home and abroad? On the most basic level, thinking globally, acting locally. Refuse their consensus and call out the hypocrisy, advocating for ourselves and our class across frontiers. Collectively, reject their 'national interest'.

Link our struggles to austerity and their war profiteering. Everything we do for ourselves and our class, hinders their 'warfare-state'. Join in solidarity across locality and trade - victory on the home front is a victory and example abroad.

From the Arctic rivers to the Red Sea, from Taiwan to the Congo basin, continental frontiers are aflame, or bristling in preparation. The changing faces of the superpower masquerades change nothing. They want us to fight - one capitalism, one war! The danger is real, the danger is now.





Anarchist Communist Group

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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.

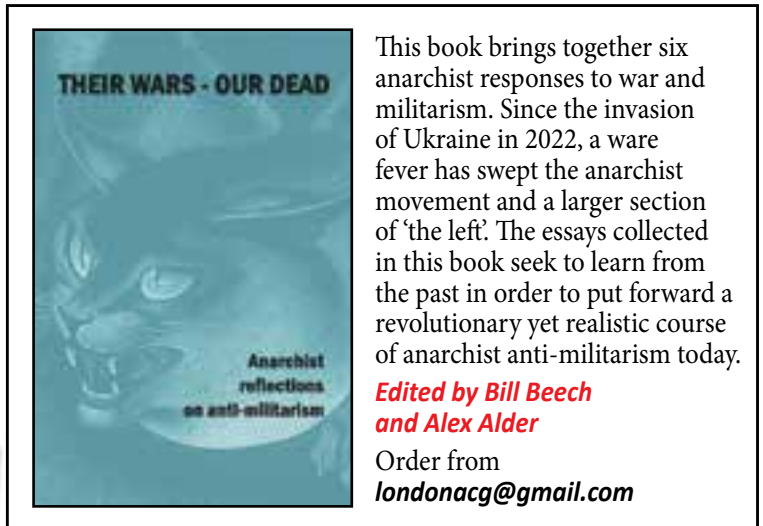
This will mean the working class overthrowing capitalism, abolishing the State, getting rid of exploitation, hierarchies and oppressions, and halting the destruction of the environment.

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

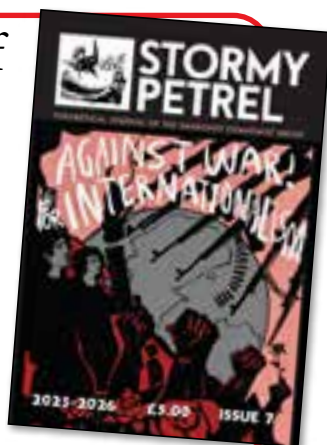


This book brings together six anarchist responses to war and militarism. Since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a war fever has swept the anarchist movement and a larger section of 'the left'. The essays collected in this book seek to learn from the past in order to put forward a revolutionary yet realistic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

Edited by Bill Beech and Alex Alder

Order from londonacg@gmail.com

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REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS