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Brandalism & Special Patrol Group

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ATTACKING THE ARMS FAIR

There may have been hundreds of police officers in the vicinity, but none of them knew what to do about the abseiling Christians.

It's not something you see every day, and on that particular day there were four of them. They were hanging from a bridge, and suspended just low enough to block the road beneath. A crowd of us joined to cheer them on as they unrolled banners calling on the Theresa May and her colleagues to stop supporting arms dealers and end their support for dictatorships and human rights abusers around the world.

This was just one of the many colourful and unexpected protests that took place outside the ExCel Centre that week. There were also Dabka dancers, remote control Daleks, hip-hop performers and everything in-between. Thousands of campaigners and activists united for seven days of inspiring resistance and direct action, putting our props and bodies on the line.

Despite the often festive atmosphere, in one way, none of us really wanted to be there. We weren't there for the good of our health. We were there to stop the hundreds of vans that were queuing up outside the venue to try to bring in military equipment for the setup of Defence & Security Equipment International 2017 (DSEI), one of the biggest arms fairs in the world.

Over 100 people were arrested by heavy-handed police officers that week, but the blockades certainly caused problems for the organisers. Contractor after contractor told us that they were being paid far more money than usual to work around the clock because of delays.

It's obvious why there were so many vans: they had a lot of equipment to move. In total, over 1600 companies were in attendance, including all of the biggest arms companies in the world. DSEI is a massive opportunity for them to showcase all of their deadly wares to state militaries and police forces from all around the world.

Among them were companies like BAE Systems and Raytheon, which have produced the fighter jets and bombs being used in the ongoing Saudi-led bombardment of Yemen. The war in Yemen has seen over 10,000 people killed, and millions displaced.

For two and a half years now, the people of Yemen have endured a terrible civil war and an aerial bombing campaign that has destroyed schools, hospitals and homes all over the country. It's a bombing campaign that has been armed and supported every step of the way by the UK.

Needless to say, the Saudi military was among those in attendance. They were joined by a roll call of despots, human rights abusing dictatorships and repressive regimes, including political and military delegations from United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Philippines, Bahrain, Egypt, Thailand and Algeria – all of which have very poor human rights records.

While there, military and state actors accused of human rights abuses will have been able to buy all kinds of weapons ranging from rifles and small arms to fighter jets, naval vessels and tanks. These don't just provide military support for the buyer, they also send a clear message of political support. In buying UK support, they are also buying silence from the upper echelons of UK government in the face of abuses and atrocities.

The attendees and companies were all welcomed by civil servants and greeted by government ministers. In total, 12 ministers attended DSEI, with five providing keynote speeches over its duration. With this scale of government support and complicity it was clear we had to take action. Events like DSEI couldn't function without the full support of Whitehall and Downing Street.

DSEI is not just an issue for anti-arms trade campaigners. It is a focal point for so many other campaigns and issues. The same companies that profit from war and destruction are also profiting from humanitarian crises and the inhumane treatment of refugees and migrants.

Militarised borders kill tens of thousands of people every year, and criminalise many more. That is why we worked together with anti-borders and anti-racism activists in calling for an end to the cycle of repression and violence and for the free movement of people, not weapons.

The pertinence of the issue was brought home by the performance of 'We Are Here Because You Are There', a powerful piece of street theatre by our friends from the All African Women's Group.

The play took activists through the asylum process, the discrimination and difficulties women often face when they arrive in the UK and claim asylum, including detention, and how they are treated by Home Office officials, their lawyers and Immigration Judges.

They were joined by speakers who shared their stories about the devastating effects of militarised borders and racist immigration policies that demonise whole populations and punish vulnerable communities.

It was made all the more compelling because it was performed in the road, right outside the setup of an event attended by the same companies that are directly profiting from the pain and stress of militarised borders.

These shows of solidarity are not just important from a movement-building perspective, they are crucial to how we organise. Our movement is one that needs to encompass the voices of all of those on the front-line of oppression and those who are suffering directly at the hands of the arms trade and militarism.

Those taking action were doing so on behalf of many more who couldn't be there. All of the polling suggests that the overwhelming majority of the UK opposes arms exports to repressive regimes. One poll, taken in the lead-up to DSEI, found that 76% of UK adults oppose the promotion of military exports to human rights abusers, with only 6% supporting them.

The scale of opposition is far greater, and far broader, than the levels of support for any political party. That is why we worked to forge strong links with those who have never been politically active before, and strived to build communities that bring people together.

One way we did this was by ensuring that we reached out to local people, many of whom were shocked to discover that 30,000 arms company reps were setting up on their doorstep. The show of support from the community was incredible, with local businesses and people joining the protests and bringing food for Occupy protesters who were camping by the road for the week.

Another vital outlet for us was Art the Arms Fair (ATAF), a unique five day long art exhibition that took place in Poplar, only three train stops away from the Excel Centre.

ATAF consisted of over 130 works of art, ranging from the smallest paintings and postcards to a massive half-scale replica of a Tomahawk missile. These were complemented by evenings of poetry, comedy and live music.

ATAF showcased thoughtful, powerful and provocative work made by people from all sorts of backgrounds: ranging from sketches by those who were sat at the side of the road during the DSEI week of action, right through to 'Civilian Drone Strike', an exclusive new piece by Banksy that was auctioned to raise an amazing £102,500 for CAAT.

The protests last year were the biggest yet, and set an extremely high bar, but there's still more that we can do next time.

The funds raised by the Banksy piece will be invaluable in ensuring that we can provide even more resources, and mobilise even more people against the next DSEI. War, conflict and repression are all fuelled by DSEI: if we are to build a better and more peaceful world then we need to shut it down for good.

Jess Poyner is a spokesperson for Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT). You can follow CAAT on @CAATuk.



A Spectre of Working Class Anarchism

By Lisa McKenzie



Solidarity is needed on our streets more than ever – so why has so much political activity on the left disappeared into the old structures of party politics, instead of supporting community and grass-roots campaigns?

During 2013, I wrote an article for the London School of Economics that was full of hope. I had recently moved to London and become engaged in the housing movement. The article began: “A spectre is haunting London and that spectre is the rumble of grass roots civil disobedience, activism and – dare I say – a people’s anarchism”. I believed this at the time.

London can be an oppressive and aggressive place, that was, and still is, getting harder and harder to survive in. The global elite set up camp in London and see it as their permanent playground. Rents are sky-high, wages are being pushed down by austerity measures and global competition, and the actual incomes of working class people are still falling because of changes to social support systems.

Yet there was a sense of hope, and a real resistance coming from the grass roots – often led by young, working class women. I believe the sense of solidarity and hope during 2013 was connected to being a full 2 years away from a general election. Different communities and organisations were forming as part of a genuine struggle for social justice, rather than being divided on party and political lines.

Grass-roots campaigns have always been the foundation of social change. They are the holy grail for any organised political activist group or professional political campaign to reach down to and connect with. Genuine, on-the-ground campaigns always spring up out of desperation, and often out of feelings of embattlement and powerlessness, usually as a last resort when other forms of complaint have come to a dead-end. These bottom-up campaigns mostly comprise people that have little to no individual personal power, and are not practised in pushing back against institutional power. They come together as a collective in order to make their voices heard.

The fightback was best exemplified by a group of young working class mothers in East London, who had not been politically active previously but, when collectively faced with eviction from their estate, formed the Focus E15 Campaign. By forming a group they became active and visible on the streets of Newham – and, more importantly, visible to those with power, who were hoping they would go away quietly. These young women did not go away quietly, and with the support of other more politically active and seasoned activists their campaign grew and became unavoidable, especially in left leaning media circles.

Existing housing campaigns all over London, and beyond, saw these young women, and their genuine grass roots campaign, and cross-campaign support sprang up. Between 2013-2015 I marched and supported housing campaigns from Barnet to Lewisham. The everyday struggles of working class families were beginning to be seen, because they had a street presence.

I prefer to do my politics on the street. My argument relating to street politics is that working class people are being purposefully and systematically excluded from public life, the media, parliamentary and local politics, academia, and the arts – so having a presence on the streets makes us visible again. If we are not visible and present on the streets we are totally forgotten, and that allows those in power to create their own narratives about us.

Local campaigns in the UK are regularly set up and organised to resist the pressure that all neo-liberal democracies put upon their most vulnerable communities. These types of campaigns are not rare at all. The strength and the skills needed to fight such campaigns are always present within local communities and especially poor and otherwise powerless communities that have histories of mutual aid, family-ties, and community identities (even though they are seldom recognised by professional and party political activists, who constantly bemoan the fact they cannot reach ‘ordinary people’). Grass roots groups emerge organically out of anger, frustration and often a realisation that organised institutional power, like political parties, NGO’s and charities, sometimes work against poor communities and people. It is all too often the professional political activist or campaign group that ultimately extinguishes the passion, anger, and confidence that comes from the sense of ‘fighting back’.

Between 2013-2015, there was a vibrant and exciting working class housing movement gaining a great deal of traction in London. This particular housing activism was mostly led by working class women in their own communities, and had emerged because of the aggressive turn capitalism had taken, especially in global cities, leading to social cleansing of working class families – with mothers and children being on the front line. Social cleansing – or as I prefer to call it class cleansing – was not new to 2013, but has been enabled by all the main political parties over 30 years of aggressive policy regimes aimed at deregulation of financial and housing markets, at the same time as cutting funding for, and eventually privatising, social goods.

It’s led to what we might call a political perfect storm. It has seen aggressive and state-funded gentrification of our major cities across the UK, increased homelessness (both visible and invisible), and an acceptance that those who cannot afford to live in cities of wealth must be moved out either by coercion or force.

Social cleansing, social apartheid and social inequality have been internalised as common sense, especially within global cities, and particularly in London. The political and economic elite see London as a special place, where the special people live – if you can no longer afford to live in London, you ought to leave.

Most of the grass roots campaigns I have been involved in, especially within the housing movement, were not connected or affiliated to any official political group or party. None of the campaigns were being directly or indirectly managed, they were community-led and -organised. In fact, most of these community-led campaigns were tackling decisions that were being forced upon them by local government – and in many working class areas in London it is the Labour Party that are in power. In Newham, where the young mothers from Focus E15 were campaigning, it was the Labour Party that were in control, from councillors, to MPs, to the Mayor of Newham. These young women only knew life directly under a Labour controlled system, a system that has not only failed to support them, but has, if anything, been the bane of their lives.

Between 2013 and 2015 the grass roots housing movement in London was attracting a broad range of support – from student movements, to trade unions, and even local Labour party members. When the election was called in 2015, housing campaigns all across London were finding it increasingly difficult to garner support beyond their community. The Labour Party and the Trade Unions were in election mode, and the housing campaigns that had direct battles with Labour councils became inconvenient. Since 2015, many of the grass roots campaigns, especially those focused on social cleansing and anti-gentrification, have been asked to wait by Labour Party supporters, because a Labour government is supposedly their best chance of being heard.

Political time moves slowly, it moves in parliaments and elections; time on the streets moves very differently. The people who are fighting for their communities – who have little or no resources – can become exhausted after a few months of campaigning. They do not have two years, or five years, of fight in them. The campaigns fold: either the residents are moved out or make concessions that are not in their best interests, because they simply cannot wait.

The poorest people often have no choice but to resist, the very structure of a neo-liberal society pushes them towards resistance – success or annihilation is the capitalist model. The restructuring of urban space that the Marxist geographer David Harvey identifies as accumulation by dispossession is producing increasingly antagonistic class relations.



That in turn is making those relations and their accompanying social injustices more apparent to the people whose right to the city is being threatened. It leads to greater class resentment that, in some cases, can turn into anger against “them” - those with economic and political wealth and power.

It’s a resentment and anger whose political consequences are as yet unknown, but which will inevitably be played out on the streets and estates of our towns and cities. Class struggle in itself is resistance, and campaigns that start from local communities and build on a sense of solidarity will always be our best chance of success.

Lisa McKenzie is an LSE sociology fellow and author of *Getting By: Estates, Class and Culture in Austerity Britain*.

ACCIDENTAL ANARCHIST

by Carne Ross



There was something missing.

It was this realisation that led me along a pathway altogether different from the one I had planned or expected of my life. It was this realisation that led me, by strange and unpredicted turns, to anarchism, a journey depicted in the film *Accidental Anarchist* (recently broadcast on BBC4).

A bourgeois child, I had been educated and indeed brought up to believe that the orthodox system of politics and economics – capitalism and representative democracy, we can call them – formed a complete whole. These social philosophies and the economic and political order they created offered the best and most fulsome method to organise affairs for the benefit of the individual and society. This is what I had been taught and what those around me, my family and my peers, and thus I, believed.

I continued to believe this when I became a diplomat for the British government. Indeed, the diplomat embodies these beliefs. In 1989, when I became a diplomat, the Western model was triumphant; the communist model was vanquished. I was glad to represent these ideals to the world.

But all along I was dimly aware that there was something missing. I didn't let this doubt, however, impede my ambition. Nor could I have told you what this missing something was. I found the logic of neo-classical economics and representative democracy impossible to question. The assumptions that undergird these thought-systems are deeply rooted: that individuals seek, above all, to consume; that they will compete rather than cooperate; that, perhaps most pernicious of all, without authority they will fall into a war of all against all – so only the state should be permitted the monopoly of violence with which to coerce stability. I believed these nostrums or, at least, I did not have the ability not to believe them.

Nevertheless, I think that deep inside me, as I believe many also sense, I felt that there was something wrong. I was discontented and I could see that discontent in others. At work, I saw coercion and petty conflict. In friendships and love affairs, I saw unhappiness, frustration and longing for something other than what there was. My life, though outwardly successful and fulfilled, was inwardly hollow, my behaviour ever more dissipate; my self-hatred ran deep.

It all came to a head with the Iraq war. I had been Britain's Iraq and WMD expert at the UN. In the run-up to the war, I saw my government lie about the threat and ignore alternatives to war. I knew about these things because I had worked on them. Eventually, despite much anguish at my lost career, I resigned after giving then -secret evidence to the first official inquiry into the war.

It might strike the reader as facetious or ironic, but I am now grateful that this happened to me. For the collapse of what I had thought would be my life-long career forced me to confront the doubt I had long held but never admitted. I looked around at the political and economic system I had defended and promoted as a diplomat, and I was appalled. This system permitted a supposedly democratic government to lie about war; no one was held accountable. This system created both gross and mounting inequality and was destroying the planet. This system assumed the worst of people, and assumed that this was the paramount truth of human nature. That people are selfish, competitive and antagonistic is just what they're like; there is no alternative to the current system.

So I began a search for an alternative. I didn't know what I was looking for or what I would find but in some inexplicable, inchoate way I knew that I had to look. I spent a year reading in a New York library. I tried, and it is hard to do, to look at the facts and from those facts derive the theory, not the other way around (and it is abundantly clear from those facts that the current system is not working). I wanted a theory that accounted for society and the world as it was today – huge, diverse, complex – and for people as they really are: complicated, rich, needy, loving. I was looking for a philosophy that allowed for the world as it really is, and for people as they really are, not the caricatures offered by orthodox theory. Above all a philosophy where people are at the centre, not as subjects but in control.

I ended up in a place I never expected to be. If you want people at the centre of politics, there really is only one philosophy that permits this. It is a philosophy that trusts individuals collectively to work together to govern their own affairs. It is a philosophy that assumes the best of people, not the worst; that in general people choose to cooperate, not compete; that they care as much about others as they do themselves; and that, indeed, they see their own selves in others – that they are not in fact separate at all. A philosophy that assumes that people love.

This, I realised, is anarchism. And the more I read about it, the more I realised that this was the answer I had been searching for, a set of ideas that struck me with great force and, as I have grown older, seen more and read further, are more compelling than ever.

I wrote a book about the contemporary importance of these ideas, which pioneers had elaborated in the 19th century and earlier. A television producer read that book and suggested we make a film. To make the film, we travelled to Spain, New York City, and Syria to explore the history of anarchism and seek out the bright hopeful places where anarchist ideals are today being put into practice. We met people who'd protested together in Occupy Wall Street and went on to organise the most effective community-based relief efforts after New York's devastating Hurricane Sandy. We met founders of cooperative grocery stores in Brooklyn, and a man who led his village in southern Spain to take over an absent aristocrat's land and farm it for the benefit of all. When you change reality in one place, he told me, you change it everywhere.

The film ended in northern Syria, where we witnessed the extraordinary attempt at bottom-up self-government in a place the Kurds call Rojava. And it was here I realised that anarchist society – where people govern themselves without hierarchy, authority or state – is possible. Here, in Syria of all places, is a society where all – women and men, Arab and Kurd – are given equal power. It is not perfect: it is a work in progress in the most difficult of circumstances, wartime. But it was a remarkable and inspiring thing to see.

Had chance proven otherwise, I would still be a British diplomat, still wondering what was missing. Anarchism does not provide all the answers, nor does it claim to; it is not a blueprint for a Utopian society, but a method to organise human affairs free from coercion and control.



accidentalanarchist.net

independentdiplomat.org

Carne Ross is the director of Independent Diplomat, a non-profit diplomatic advisory group. He is the author of *"The Leaderless Revolution: How ordinary people will take power and change politics in the 21st century"* (Simon & Schuster, 2011) and is the subject of the documentary film *Accidental Anarchist*.



Grenfell Britain

by Potent Whisper

What happened at Grenfell , that was an act of war
The murder of innocent people who died because they're poor
Hundreds of dead and you can bet that there'll be more
So if you think that **you** survived it, I wouldn't be so sure

Maybe you thought you knew what redevelop-meant
But if you believe that we develop, please develop sense
If you live in social housing you'll be redeveloped next
And then we'll all be redeveloped 'til we're redeveloped dead

Cos what happened at Grenfell, that wasn't just "tragic"
It was a deliberate attack, cos it was managed
The people want justice, and trust me they'll have it
And part of that is asking how and why this happened

So, to start, the fire alarms weren't active
No second staircase for fire exit access
No sprinklers fitted when the renovation happened
No access for fire trucks
But there was the cladding...

The cladding wasn't safe, but they chose it cos it's cheaper
(only by £2, for every square metre)
That cladding was the reason that the building burnt so quick
But they still chose it, cos people's lives aren't worth shit.

So now we've established **some** of how it happened
It's time to examine who approved that use of cladding

The cladding, at the start, came from Omnis Exterior
Who, when they sold it, will have known it was inferior
Harley Facades bought it and installed it for Rydon,
the lead contractor in the process that supplied them
Rydon worked directly for KCTMO, the TMO managed the tower for the Council
The Council owned the building - well - as far as we all know...
So I'd say the Council is one of those accountable

They're accountable, cos people gave them warnings
All formal avenues to change had been exhausted
There's proof that Grenfell Action Group offered them a **plethora** of warnings they'd sent to them for fucking YEARS before this

This **is** war, and it's time to take your gloves off
If you want revenge there's many names to get your tongues on
Very many companies and many hands with blood on
But we won't let any of them devils pass the buck on

Let's focus our attention on those companies I mentioned
Sit them down, surround them, and ask them these questions:

1. Did any of them raise any concerns, and if so who did they raise the concerns to?
2. Did any of them receive concerns, and if so how did they act on what they knew?

These are key questions in the investigation
And suspects need to evidence their answers, to the nation
They need to be able to back up every single explanation
And if they're found guilty in this investigation

I don't wanna see resignation or fines
They need to go to jail for a very long time

But, right now, while the victims grieve
Those whose representatives left them on the street
We've seen a huge community meet their immediate needs
And now they need housing, with instant guarantees

There's 1400 empty homes in Kensington
While homeless people beg for them - that's negligence
The government should buy them all, make them into Council stock
Then they should supply them all and keep them all at Council costs

We need local, social housing for the victims
Not in hotels, real places they can live in
Long term homes that are safe for kids and women
And then we need a Needs Fund to cover basic living

For clothing
For school uniforms to be replaced
For every single funeral, respecting every faith
For new official documents, licenses and passports
For food, for travel, for anything they ask for

And everything they need, like foster parents for the orphans
All workers need their jobs and pensions protected
Undocumented people **also** need to be supported
And students with exams need their circumstance respected

At the same time, we need to look at **your** housing
If you're living on a block, your block is one of four thousand
Are **you** at risk too? Is **your** family next?
Well May ordered tests, and the tests said **YES**.

If you're at risk right now, organise a rent strike
Don't pay a penny 'til your landlord protects your life
I'll say that again, you need to organise a rent strike
Don't pay a penny... don't pay a **penny**

And don't let them try to demolish your estate
They'll use this to justify it, saying you're not safe
They've been doing it for years, they did it to my mates
And Estate Regeneration isn't what it says

They'll smash down your home
You'll get dashed out and cashed in
You'll be on the street in a click, it happens that quick
You won't be on fire but your life will be in ashes
So tell them they should refurb and don't let them chat shit

So we've established **some** of what to do next
We'll need a lot of money to take the next few steps
I can hear the **Tories** ask where we'll get the funds from
Well, thanks for asking, I'll tell you where it comes from
Amazon, Apple, Google, E.on, Ebay
They pay less tax than even you and me pay
Annually they avoid a billion in tax
So I say we take every pound of that
And then we make them pay their tax forever, the murderers

They're one of the reasons that Grenfell happened
The government say there's no money for our services
But there's no money cos they never pay their taxes

It wasn't just Grenfell that suffered mass victims
Every single day we're seeing Grenfell killings
We suffer to corruption in a Grenfell system
This isn't Great Britain, this is Grenfell Britain

The disabled are on fire
They're burning the workers
The elderly are choking
Your teachers are in hearses
Students are on fire next to doctors and nurses
Your hospitals, even your fire station's burning

You don't need to be an expert to work out the remedy
Stop cutting funds and instead cut austerity
I'm definitely not an expert but it doesn't seem hard
I can only speak for me, but I'd suggest **these** demands

All tower blocks need sprinklers fitted
With fire alarms, on integrated systems
Compulsory, yearly, fire risk assessments
(Cos at the moment, they only recommend them)

Inspections should be undertaken by the fire service
Not by the TMO, this is their downfall
All TMO's should be instantly dissolved and accountability should return to the council

No more self certifying safety checks
(Anyone could do a week and take these tests)
There should be a second staircase, with instant application
And then we need to vote that homes be fit for habitation...

Then of course we need a change to housing regulations
Recommendations should be legal obligations
And the regs need to have retrospective application
Cos most social housing was built before them came in

Then reinstate legal aid, perhaps the worst injustice
They put a price on life, don't let them put a price on justice
Their screams are burnt into our minds and their names into our hearts
The fire might be out, but a rage has been sparked
It's a rage that will blaze on every street, with every march
There won't be a day of peace until justice comes to pass

It wasn't just Grenfell that suffered mass victims
Every single day we're seeing Grenfell killings
We're suffering corruption in a Grenfell system
This isn't Great Britain, this is Grenfell Britain

END.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

STATEMENT OF REASONS

Obviously as a council we have proved ourselves completely incompetent. The three week promise we made to re-house survivors of the Grenfell Tower Tragedy has now become three months. Only three families out of two hundred have been permanently re-housed. I'm asking if you can find it in your heart to let us use your empty property at 80 Holland Park and restore our faith in humanity.

“Kensington is a tale of two cities. The south part of Kensington is incredibly wealthy, it’s the wealthiest part of the whole country. The ward where this fire took place is, I think, the poorest ward in the whole country and properties must be found - requisitioned if necessary - to make sure those residents do get re-housed locally. It can’t be acceptable that in London we have luxury buildings and luxury flats left empty as land banking for the future while the homeless and the poor look for somewhere to live. We have to address these issues!

Jeremy Corbyn MP

d r d



The Language of Youth Liberation

by Kathleen Nicole O’Neal

Two lies reside at the heart of our society’s understanding of children and adolescents. The first lie is that parents, teachers, and caregivers are always benevolent, wise, and capable of ensuring that the best interests of a young person are met. The second lie is that young people are inherently incompetent, foolish, and incapable of attending to any aspects of their own welfare or making wise decisions on their own behalf. Questioning either or both of these lies – that undergird all of our legal, social, political, cultural, economic, educational, religious, spiritual, and psychological institutions at the macro level and habits of thought at the micro level – puts one on track towards embracing youth liberationism as a philosophy and activist priority, and decrying youth oppression as the greatest unsung injustice of our age.

Feminists, critical race theorists, disability theorists and queer theorists have given us language and conceptual tools to better understand various forms of oppression and how they might be overcome. Youth liberationists offer a similar set of concepts to enable us to unpack all the ways we take youth oppression and adult supremacy for granted, thereby allowing us to begin to see a path towards youth liberation. Therefore, I would like to present a few keywords in youth liberation theory that shed light on what we talk about when we talk about the oppression and liberation of youth.

Ageism – Youth liberationists speak a lot about ageism. It can take different forms (it is a prejudice that impacts elders, too). Normative ageism is your garden variety bigotry towards youth defined as “the assertion that individual capabilities, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and the ability to exercise rights is tied in an uncomplicated way to age.” Cultural ageism “involves the attitudes taken by members of one generation towards another that devalue their mores, technology, pastimes, entertainment, etc. only because it is different from that which the previous generation is used to” (think baby-boomers complaining about rap music and videogames). Paternalistic ageism is the belief that young people require older people to make choices for them because they are too immature to make decisions for themselves. Pedophobic ageism is the casual hatred of children one finds so often in contemporary society (think restaurants that institute blanket bans on individuals under a certain age). Ephebophobic ageism is the casual hatred of adolescents that permeates so much of our popular and civic culture. Economic ageism denotes the ways that youth (including young adults who have outlived minor status) are discriminated against in the labour market, when seeking government assistance, and in the context of the capitalist system as a whole.

Scientific ageism (sibling to scientific racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, classism, and ableism) denotes the ways that biology, psychology, and psychiatry are employed to perpetuate ageism (think all of those studies of “the teen brain” or social panics about young people reaching puberty at earlier ages than before). Personal ageism involves valuing relationships more when they are with people that are of a given age. Sentimental ageism is a romanticised view of childhood and adolescence that many adults take on as they age, thereby perpetuating the ongoing injustices and oppression of young people today. Puritanical ageism is often, but not always, religious in nature and is concerned with preventing young people from engaging in sexual activity, consuming forbidden media, drinking, smoking, consuming intoxicants etc. Institutional ageism refers to the ways that institutions such as guardianship, legal age restrictions, compulsory education, minor status and the like oppress and discriminate against youth at the institutional level. Authoritarian ageism is yet another form of ageism embodied in the phrase “because I said so.” Obviously ageism is one thing and many things.

Guardianship – The institution of guardianship (or “parental rights”) is viewed by youth liberationists as constituting a private property right in minor children held by their parents or guardians and is therefore deemed fundamentally oppressive. This is because guardianship empowers parents to make decisions on behalf of their children in ways that go beyond looking out for their best interests, and instead involves dictating where one’s minor children can live, what religion they can practice, the sort of education they are to receive etc. Youth liberationists see guardianship as a throwback to a time when children were considered the legal property of their parents.

Minority – The legal status of minority is one of subordination and oppression, where youth are, typically forcibly, prevented from voting, signing contracts, consenting to medical treatment, engaging in intimate relations, obtaining housing, owning property, working, consuming certain media, purchasing cold medication, and a plethora of other activities that constitute the bulk of human existence. Youth liberationists question the need for this institution and believe it thwarts the potential of youth, and ultimately endangers them through disempowering them to look out for their own needs.

Paternalism – Paternalism is the notion that youth are best served by wise and benevolent adults that see to their best interests by making their important decisions for them. Youth liberationists resist the logic at the heart of paternalism because we realise that no perfectly wise and benevolent adult actually exists and that youth, like all people, are uniquely situated to know what is in their own best interests and act accordingly.

We recognise that child abuse and child protectionism are often two sides of the same coin.

Intersectionality – Anti-youth ageism intersects with all other types of oppression. When adolescent women are shamed for their bodies by sexist dress codes at their schools or are prevented from making decisions about their reproductive and sexual healthcare, they are oppressed at the intersection of ageism and sexism. When youth of colour are more likely than other youth to be negatively impacted by zero tolerance policies in American K-12 schools, these youth are oppressed at the intersection of ageism and racism. When there are negative consequences for LGBTQ youth for coming out, but there are no negative consequences for the parents who kick them out of the house or send them to anti-LGBTQ reparative therapy programs, these youth are hit at the intersection of heterosexism, cissexism, and/or monosexism and ageism. When caregivers murder disabled youth with impunity and the media report the crimes in terms that cast the parents as long-suffering victims of their child’s health problems or differences, these youth are victimised at the intersection of ageism and ableism.

Autonomy – Autonomy is important for all people to exercise. Autonomy as a concept is often used interchangeably with independence, but this is wrong. Even when youth or others must seek the assistance of others (as we all ultimately must) in order to function, this does not negate the importance of an individual right to self-determination. Recognising that autonomy ought to be separated conceptually from independence is an important cornerstone in youth liberation theory.

To wrap up, I hope that some of these keywords have provided a sense of the ideas at the heart of youth liberation theory and the rudiments of a vocabulary that can speak to the reality of youth oppression and the possibility of radical alternatives to the present condition. Finding the language to discuss youth oppression is taking the first step towards abolishing it.



NO!
Against Adult
Supremacy

<https://goo.gl/gZ2ceN>

Kathleen Nicole O’Neal is a writer and advocate for youth liberation.



McStrike

by Shen Batmaz

4th September 2017 has been hailed as a landmark day for labour relations in Britain: it was the first time in British history that fast food workers from McDonald's took industrial action against their international employers.

They followed in the footsteps of their brothers and sisters around the world, from New Zealand, to Japan and the USA. Across the globe McDonald's workers have been taking action against the world's second largest employer, and British McDonald's workers had finally come out to join them.

For years the idea had been accepted that McDonald's workers and other workers like them were impossible to organise – an idea that was regularly regurgitated by even the biggest unions. September 4th was historic because it was proof of the anger precarious workers feel, proof that we need to be ready to talk to these workers rather than continue to write them off.

But to the workers it was more than that: to the workers who walked out on that morning, this was the biggest thing they had ever done. It has been called a ‘David verses Goliath’ fight. To the 40 or so workers who walked out on that day, the idea of standing in David’s shoes and facing down the giant that is McDonald’s was an apt metaphor. The workers who walked out that day were intimidated for weeks leading up to the strike, told that we would be arrested, or pulled into back rooms and asked if we are in the union. The head office officials who oversee the stores involved in the September 4th strike did everything they could to scare the strikers, but they walked out anyway. The picket line was marked with bright red shirts, chants of “I believe that we will win” (a chant imported from the ‘Fight for \$15’ McStrike campaign in America), and the optimism of workers who had finally decided that enough was enough and stood up together.

Our strike asked for four simple demands: We wanted a real living wage of £10 an hour, an end to McDonald's mistreatment of staff and culture of fear, a union in the workplace and, finally, an end to zero hours contracts. Originally, our reason for joining the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers union (BFAWU) was because of one bullying manager, but with the union's help we realised we could demand more by working together.

We put in grievance after grievance and made phone calls, but were ignored by McDonalds. It soon became clear that we were inconsequential to this multi-billion-dollar global corporation – they just didn't care if we were unhappy. Workers in McDonalds are told that their low pay and treatment is their own fault, that they're unskilled or stupid. I'm sure we all heard this idea in school: "If you don't do well on your exams you'll end up in McDonalds".

This giant corporation and others like them gain from negative opinion of their workers: if they foster these ideas of us as lesser members of society, the public doesn't care what happens to us. McDonalds can get away with paying us and treating us how they want.

This is apparent in the gross gap between the CEO Steve Easterbrook, who earns £11.5m each year, and the youngest workers in British McDonalds who earn only £4.90 per hour. This gap is unacceptable. The people who do the jobs that make the money for the company are living in poverty and unable to afford even the basics, such as food or shoes, while the CEO and shareholders live lavish lives. McDonald's makes billions in profit each year, and yet some of my co-workers have told me stories about the free meal we get at work sometimes being their only meal because they can't afford to buy food. I've sat with a friend and colleague as she cried, because she couldn't feed both her and her four-year-old son, meaning she went without food when not at work. I work with people who live in constant fear of homelessness, and have watched as other workers have seen that fear become a reality.

There are thousands of fast food workers in Britain claiming working tax credits and housing benefits. Theresa May says there is no money for our public sector, but how can she claim this while our government subsidises the low pay of companies like McDonalds? The fight against McDonald's is important because how they treat and pay their workers sets the bar low for other employment. When we push up from the bottom, when workers like us, Picturehouse or Uber win, everyone wins, because we push up the bar for workers across the country.

Our fight against McDonald's is just beginning. While we watch our brothers and sisters in stores across the country face these conditions, we can't rest. We have to organise. Our two stores need to grow into five stores, ten stores and onwards. We can win, but to do that we all need to come together to fight. There is power in a union, and what could be better for the left than an army of angry fast food workers ready to start a rebellion against their corrupt employers?

Since this article was written, McDonalds UK have granted their workers an unprecedented pay-rise. They claim it had always been planned, irrespective of the strike action; the striking workers claim otherwise.

Repeat until victory: there is power in the Union.

#McStrike

Shen Batmaz is an organiser of the McStrike campaign at McDonalds Crayford, and a member of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU).

www.bfawu.org



Bang-up and Smash

by ASBO

Bang-up and Smash (BUS) is an overview of women's prisons in the UK, and a political analysis of their physical and ideological construction. The project began in jail. I was trying to think of ways to kill a bit of 'bang-up' and someone suggested making a zine, so I started collecting articles, random quotes and interviewing my mates.

I never meant to write a book, and it wouldn't have been possible without the input from many others (thank you comrades). Any money raised from the project is for those still behind bars. My experiences are only important as illustrations of the realities of prison life and as examples of the ways that the prison industrial complex exerts itself on those inside and out. Personal anecdotes and random observations are only included in BUS in an attempt to demystify life in an institution.

I was talking to someone today who has a family member in jail on an 'indeterminate life sentence'. They said that whatever your views on prison, the reality is, when you imprison someone, you are impacting their whole family and support network. One of the aims of BUS is to show what to expect from this process, from the moment of arrest to coming home, and to provide practical tools for everyone impacted by incarceration, not just those inside.

Banged-up

Very little has been written about women's prisons, especially in the UK, and most discourse is either patronising and gendered or detached and academic. The book aims to break with this, and put an anarchist critique at the heart of the discussion around prison. Jail and the prison society is pervasive in our culture, yet these institutions (and those that feed them) remain shrouded in mystery for many people.

BUS aims to help people be prepared for prison. Don't get caught! But if you think you might, why not read up first? BUS includes practical information connected to everyday life in jail, legal analysis and different ways to access support, with a critical analysis of concepts that the prison industrial complex is dependent on, such as prison labour, racism, rehabilitation and reform. It also outlines the different forms of discrimination inherent within the prison system, and the technologies used to control its inhabitants.

Part Two is a detailed overview of the procedures and powers that are used in an attempt to control those released on licence (or parole), and provides an insight into the practical issues individuals should expect when they are released. These processes are concrete examples of how pervasive the prison society is, even outside of prison.

The book also shows the relentless expansion of the prison-industrial-complex.

BUS aims to critique a lot of discourse around prisons, including many concepts that anarchists have traditionally rallied around – for example, abolition, the category of 'political prisoners', and so-called community responses. It is an uncompromising (and, probably, sometimes clumsy) attempt to provoke discussion and problematise various concepts relating to prison. One of the aims was to make it accessible, whilst containing a lot of practical information, and readers are free to reproduce and share any sections they like.

The wheels of justice and bureaucracy move slowly, but also replicate and reinvent themselves at a fast pace. Legislation and governing bodies are constantly changing. There have been numerous deaths in custody since I finished writing, as well as plans for expansions, and the smoking ban is now being enforced in several women's prisons. The written form is fixed, so some stuff in BUS will get out-dated pretty quickly. But the everyday realities of prison-life are ongoing, and the daily grind often remains unchanged for long periods of time. I can only speak from my own experiences, which will always be subjective and limited, but hopefully they are at least a sketch or snapshot of the prison system, a window into life behind the bars.

Good time for doing time?

"I would not give up all the bitterness that you bring me for all the mediocre sweetness in the world."
Renzo Novatore, The Howl of Dynamite (1919)

"Life's like a bed of roses, you take the thorns and you make do. Sometimes you have to hurt for the cause to be reached, but one day you'll be stronger, than all that you beat."
Angel Haze, Battle Cry

In the last two years the country has become full of Corbyn-acolytes. It is both sad and enraging, how many people have been brought-in by the lies of Labour. This is a dangerous game, and even though I mourn my anonymity and am constantly frustrated by the increased attention I get from the state, I am glad that my sentence has fuelled the fire in my belly, and the contempt I feel for anyone in power.

Corbyn has repeatedly criticised the Tory government for its lack of support for the filth and its cuts to the police force. In May 2017 as part of the campaign trail, he vowed to put 10,000 more coppers on the streets if elected. As recently as mid-September 2017 he asked Theresa May to promise that no more cuts would be made to the police force. It is also worth noting that while Labour has historically been against the increased privatisation of the prison estate, the current wave of prison expansion was drawn up under so-called New Labour. All governments are dependent on prison.

What next?

Prison is a war on the working class. BUS highlights the way that the prison industrial complex extends beyond cells and razor wire, and how the tools of these institutions and their apparatus are used to control working class people. Bail hostels and probation are examples of these processes, the end of the road in a protracted car crash of institutional control. As the divide between rich and poor increases, and the dependency on cheap labour grows, the prison estate continues in its relentless expansion. The news is full of stories of overcrowding, and this will continue whichever politician is in power.

"Terrorism: The use or threat of action where...the use or threat is designed to influence the government...or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and...the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious [racial] or ideological cause."
Terrorism Act 2000

We live in strange times. Surveillance is increasing every day, and legislation around extremism is used as a rationale for increasingly invasive judicial procedures. The lengthy, farcical definition of terrorism used by the government attempts to shut down all forms of dissent. Let them flex their muscles and try to scare monger. Solidarity mean aggression, solidarity means attack.

To all those rejecting authority. inside and out - solidarity...



Bang-up and Smash is available to download free at <https://goo.gl/LuYvUm>



Print copy available from Active Distribution <https://goo.gl/vXeoCm>

ASBO is a former prisoner and the author of *Bang Up and Smash* (Active Distribution). They can be contacted at asbo.hmp@riseup.net.





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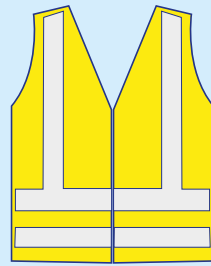
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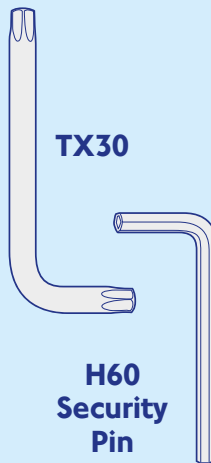
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How to hack into bus stop advertising spaces

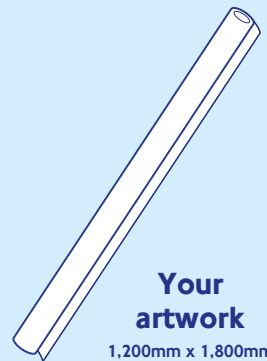
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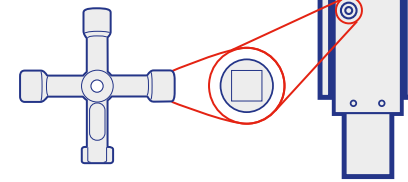
Choose a suitable bus stop location. The main bus stop advert company is JCDecaux, and there are hundreds of sites to choose from.

2

Select the 4-way utility key from the kit and locate the attachment that has a large square key shape. This will open the lock on the side of the advert shell.

3

Insert the square key into the lock and turn clockwise 180 degrees. Don't worry if it doesn't open first time, the mechanism can be stiff. Keep calm and keep trying.



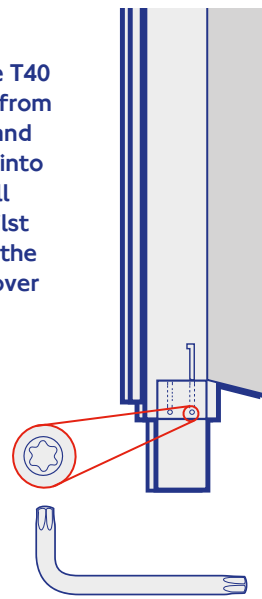
4

Once the side panel is open, insert one finger into the bottom of the casing and slide the metal cover up to reveal the next key hole.



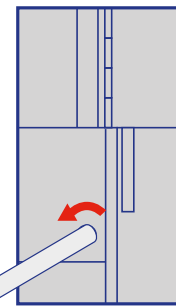
5

Take the T40 hex key from the kit, and insert it into the small hole whilst keeping the metal cover held up.



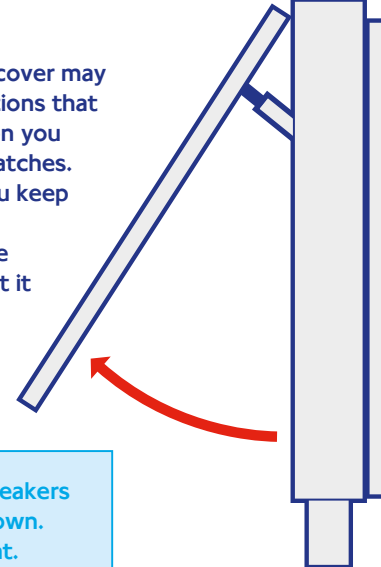
6

Once the key is located in the lock, turn anti-clockwise through 90 degrees to release the catches that keep the perspex screen closed.



7

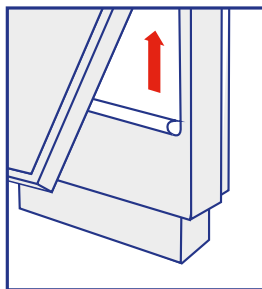
The perspex cover may have two pistons that open up when you release the catches. Make sure you keep hold of the bottom of the screen and let it rise slowly.



If installing at night time, turn the power breakers off inside the panel - just flick the switch down. You will feel less exposed with the backlight.

8

Roll up the poster that is inside from the bottom.



If the poster you are replacing has a blank reverse, you can re-use it for another installation; if not, you should recycle it.

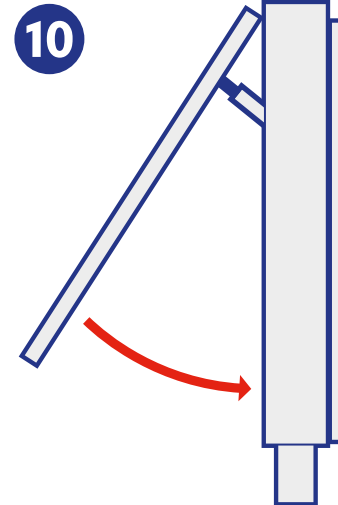
9

Slide your poster into the top of the panel, push it into the clip that runs across the top of the perspex. You may wish to pre-fold a 1cm edge on your posters, for an easier install. A credit card can also help with pushing the poster into the clip.

10

Put two hands on the bottom edge of the casing and push back to the frame to re-engage the catches, and close the door.

Then walk away;
take your time;
enjoy the
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