

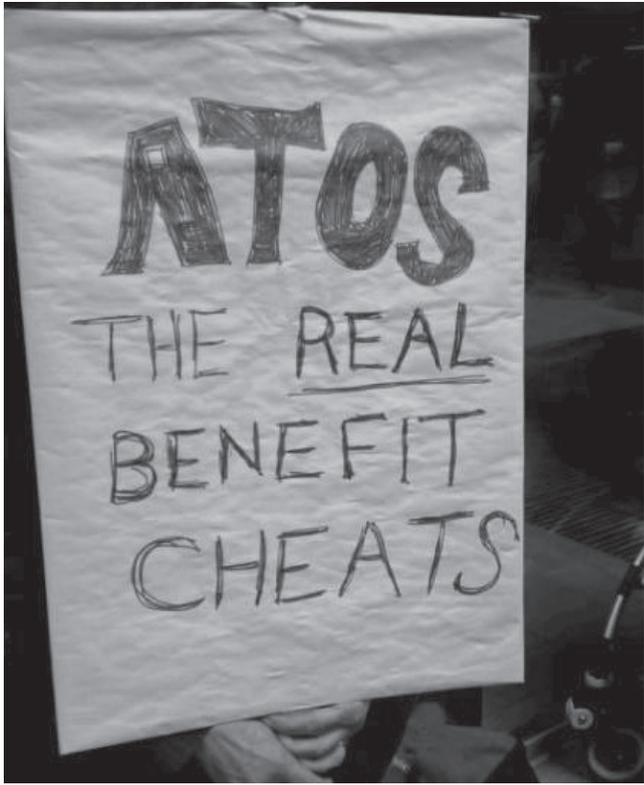


Special Austerity edition!

RESISTANCE

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Week of Action Against ATOS Origin

A report from the streets of Liverpool

On 9th May the offices of ATOS Origin in Liverpool's business district were picketed by a group of activists including benefit claimants, health and education workers and members of UK Uncut Liverpool, Liverpool Anarchist Federation and Liverpool Solidarity Federation.

Liverpool Solidarity Federation called the picket in solidarity with the Black Triangle Anti-Defamation Campaign and Disabled People Against Cuts.

One of Merseyside Police's omnipresent Matrix vans showed up almost as soon as the picket started and left one of its occupants to ensure the picketers kept their distance from the building as instructed. However, as the rain bucketed down, the lone copper wisely decided not to try preventing the group from taking shelter close to the entrance.

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Liverpool protest outside ATOS offices

With slogans hastily hand-written and taped onto scavenged placards, the picketers shared cake and umbrellas as they distributed leaflets to workers on their way in and out of The Plaza building, where ATOS Origin has its Liverpool offices.

The intervention was welcomed by workers in the building which, amongst some generic legal, property and credit companies, houses a home care agency and RNID Communications Services – companies whose clients and employees are likely to be affected by ATOS's dreaded Work Ca-

pability Assessments.

If any of the workers who took the leaflet were from ATOS Origin, they didn't say so, but nobody expressed objections to Solfed's flier, which depicts ATOS CEO Keith Wilman declaring: "Too sick to work? I don't give ATOS!" and contrasts his £626,000 salary to the plight of the 30,000 people wrongly declared fit for work and denied benefits by ATOS assessments in the last two years.

The picket remained for its planned duration, and further actions are a distinct possibility.



Clashes in Italian Ports over Job Cuts

Italian portworkers have clashed with police in a number of protests following the announcement of sweeping job cuts.

The job cuts constitute part of the Berlusconi government's latest round of austerity measures. The state owned ship-builder, Fincantieri, is imposing job cuts and changes to terms and conditions that will affect around a third of its employees - two and a half thousand workers.

These include forced early retirement, reduced hours and job moves. The port-

workers union have reported that this will result in the closure of the historic shipyards at Sestri and Castellammare.

In response, portworkers have staged angry protests at a number of locations, which have resulted in clashes with management and police:

* Workers clashed with riot police outside government offices in Sestri, a north-western suburb of Genoa. The protesters demanded to see the prime minister.

* At Castellammare di Stabia, near Naples, workers blockaded officials includ-

ing the mayor and police chief in their offices overnight. According to the local press, the building was damaged by demonstrators, who also decapitated a nearby statue of Garibaldi, the Italian nationalist icon.

* Fincantieri portworkers also blockaded a highway near Sorrento in Campania.

The company has so far stated that the offered changes are "take it or leave it". Negotiations are scheduled with unions for the 3rd of June.

Hyundai Strike Hit with Police Repression in South Korea

Riot police have broken up a strike and occupation of Yoosung Enterprise factory in Asan, south of Seoul.

Around 3000 riot police have attacked 500 strikers staging a sit-in at the factory, which manufactures piston rings for Hyundai, Kia, Renault and General Motors in South Korea.

The majority of occupiers have been arrested, with the remaining strikers and their supporters being dispersed by the police.

The raid marks a significant attack on a building strike wave in the South Korean automobile industry which has

seen several victories, but also follows several years of mounting repression against the workers' movement. Hyundai had already suspended production of diesel engines at its Ulsan plant as a result of the strike action creating a supply bottleneck, and had been threatening to suspend production of petrol engines as well.

However, Ulsan plant itself has been hit by strike action in recent months, initiating the strike wave leading to the Asan occupation. The end of 2010 saw a wave of strikes in which irregular workers - precarious employees with minimal rights, usually on short-term contracts

and who earn on average less than half the salary of permanent employees - took a leading role. A sit in by irregular workers turned into a full-scale occupation after the protest was attacked by security guards and company thugs. The dispute spread to Chunju and Asan, and in Asan was met with significant violence during a prior attempt to organise a sit-in.

The tight supply chains utilised by Asian car companies, in particular Hyundai, with its lean production model, have been successfully disrupted by workers taking strike action in recent years, most effectively in China.

Edinburgh's refuse workers step up resistance

The resistance of Edinburgh's refuse workers continues amid fresh offensives from the city council.

The dispute between the workers and the city council over proposed changes to working patterns, along with a significant wage cut, started in 2009 as the city council looked to cut wages to its entire manual workforce, including road workers, street cleaners and gardeners.

Faced with the pay cut, along with a substantial change to working patterns, the refuse collectors of Edinburgh organised a work-to-rule and operated an overtime ban. Now, after almost two years of struggle, the workers feel it's time to step up the action, with threats coming from the council that 100 workers could be made redundant.

Workers from across Edinburgh's refuse collection depots held a mass meeting in April, resulting in a collective decision to ballot for strike action. The Unite union that supposedly represents the workers has remained wholly inactive to the call for a strike ballot; three weeks after the event, workers are yet to hear from the union on the issue.

Unite's last three meetings with workers have been cancelled without warning or reason being offered. At one of their branch meetings workers expressed their opinion of



In 2009, a group of IWW members blockaded the lorries of scab workers in solidarity with the council workers, some of whom were later arrested.

the union's lack of action by voting overwhelmingly for the removal of the Unite convener Stephen McGregor, but he refused to step down.

Throughout the struggle, Edinburgh City Council has been hiring scab workers from elsewhere in the UK and putting them up in hotels, whilst using the national slash-and-burn cuts agenda to justify the wholesale privatisation of a large proportion of its workforce. Reports are circulating amongst workers of a meeting between Unite leaders Stephen McGregor and Sandy Smart and representatives of some of the private businesses set to get contracts if refuse collection is sold off. This collaboration would come as no surprise to the refuse collectors.

The latest move from the council has been to integrate trade and domestic waste, massively increasing the workload on the workforce without any increase in pay, whilst laying off over 20 temporary staff only to replace them with private contractors. Having been let down by Unite at every turn and facing more



threats to their workload and working conditions, Edinburgh's refuse collectors are turning increasingly to self-organisation.

The April workers' meeting produced a result even more encouraging than the overwhelming vote to ballot for strike action; it saw the workers organise the resumption of Saturday pickets attended by the workers themselves to prevent scabs leaving the depots. The duplicitous privatisation agenda of Edinburgh City Council has left many of its workers facing the prospect of increased workloads, pay cuts, and redundancy. Organised resistance is the only response.





Spain - It's our moment: May the Occupations and

Statement by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT of Spain on the May protests and occupations which have swept the country:

The countless demonstrations and occupations that are taking root in the main squares of cities and villages since the 15th are a clear example of the organizational capacity of the people when they decide to be the protagonists of their own lives; overcoming apathy, resignation, and the absence of a self-awareness with which to articulate solutions to take on and construct alternatives to the many problems that today face all of us: workers, the unemployed, students, immigrants, retirees, the precarious...

The organizational formulas developed in these mobilizations prove the viability of direct participation through assemblies for taking decisions that channel our aspirations and demands and make us overcome individualism. We become protagonists, rather than spectators of a system based in representation and delegating authority, which erases our individuality. Assemblies, a rotating

microphone, working groups, responsibility, capacity, organization, self-responsibility, coordination, involvement and visibility are the collective teeth that move our gears, capable of challenging the institutions and provoking an expectation and public debate that have eclipsed the electoral campaign and the recurring contents of the national and international press.

The illusions generated by the massive mobilizations shouldn't allow us to forget that this situation will be an object for instrumentalization, distortion, and management by political, social, and union groups; these groups are even more afraid than the government of losing the small amount of legitimacy that they have left in the minds of some citizens. Likewise, the proposals and messages emanating from these mobilizations must be analyzed in-depth. Overcoming the two-party system and gaining a modification to the Electoral Law will not make us freer, nor will it favor individual sovereignty. The demands are centered in the necessary sociopoliti-

cal changes, but there is a lack of denunciations or proposals discussing the world of work – clear and explicit denunciations of the collaborationist role of the institutional union federations, of the Labor Reform currently in force, and of the wide legal margin for implementing layoffs and destroying jobs.

Disobedience is the fundamental element that, since the 15th, has characterized all of the mobilization and expressions of protest. It is challenging and defying once again the repression and the attempts to hold back the occupations that are coming from various offices of the government and the Electoral Commissions; it is further strengthening the participation, involvement, and self-awareness of our need to organize ourselves. Disobedience is a collective pulse that demonstrates our overwhelming force when we work together and decide not to give up on our demands. It is a throb in our hearts that fuels an awakening of consciences that will allow us to react, and to extend our mobilization, our solidarity, and the overcoming



Disobedience Continue!

of the fear that neutralizes struggle.

“Cualquier noche puede salir el Sol” [“Any night the sun could rise” - a line from a popular rock song about revolution, also a reference to Madrid’s ‘Puerta del Sol’], and in Madrid’s central square we’ve already spent a week avoiding the sunset. We have materialized our practice, that it is not only possible but necessary to work together, unite, and fight to change our immediate present and to outline from our self-organization the pillars of a society without power, inequality, repression, and delegation of authority. On May 22 [Election Day], more consciously and visibly than ever, we will respond with abstention, because we ourselves have demonstrated that the politicians do not represent us, nor do we need them.

From the CNT, we will continue participating and calling for a permanent mobilization and struggle, as a means to resolve the problems in all spheres of our lives.

We continue to build at the same time as we disobey. The protest continues!

Night or day, the struggle is ours!

Secretaría de Acción Social del SP del Comité Confederal- CNT

Thanks to OliverTwister for the translation

Picture courtesy of Javi S&M CC BY-SA 2.0

Call for Solidarity with Greek Anarchists and other Revolutionaries

The Anarchist Federation (UK) echoes the call for acts of solidarity with the Greek working class and Anarchist milieu made by our comrades at the Eutopia journal and the Athens Group of Libertarian Communists.

At a demonstration in support of the General Strike on Wednesday 11th of May, police made an entirely unprovoked attack on what they perceived to be the most political radical sections of the crowd. Hundreds of tear-gas canisters were fired, many people were beaten and hundreds injured. One demonstrator, by the name of Yannis, is currently in a critical state in hospital and is at serious risk of losing his life.

This comes after months of increasing repression on the part of the State, Fascists and other far-right groups who our Greek Comrades believe to have close links with the government. There have been regular violent assaults by far-right gangs on migrants, leading to at least one death. This is the standard tactic of fascists in a time of capitalist crisis, to scapegoat ethnic minorities and violently attack them.

Far-right groups and police have also been making violent attacks on anarchist and anti-authoritarian squats in Athens, with the aim of disrupting the activity of the movement, which has been heavily involved in the resistance against the austerity measures being forced onto the Greek working class.

In Britain in recent times we have also seen the same pattern of austerity measures, increasing far-right activity in the form of the EDL, police violence against participants on anti-austerity demonstrations, and state attacks on the Anarchist milieu, such as the recent raids on Anarchist squats in the run up to the Royal Wedding.

The current crisis of Capitalism is a global crisis, and States around the world are reacting to it in similar ways, through austerity measures driven by neoliberal ideology and enforced by international institutions such as the IMF. Therefore, our resistance to it must also be international, and we must stand in solidarity with our comrades in other parts of the world, both in our words and in our actions.

We call on British Anarchists and others struggling against the current attacks by the government to write to Greek comrades, organise demonstrations and take direct action in solidarity with them at this critical moment in the history of their movement.

USA - Workers Picket Provenance Hotels in Portland & Seattle to Support San Francisco Hotel Workers

A non-traditional alliance of workers in Portland and Seattle organized a Day of Solidarity with Hotel Frank Workers on Friday, April 29.

The Portland Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Seattle Solidarity Network, and workers at Hotel Frank in San Francisco were all on the streets picketing Provenance hotels. Provenance is the hotel management company that threw the UNITE HERE Local 2 contract at Hotel Frank in the trash almost a year ago.

In Portland, the IWW picketed Hotel Lucia. Provenance has its headquarters in Portland, as well as two upper-crust boutique hotels, Hotel Lucia and Hotel deLuxe. The IWW has a long history as a militant and radical labor union, often credited with popularizing the slogan and philosophy that “An Injury to One is An Injury to All.”

In Seattle, the Seattle Solidarity Network picketed Hotel Max, another high-end Provenance boutique hotel. SeaSol, founded in 2008, is a much younger organization than the IWW, but has already established a reputation for organizing successful campaigns for workers and tenants’ rights.

And in San Francisco, Hotel Frank workers held our regular Friday afternoon picket. Hotel Frank workers declared a boycott of the hotel last September. Since then we have staged an escalating series of actions aimed at restoring our Union contract, including active picket lines and unannounced delegations to management.

Last Saturday, the day after the tri-city action, we set up a loud picket



line at Hotel Frank at 7 AM on Saturday morning, rousing the guests out of their beds a bit earlier than they were expecting, prompting a flood of complaints by guests to the beleaguered managers. Union-busting companies and guests who cross picket lines reap what they sow.

We are the room cleaners, front desk hosts, bellmen, housemen, laundry and maintenance workers who have worked at Hotel Frank for 10, 20 even 30 years. Hotel Frank is a small hotel just off Union Square. We have had a Union contract for nearly 40 years.

But in May, 2010, Wells Fargo bank bought the hotel in a foreclosure sale. The bank brought in a new management company, Provenance, and declared our contract null and void. Since then, it has been one travesty after another.

The room cleaners are cleaning many more rooms, often skipping their breaks out of necessity, and suffering debilitating injuries to boot. Everybody works an extra half-hour per day for free. Staffing has been cut to the bone. There has been no agreement about medical coverage or pensions. And the hotel has fired Union activists, including

myself, and disciplined workers on frivolous and discriminatory charges. We are waiting for a decision by a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) judge on a trial instigated by the NLRB on numerous violations of federal labor law by the hotel.

Hotel Frank workers have dug in, have stayed strong, and remain very solid and united. “This is a small group of workers facing a big bully,” said Maria Guillen of Jobs with Justice.

Lately the hotel calls the police every time we set up our picket line, but so far the only action the police have taken is to arrest an out-of-control guest who took a swing at me.

The solidarity of workers in Portland and Seattle is, of course, music to our ears. And the support we have received from other workers and community folks on our picket lines keeps us going day-by-day.

It’s a true story – An Injury to One is An Injury to All.

by Marc Norton

ANARCHIST FEDERATION STATEMENT ON THE JUNE 30TH STRIKES

Nearly a million workers will be striking and demonstrating on June 30th- workers in education, the civil service and the London underground. This is a further sign of widespread anger within the working class at the package of austerity measures unleashed by the government. We have already had the student demonstration which ended with the Millbank occupation, the huge turnout on March 26th as well as many local actions including strikes, blockades, marches.

These austerity measures are hitting us, the working class, through cuts in the NHS, fast rising unemployment rates, rounds of redundancies, whether so-called “voluntary” or compulsory, wage freezes, cuts in disability benefits, and cuts in local services as well as an attack on pensions, which is a major reason for the June 30th actions. People will have to pay more for their pensions, will have to work longer, and at the end, get a smaller pension.

It seems exciting that so many workers are coming out at the same time. However, union leaders will not go far enough, and will seek to channel our anger and dissent into weak and tokenistic forms of protest. Those of us in the striking unions have been balloted for discontinuous action - giving us the option to stage multiple strikes. We need to make sure this happens, and that these strikes are as far reaching and militant as possible including further strike action in October. But not all public sector workers are striking, and the private sector is out of the equation.

This should not be an occasion to let this go by passively. The day of action can be made more effective by

- Strengthening the strike pickets as much as possible. Everyone should support these by going to their nearest picket. This means not just workers in that sector but everyone who is affected by the cuts- other workers, school students, FE and HE students, pensioners, the unemployed
 - Refusing to cross picket lines
 - Joining the strike even if you are not a paid up member of a union
 - Organising meetings in the workplaces in the run up to June 30th to get maximum support for the strike
 - School students and further education students (where they are still at school because many terms will be ending) should turn out to support teachers and lecturers and organise their own actions
 - Most university students will have finished their academic year. However, where possible they should support the strike pickets and demonstrations where they can
 - The widest possible solidarity has to be reached between teaching staff and support staff. In all sectors, whether education, the civil service or transport the greatest involvement of those not “officially “ on strike
 - Encourage those who feel they cannot take part in supporting the strike including workers in other sectors to phone in sick on the day
 - On June 30th delegations from picket lines to visit other workplaces to encourage solidarity action. The organisation of local marches and assemblies where possible

June 30th has the potential to be a huge display of anger at the cuts that are being imposed. The more successful, the more who turn out to strike and to support, the greater the encouragement to carry on ongoing actions that don't just involve one token day.

We have no faith in the trade union leaders to successfully “lead” the fight against these austerity measures. Neither should we place trust in the Labour Party. They were the ones who started many of the measures that this government has carried on. Where Labour runs local councils it implements the cuts packages. Labour tells us that cuts are necessary, it's just that they will do it in a “kinder “ way. How many Labour MPs have you heard justifying austerity measures?

No, we have to rely on ourselves, on our own organisation. We can carry on the fight through mass assemblies where everyone can put over their view, where any delegates are mandated and subject to recall. We can win this fight against these austerity measures. All over the world we have the example of ordinary working people suddenly discovering their own self confidence and their own ability to organise and to resist, no matter what the odds.

WE CAN WIN!

New AF Pamphlet

Introduction to Anarchist Communism

Anarchist Federation



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ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists (based in Britain and Ireland, but with many contacts overseas) which aims to abolish Capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is Anarchist Communism.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the ruling class which controls all the power and wealth, and the working class which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the direct action of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world it's destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it such as working through parliament and national liberation movements (like the IRA) as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them, they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

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