The Student Organiser's Handbook

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Introduction

Why Organise?

If the university is a factory, then what does that make us? If deans and vice chancellors are the managers, and lecturers are the employees - then students are the raw material. Graduates are one of the products: trained up, compliant workers ready to be sold to the highest bidder. At least, this is what university seems to have become. Every education institution is scrambling to get "connections with industry". Even the most theoretical subjects are advertised and valued because of the "transferable skills" they teach. The irony is that while our future employers are the people who will profit from the hard work we put into learning, it is we who have to foot the bill. The most recent graduates are going to leave university with more than £50,000 debt to the government, and even more in bank loans and overdrafts. [1]

At the same time, the university is less under our own control than ever before. "Managerialism" means that the people who run universities do not see themselves as benevolent leaders, running the university democratically on behalf of staff and students, but as managers running the university like any other business - in order to make a profit. [2] Relationships with corporations go beyond just

inviting them to careers fairs every year - they now tend to have a say in course content, partner in research projects, and have the ear of management [3]. These "partners" are not just ordinary corporations but include arms dealers and oil companies. The people selling crowd control equipment to repress protest overseas are the same ones cosying up to our new managers. The companies using dirty tactics to undermine climate research in our science departments have set up camp the next building over and are recruiting graduates. Even banks are getting in on this. Santander is leading the way, and has now convinced about 70 universities in the UK alone to become "Santander Universities" with the promise of funding and internships. [4]

We are not the only people losing out through these changes. Lecturing at a university has gone from being a relatively nice job to one that involves years working for nothing, and high amounts of stress and pressure even if you do make it. [5] Illnesses due to stress in university workers is on the rise. [6] Workers who provide services such as IT, cleaning, and security are facing cuts which lead to being over-stretched and under-paid. Privatisation (outsourcing of services like IT or cafeterias to private companies) means even worse working conditions for many of the lowest-paid staff. As one anonymous worker at the University of Bristol wrote:

"Let's be frank: students will be paying more for less. Students may have glossy magazines and fancy rooms with the latest technology, but behind the scenes there is a lot of rot, and the stench is becoming more evident. The latest cuts have resulted in the closure of courses, increased staff workloads, redundancies and job downgrading. This means overworked and demoralized teachers, larger sizes of classes, and fewer contact hours for students." [7]

There is a lot to be fought for - a lot we have to gain if we can

change things. The question then is, what is to be done? To be honest, the prospects look bleak. Left-leaning political parties response to the current crisis has been the same as ever - to promise us something slightly less bad if we help them to power (despite the fact that every rise in tuition fees has been founded on broken election promises). The student unions and the NUS have generally done very little as well. They will organise tame action and useless negotiations when their bureaucracy is pushed from below, but otherwise tend to do nothing actually useful. It is up to us, then. If the university is going to get better, if we are going to stop the government loading us with more debt, then we must organise ourselves - from the grassroots - in order to take militant, direct action on a mass scale.

This is not impossible - only difficult. This decade, a mass movement of students in Germany successfully reversed the introduction of tuition fees in their country. Likewise in Quebec in 2012, people organised a 'Student Strike', with thousand upon thousands of students walking out of class for months on end. Along with other action, this managed to stop a hike in tuition fees. These are just a couple of examples, but the point is - it is possible to mobilise students to take militant action. 'Student apathy' is not an immovable barrier, just a temporary sleep that people can be roused from.

The idea of this guide is to provide some pointers to the student organisers of the future - so they can learn from the experience and mistakes of the people who've written it. But we are not experts - no one really 'knows' what they are doing. The difference between someone who gets active and organises, and someone who sits back because they "aren't the right person for the job" is just this - confidence. The only way to learn to be a good organiser is to get out there and start doing it.
We are the ones we've been waiting for!

What does Being a Student Organiser Involve?

The term 'student organiser' is used to get away from the idea that most students are inactive and need a few superhero 'activists' to save the day for them.[8] It is also used to get away from the idea that there are 'student leaders' who need to tell everyone else what to do. Everyone should be concerned by how managers, corporations, and the government are ruining education (not to mention our lives), and everyone can and should be resisting them.

To us, organising at university means:

- Helping students with radical politics to find each other
- Taking direct action to improve student life in and outside of the university
- Educating each other and persuading more people to fight back
- Creating spaces for 'direct democracy' where students can get together to plan action and take back control of their university
- Acting in 'solidarity' with the struggles of university workers and people outside of the university
- Building a 'culture of resistance' on campus

The long-term goal is to get the majority of students to organise themselves based on the principles of "direct democracy", using mass direct action to make social change. Of course, this won't happen all at once and we can't make it happen just by ourselves. We have to start smaller - and this may mean taking action as a minority along the way. We learn by doing after all, and most people won't get involved in direct action until they see examples of it working right in front of them. As such this guide is divided

into five parts:

1. **Small Group Organising** - covers the basics of starting a group from scratch, holding meetings, keeping it going
2. **Events and Demonstrations** - how to organise and publicise events and demonstrations
3. **Organising Your Department or Faculty** - a guide from some students in Quebec about how they organised in their universities during the student strikes of 2012
4. **Occupations** - a 101 on occupying university buildings
5. **Appendices** - contains useful resources, contacts, and links to further information

Some subjects are not covered here because there is a lot of information on them already, or because the authors don't know enough. So we highly recommend you also read up on things like small group direct actions (eg blockading), first aid, theory/history, etc. The focus is on organising at universities in the UK. School students might also want to read "How to Organize a Student Revolution" by Jeremy Hammond [9]

Finally, this guide will only continue to be useful if it stays up to date and grows - so please consider adding contributions from your own experiences! There's no copyright, so you're welcome to reproduce, reprint, and rewrite it whatever way you like. See the website http://studenthandbook.ourproject.org for the latest updates and contact information.

Notes

[1] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-14488312

[2] As an example of the effects this is having, see: https://bristolalternativevoice.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/back-to-the-future-humanist-values-in-higher-education/; also https://bristolalternativevoice.wordpress.com/2011/05/23/routinisation-of-work-2/

[3] for example, the website for University of Bristol faculty of engineering currently boasts "Industry is also deeply involved in what our students are taught. All of the departments in the Faculty have an Industrial Advisory Board, formed by leading industrialists." Note that members of the IAB at the time of writing include arms dealer Thales. See the report "Study War no More" for a wider look at the involvement of arms dealers in UK universities - http://www.studywarnomore.org.uk/

[4] http://www.santander.co.uk/uk/santander-universities

[5] https://bristolalternativevoice.wordpress.com/2011/12/09/a-career-in-academia-twenty-years-of-schooling-and-theyll-put-you-on-the-day-shift-2/

[6] https://bristolalternativevoice.wordpress.com/2012/03/14/workloads-and-yet-more-workloads/

[7] https://bristolalternativevoice.wordpress.com/2011/11/27/open-letter-to-the-students/

[8] See the text "Give up Activism" published in Do or Die issue 9, for a discussion on "the activist mentality" – http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/activism.htm

[9] http://www.school-survival.net/kit/revolution.php

Chapter 1

Small Group Organising

1.1 Basics

This guide is written by student organisers who started out with no experience and learnt by making countless mistakes and false starts. The idea behind this handbook is to support the next generation of student activists to not only avoid many of the mistakes we made, but to actively build and strengthen our movement. Hopefully, this will also serve to "de-mystify" the process of organising, and give more people the confidence to take part.

The important point to remember in all of this is that none of us are "experts". The only real difference between people that "make things happen" and those that don't is confidence and attitude. If you think things through carefully, and keep your plans simple, it is actually quite hard to do things "wrong" at all. There is no reason that your ideas are any better/worse than anyone else's. Though of course, people who talk loudly and dominate meetings can make us forget this sometimes!

1.1.1 Getting Started

The type of groups or organisations you build at your university or college should depend on the circumstances you are in. Ultimately we're working towards a mass movement, but in the short term this normally means organising a small group of people and building from there. If there are no groups already – no anti-cuts group, no anarchist society, no feminist society etc. – then starting from scratch can be a daunting task. Be encouraged though – if there is no radical left voice on your campus, you can bet there are other people just waiting for something to happen. Persuading people can be hard – but finding them is a little easier. Here's some tips:

- Find a buddy – one other person who you can work with, even if they are less committed than you. Starting out alone can be done but it's much harder. So, talk to your friends and your course-mates about politics and conditions at your university and hopefully you'll find people thinking along similar lines. If not, try your student union or existing student societies.
- Research what is already happening, before you start. Get contact details for any existing left-leaning student groups, sympathetic student union officers etc. Even if events don't sound that interesting or radical, they are an opportunity to run into like-minded people looking for something better
- Once you've done some research, the final step is to just go for it and organise an event. If there's something people are already frustrated about then this could be a meeting, otherwise it should be something more social like a film-showing or a discussion. Put posters up everywhere, and ask any sympathetic student groups to put out messages about it. Don't worry if there aren't many people at your first event – the main point is to find some people who you

can work with

- Be prepared. Before your first event, book a meeting space for a week or two in the future, and bring a sign-up sheet to get people's contact details. If it goes well then at the end you should announce that you'd like to organise more things like this in future, perhaps start a political group, etc, etc, and pass the sign-up sheet around for anyone who wants to hear more or be involved. Make to speak with every attendee, find out what they want and what they are passionate about – take this into account when deciding on the next event. Congratulations – you just started a group!

Starting to organise on your campus should mean you are talking to lots of people. This can be intimidating. Remember to listen to people when you do this – it's far more effective to say "what do you think about..." than it is to just say "we should do something about this! Here's what I think we should do!", because as well as possibly having good ideas, people like to be listened to!

1.1.2 Growing a Network

If a small group is to grow into something bigger, one of your tasks needs to be 'networking'. To understand this, it's useful to imagine your group's influence as several 'concentric circles' – with active members at the centre; student sympathisers and staff allies next; and then the rest on the outside (see Figure 1.1)

The point of networking is partly to draw people further into the 'circles', and partly to make the most of people where they are. For example, one thing you should aim to do is establish contact with staff trade union reps and militant members of staff – drawing them from your 'everyone' circle into your 'allies and sympathisers' circle. Another thing that's important is not just talking to the
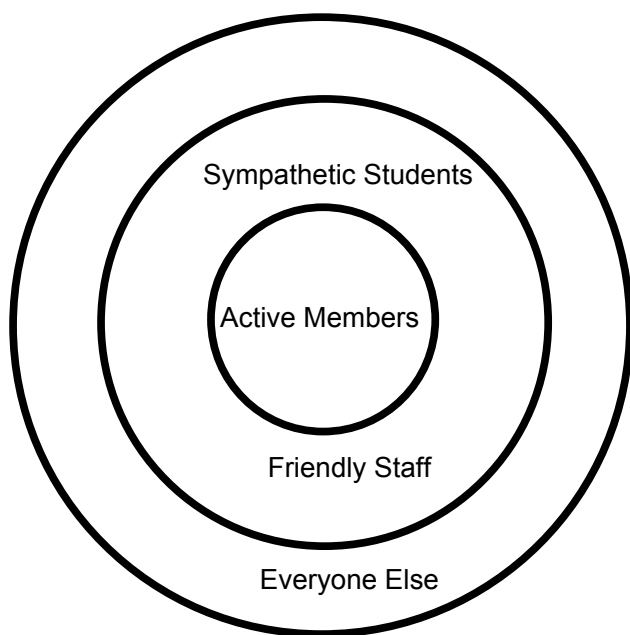
Figure 1.1: concentric circles

'inner circle' – sympathisers may not want to come to all your meetings but they can still provide invaluable support. Some of them will have networks of their own. So, make sure that you have a way to keep them up to date with what you are doing too.

Tips for networking

- Keep a list of contact details for friendly journalists, staff members, student union officers, activist groups, community organisations, etc. Make it available to everyone in your group (but don't let a list of militant staff fall into the hands of management!)
- Keep a list of friendly student groups, Facebook pages, email

lists, etc. These can be used for publicising events.

- Set up a web presence for your group - blog, Facebook, Twitter, etc - and keep it up to date! This gives people another way to contact you and makes your group seem more active. A blog is also a place you can accumulate information, history, and ideas to refer back to later.

- If you use email lists, never use just one for everything. Instead, create two. One 'announce' list for announcing events, meetings etc. This list will be public, and you should sign up as many people to as possible (ie. your middle circle). The other should be a 'discussion' email list to which you sign up people who are most keen or active. This can be used for planning, sending out minutes etc. The point of this is to involve people who want to be involved, and give people who aren't ready for that yet a way of keeping up-to-date with what you are doing, without flooding them with too much information.

- Have a sign-up sheet for the email lists at every event you run – this makes it easier to sign up and get involved. If appropriate, announce your next meeting at the end, so interested people can come along.

- Use multiple ways to keep in contact with people, rather than relying on just one. Publicise your events using posters and leaflets as well as online. Use Facebook, email, and Twitter, rather than just one of those. Talk to your coursemates face-to-face. Host stalls to 'get out there' and have discussions with people.

- Make a special effort to welcome new people to your meetings, email lists etc. Always remind people in meeting call-outs that new people are more than welcome, and that you try to make meetings friendly, inclusive, and not just dominated by a few people.

- Have a public 'safer spaces' policy and statement about how

you are going to make your group more inclusive. It may sound like a small gesture but this kind of thing can be the difference between someone writing off your group, and someone getting actively involved. Many like-minded groups have such policies that you can easily adapt to fit your purpose.

1.1.3   Finances

Students normally manage to get a lot for free - using anything from university resources to shoplifting. However, you're still likely to need money for something at some point. Try to keep your finances managed in a democratic way - delegate someone (a 'treasurer') to hold money for the group. Keep it in a locked money box with a book listing every time money goes in or out. Fund raising should be done in a way that is fair too - events can be donation or "no-one turned away for lack of funds". If you are fund raising be clear how you intend to spend the money, and don't pressure people to donate. If you have membership fees, make it so that people can opt-out if they are really skint (or do it on a sliding scale - the more you earn, the more you pay).

For more on managing finances check out Financial Literacy for Co-operatives from Seeds for change - http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/finance

Fundraising Ideas

- Pass a hat around, or bucket shake at meetings and events
- Take donations (eg via crowdfunding)
- DJ/club nights at local venues

- Benefit gigs (bands, comedians, cabarets etc)
- Quiz nights
- Film nights
- Accessing grants (in the UK, try the "Edge Fund")
- Sell food and drink at your events
- Sell pin badges, stickers and other small items.

1.1.4   Be organised!

"Just because we're anarchists doesn't mean we can't have a conservative filing system!" – Overheard at a Bristol University occupation, 2010

Being a student organiser means that it is really important to be well-organised. This doesn't really need a whole sub-section to it's own, but it deserves mentioning! Distributing meeting minutes and decisions quickly is vital for keeping a group going. Always give people notice of meetings, events, etc. well in advance, and send reminders just beforehand. Holding an archive of meeting minutes (for example, in an online folder), means that people can easily look back to see what was decided and what the main action points were – this prevents a situation where the students who've been involved longer have power over the group, because they remember meetings the others weren't even at. Archiving of posters, demo-reports, materials, etc is also really useful – it will make it far easier to produce things in future, and will mean that any work you do will have more effect even long after you've left university or college. Finally, keep a list of contacts, meeting places, and maybe even lessons learned from each event you organise. Having this information accessible not only means that less experienced organisers feel more included, but it also saves time and means that everyone can take on work that is often left on the shoulders

of people who've been around the longest.

1.1.5 Security

If you do well and your group becomes a force for change on campus, people are going to start taking an interest in stopping you. Your institution's management don't want dissent at 'their' establishment, and police already actively monitor and disrupt grassroots organisers. Over the past few years, we have seen students considered to be organisers earmarked for expulsion at some universities. One guy in Cambridge even got suspended for reading a poem. Future employers may also be interested in identifying potential trouble-makers. There has been a lot written about this in-depth (see the resources section!) but there are a few simple tips that we can give, which might have saved people a lot of hassle over the years if they had been followed!

1. Use your group name, group Facebook etc. for anything public (eg. organising events) – rather than the names of individuals.
2. The real full names and contact details of members should never appear in print or online in relation to your group. First names or fake names should be enough if anything.
3. Student societies normally need a few named people down as 'secretary', 'president' etc. These people could get legal trouble if your society organises any demonstrations. So, consider calling the organisation something different and not formally linked to you when you are running a protest or action. (for example, in Bristol we created the group 'Reclaim Education' to run a week of action, and used our 'Bristol Left' society to book rooms).
4. When talking to the press, give a fake name – it is highly

unlikely they will check. This practise also helps weed out "career activists" and people who just want their moment in the limelight.

5. Make sure it isn't always the same person speaking in public or talking to management. They will get treated like the ringleader even if they aren't.

6. Do not discuss anything 'sensitive' (eg breaking the law) over the phone or over normal email. Leave no written record and discuss in person only with people you trust. Assume university-run email can be read by management.

7. However 'friendly' a cop or security guard may seem, anything they overhear you saying will be noted and passed on. They can be very skilled at getting information out of you via 'friendly' conversation. The best thing to do is to simply walk away, or say nothing.

8. Not everyone is who they say they are. Students in Cambridge recently recorded the police asking someone to go to meetings and spy for them! So don't share risky information unless you have to (as an example: "hey everyone look at the hat I got off a copper at yesterdays protest!" is definitely a bad idea). Action plans should not be shared with anyone who isn't involved and trusted, nor should people ask or expect to be told about them.

9. Don't get paranoid. Taking simple steps to protect your security is worth it – but if they don't work it isn't the end of the world. After all it's better to take some risks rather than never doing anything at all. Court cases can be won and expulsions can be challenged – it just takes a lot of effort which could be used for organising instead!

1.1.6 Internal Politics

Student groups should be run by the people active in them – not lead by one any person or 'steering committee', and not instructed from the outside by a political party. Positions of power regularly get taken up by people who will abuse them for their own gain and there are countless examples of this happening in left-wing groups. They also encourage apathy – if not everyone has an equal say and equal responsibility, not everyone will want to pull their own weight. Finally, positions of power disproportionately get taken up by white men – which leads to misrepresentation and bias. Not being instructed from outside is also a practical principle – the people who know best how to organise students are students themselves. If people who have no stake in your success have a say in your actions, they will be far more likely to make bad judgements.

As well as this, those of us who are marginalised by society often get excluded from resistance groups in the exact same way. Since we are socialised to exclude people, our groups need to make an active effort to be welcoming, to make sure everyone in the group feels involved, to address barriers to people participating, and to empower marginalised people to challenge internal oppression. This is not simple and will require self-education and action, in addition to policies and ideas.

Exactly how to put this into practise is up to you, but the following ideas may help. . .

- Use 'direct democracy'. Direct democracy is where all decisions are made by the group (eg. by discussing and voting on each issue), rather than simply voting for somebody to make decisions on your behalf.
- While decisions should be made by the group, some tasks

need to be done by one person or a subgroup. For this, you can use "delegates", instead of representatives. The main difference between delegates and representatives is that delegates are 'fully mandated' and 'instantly recallable'. 'Fully mandated' just means that they are given a clear 'mandate' that tells them what they are supposed to do in any situation, rather than them making important decisions on what is best for the group (for example, an occupation might delegate someone to negotiate with university security, mandating them to ask for other people to be allowed access, not to discuss leaving, but giving them some leeway to discuss fire safety). 'Instantly recallable' just means that if they stop following their mandate, the group can easily reign them in and replace them straight away, without waiting for any kind of election term to expire.

- People who are at risk of being marginalised should have a full voice, and spaces they control where they can discuss any issues that arise. This could be through relationships with external groups (for example, a feminist society on campus), or through internal ones (for example, the Black Power Caucus and other 'liberation campaigns' that are part of the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts)

- Make sure you run discussions and events about things that affect groups who are normally oppressed, rather than just things that affect all students.

- Run self-education sessions, film screenings, discussion groups and reading groups – sharing knowledge is important for preventing a few people from dominating the group. This should include education on how people get marginalised internally and in society.

- Make an explicit statement on how you intend to be inclusive, and consider setting up a grievance procedure and safer-spaces policy if your group is large enough for this to

be practical. Policies are not enough on their own, but they signal intent and make it clear that the group is open to being challenged and improved.

- If you are one of the groups of people that tend to exclude others from society (for example, white people, men, the rich and privileged), you must start with listening to excluded group's criticisms, and trust that they are being honest and know what they are talking about. Make space for criticism and then listen and make changes, without making excuses or dismissing people. This is critical in building an inclusive group. A culture of inclusivity in turn is critical to building a sincere culture of resistance.

1.1.7 Public Speaking

At some point or another, someone from your group will need to do some public speaking...

- If you are speaking to a big group, make yourself heard. Hold your head up high (talk to the crowd, not the ground!), be loud and clear.
- Try to speak slower than normal, even if it feels stupid to start with. You need to talk slower when speaking to a crowd, but nerves make you talk even faster than normal! Speaking slower will help you to stay calm.
- Don't be intimidated by long pauses if you slip up. Pauses are always much longer in your head. In fact, use lots of pauses and spaces between points! Pauses add emphasis, allow you to collect your thoughts, and helps people to listen and internalise what you are saying.
- Practise by yourself and in front of friends, to get your confidence up. Time yourself so you know how long your speech

will last.

- Try not to just read off of paper – it's hard to read quickly, difficult to sound interesting, and it makes you harder to hear because you end up speaking into your notes instead of the crowd. Instead, have cue cards with your key points written in big letters.
- Consider breaking what you are saying down into a series of key points. As you speak you can use your fingers to keep track of each point. Not only does it help you stay on track, but it also helps you to present your ideas more clearly.
- Memorize your first and last sentence so you start confidently and don't trail off at the end.
- Write down facts and figures – these are hard to memorize and they are useful for being convincing.
- Illustrate your points with examples and analogies, to help people understand. Stories with people in them give the crowd something to connect to, and keep up interest.
- Use 'power lines' – short sentences you have memorised that sound good and which you can emphasize and repeat.
- Remember that perfection is not when you have nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away. Apart from examples and stories, don't waffle! A little known secret is that if you finish more quickly than people expect, most of them will be glad! Being able to go on for ages isn't a badge of honour or status symbol – it actually makes people like you more if you just get to the point. The reason politicians DON'T do this is that they don't actually have any real points worth saying!
- Use short and simple language. Long technical words are not only hard to hear but confuse and tire people, making you hard to follow
- Watch your habits – umming and aring is bad. Try to use

'thoughtful' pauses instead. As is strange fidgeting! (I'm sure you can think of some lecturers here!) Unless you are confident, it is best to stand still. Know where your hands are (eg holding cue cards) – don't let them off on their own! At the same time, focus on your message and avoid being overly self-concious of any 'bad' habits.

- Be respectful, at least to your audience. Not saying 'Thank you for inviting me to speak', 'Thank you for listening', etc. **can** come across as cool and informal, BUT can also backfire. If in doubt, be polite and courteous.

1.1.8 Newsletters

Setting up a radical university newsletter can be a great way to grow your group and reach lots of people. There are already guides online for setting up newsletters, for example:

- Guide to Setting Up a Local Newsletter: http://www.libcom.org/organise/media/articles/local-newsletter-how-to.php
- More Technical Guide: http://www.libcom.org/organise/media/articles/campus-newspaper-how-to.php

From personal experience, there are a couple of things worth adding. First, running a university newsletter is a lot of hard work. Just getting something out is easy – but putting all the effort in to publicise, format, and distribute it, so that it actually has an impact, not to mention producing it regularly, isn't so simple! Second, if you want to get staff involved, one thing that has worked well is to time it so that it can be a collective response to a grievance. For example, if the newsletter is going to be

released after or before a strike, staff will find it easier to see the point and will be more likely to read and engage.

1.1.9 Theory

"There is nothing so practical as good theory" – Kurt Lewin

There have been many good texts written about organisation and small groups, as well as on dealing with some of the problems that can arise. Below is a small selection, if you are interested. . .

- "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" is a classic text on organisation by Jo Freeman, as is "The Tyranny of Tyranny" by Cathy Levine, which was a response to it – http://www.afed.org.uk/publications/short-texts/20-untying-the-knot.html
- The blog "From There to Here" has a series of articles on theories behind organising and growing small groups, for example this one on size limits – http://totheretohere.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/small-group-size-limits-and-self.html
- "The new radicals in the multiversity and other SDS writings on student syndicalism" (there are problems with this text, but it is included here as it presents some useful lessons from the student movement of the '60s) – http://www.libcom.org/library/new-radicals-multiversity-other-sds-writings-student-syndicalism-carl-davidson
- "The Fundamental Requirement for Organised Safer Space" by 'Floaker' explains the idea of "Safer Spaces" and why we need them – http://floaker.net/2013/03/31/organised-safer-space-2/

- The "Master Suppression Techniques", publicised by feminist and social scientist Berit Ås, are a set of behaviours that tend to be used to oppress people within groups – https://theviolentminority.wordpress.com/2013/06/02/how-to-oppress-people-in-meetings/
- Why women-only groups are sometimes necessary – http://londonfeministnetwork.org.uk/home/why-women-only – also some frequently asked questions on the issue – https://itisiwhowillit.wordpress.com/2011/11/20/women-only-spaces-are-not-sexist-spaces/
- Sexism in the Anarchist movement – https://web.archive.org/web/20111128140656/http://www.anarcha.org/sallydarity/SexismintheAnarchistMovement.htm
- Community Support Around Intimate Violence – https://www.activist-trauma.net/assets/files/community%20support%20&%20intimate%20violence.pdf (this is something that should not happen in radical groups, or anywhere. But sometimes it does, and we need to be ready to deal with it as a community and not just ignore it. This zine contains some thoughts and ideas about what to do)
- "The Progressive Plantation – Racism Inside White Radical Social Change Groups" by Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin analyses racism within social change groups and gives advice on fighting it (NOTE – can't find where to get a copy. It is reproduced in the latest edition of his book "Anarchism and the Black Revolution", available via http://burningbooksbuffalo.com)

1.2 Sustaining Resistance

Even when everything else is done brilliantly, the student movement often fails to achieve it's potential because it isn't 'sustainable'. People get tired and drop out, and we fail to keep our momentum going, so great protests and actions end up leading to nothing. If anything this is the most incomplete section of this guide – sustainability could have whole books written about it, and there are many conflicting and competing ideas about it out there. More importantly this is something that most movements do not do well – how to be sustainable is a question that still has not been properly answered.

This all does assume that the organisation you are part of is something that needs to keep going, that needs to sustain itself. A similar problem to sustainability is when groups keep going with no purpose – all action and organisation taking place simply for the sake of surviving. No group or project is an end in itself – if it becomes this, once the reason for it has gone, it needs to be allowed to die! Spending energy on keeping a project going can actually stop anything new growing in its place.

1.2.1 General points

- When starting something new, always ask: "do we have the time, people, energy, and resources for this?". For long projects this will need to be re-assessed regularly
- We only have so many resources, so much time, and so many people. So we need to use all of these as effectively as possible. This needs to be taken into account when we decide on our actions, general direction, even group structure. Don't

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just do things because they are 'right', but because your actions are also the most effective way to have an impact.

- Make an effort to bring in new people – and when they come, make them feel welcome and try to offer some kind of an introduction. Don't just assume that they know everything about the issues you are working on, or how your group makes decisions. Joining a political group for the first time can be very intimidating because everyone seems to know so much more than you do
- Feeling involved is vital for keeping people in a group – if they don't feel ownership of it then they will drift away
- Accept that there will be highs and lows. If you've gone from a period where loads was happening to one where everything is a lot quieter, it does not mean you have done something wrong – cycles are natural
- Use 'low' periods to your advantage. Since there are always going to be times when activity dies down for a bit, don't stress about trying to keep everything going. Instead, use the time you have to reflect, and run events where your group can socialise and relax together
- When you do something, do it WELL. For example, a demonstration needs more than just good publicity and to be good on the day, but also needs good reporting to others, a plan to build momentum from it, space to debrief and learn lessons, involvement and training of newer people in the group, and care afterwards for anyone stressed-out. These things all MULTIPLY the effects of an action
- Reflect regularly – especially about what you are trying to achieve. Just reacting to situations is tiring, and giving time to discuss strategy makes people feel involved
- Education and discussion of ideas and facts is important – if only a few people have a good grasp of the issues that you

are struggling over, the group will not last when they leave, and they will find a disproportionate amount of the work falling to them

- Try to balance action and organisation. Action is as important as education and discussions for learning and for bringing in new people. On the other hand you need to make sure you aren't **just** doing action. Too much organisation and too much action are both dangerous – the one causes stagnation, the other causes burn-out
- Society teaches us not to take initiative ourselves – everything has to be done through the 'proper channels' and with general approval. This means that there is a tendency to treat our organisations like a bureaucracy – referring anything we want to do back to meetings, and expecting our organisations to have a 'position' on everything. This can sometimes lead to divisions (since we're never going to agree on absolutely everything), and definitely leads to long meetings – debating things that no-one needs permission to do in the first place. A solution is to make space for autonomous action – sometimes it is better to just do things without linking them to a group you are part of. Accepting that not all action has to take place within our organisations means that they can focus on their real purpose, and hence last longer
- Cooperate with other groups when useful. Cooperation for it's own sake is just a waste of time and resources, but often it's helpful. Link with groups that have similar politics in your city and at other universities to share resources. It may be that you are working on similar campaigns, so you can share resources and ideas. Also try to work with other groups on campus around issues you agree on. This is really hard to do – you need to both maintain your integrity, and find common ground for action – but it has incredible potential when it works!

1.2.2 The Personal is Political

- Take care of yourself! The whole point of organising is to make our lives better – not worse. Just because we want to make the world better for everyone else as well, does not mean that our own lives aren't important. So don't let organising and action get in the way of doing things that you like, and spending time with those that you love

- Watch out for "burn-out". When you've been involved in emotionally demanding situations for too long, you can end up entering into a state of "burn-out" where life goes sour, you lose your spark, you stop having fun and you stop being fun to be with. There are some great resources out there already on understanding and dealing with this, for example the "Sustainable Activism and Avoiding Burn-Out" flyer from Activist Trauma Support. From personal experience, the most important advice is to pace yourself and to take a long break RIGHT AWAY if you start to experience this

- The previous advice about letting things fails also applies on an individual level. If you are always depended on to do things, NOT doing them may be the only way to get people to realise that there is a problem!

- It is best to under-commit – volunteer for less work than you can do. That way, you can help out when emergencies happen or if others can't do what they have said they will, without over-stretching yourself

- If you can't do something that you have committed to, then say so ASAP. Life is unpredictable, so we should not be ashamed to admit that we are not able to do something! On the other hand, keeping it quiet and just not doing what you have volunteered to do can be really harmful to the group – the sooner you let them know the easier it will be for them

to make new plans

- Take regular breaks – political work can be addictive!
- Set boundaries for yourself and stick to them – sometimes you need to say no to things, however important they are

(disclaimer – none of the advice here should be seen as an alternative to getting support for mental health issues from trained professionals)

1.2.3   Sharing out the Work

It often happens in a group that a few people end up doing most of the work and taking most of the initiative – for example, calling all of the meetings and producing all of the publicity. This is a complicated situation. On the one hand, those doing all the work feel exploited because they are pulling other people's weight in addition to their own. On the other hand, everyone else feels like they are at the bottom of an 'informal hierarchy', where they are excluded from taking initiative and doing work due to their lack of experience and confidence. If this continues for too long, then the 'perceived hierarchy' becomes a real one. Because the active minority always have to take initiative, they have effective control of the organisation. Because the inactive majority do little work, they have less access to information and have less practical understanding of how the group is structured, and so have no power to change it. When this happens it is important to make it visible by raising the issue at meetings and talking about it – but often it turns out that talk is not enough. If you find yourself at the top of one of these 'informal hierarchies', the best thing to do is to just stop. It is not good for you to take on a disproportionate share of the work and others have no right to expect that of you. If you are lucky then other people will pick up the slack – sometimes

these situations come about because no space was left for other people in the first place. If you are unlucky, then things will start to not get done – which sometimes needs to happen if people are to realise what's happening. This can actually have the effect of making people feel more involved with the organisation! If you are at the bottom of an informal hierarchy, the important thing to do is to assert yourself – you have as much right to be there as anyone else, and that should be respected! Take active steps to volunteer for tasks, and demand that space be made for others to take on roles in the group. Hopefully this will be enough – most of the time people are more than happy to share out work! If you do meet with resistance, you will have to balance whether it is worth conspiring from within to take back control of the group, or simply leaving to make a better one – both of these options are good, in different situations.

1.2.4   Collective Burn-Out

"Burn-out" is something that tends to get seen as an individual problem – someone overcomits or cannot handle pressure, so they get worn out and can no longer be effective. However, more often than not, burn-out is a collective problem. When one person gets it and drops out, then more pressure is placed on everyone still involved – if more people then drop out as a result then you can end up with a cycle which ends with everyone burning out the group falling apart. The causes are also often a result of collective practises too – when we try to do more than is actually possible, and when we do not take care of those who are having a hard time,burn-out is inevitable.

- Make your group accessible and inclusive – often work gets put on to a few people because those who would have vol-

unteered could not get to meetings or felt sidelined

- Talk about mental health as a group. "I'm too tired and stressed" and "I don't have the energy for that" are things we should be comfortable saying. From experience, it takes a lot of courage to be the first person to say this – but that is often all it takes to get everyone talking!
- Keep a pace and level of activity that is tolerable – frantic work around a one-off event or protest is ok, but will need to be followed by some time for recuperation. Relaxed social events are good for this. We cannot give 110% all of the time!
- Try to create a good 'group culture'. New members will not stay if the group is not nice to be in!
- "Checking in" often about how we are feeling helps to set a sensible pace and create a good group culture. This is can happen formally in meetings (for example, as a "go-round"), or informally by just remembering to ask people how they're doing
- Try to have some small, clear, achievable goals as a group. With big projects, try splitting them up into some intermediate steps so you get some sense of achievement as you go. Be careful of taking on long projects – these drain energy and are harder to sustain than lots of quick, small campaigns
- Celebrate your successes, and show gratitude to people for the work they do
- Ensure that people volunteer for things willingly and no-one feels put on the spot
- Try to share resources with other student groups, on your campus and others, in order to reduce your workload
- Get connected with "Movement Support" organisations, like defendant solidarity groups – some UK-based ones are listed in the appendices. These groups have experience that will

be very helpful to you when you need them, and they often need volunteers too

- Avoid the temptation to do everything yourself. Too many organisers who think they have an exciting new idea end up reinventing the wheel. Before you start on a project, look around to see if anyone has done something similar and try to work with them first

1.2.5 Student Specific Issues

It is really hard to maintain momentum in student organising. The structure of student life, of holidays and exams, puts 'speed bumps' in the way of our movement. Three of the problems commonly faced will be looked-at here, along with some ideas for dealing with them

The Winter Problem

When big student protests in the UK have happened in the first term (for example, the 2010 protests and occupations against fees), they have not lasted through the winter. Around winter time, people often have exams to study for, and afterwards the pace of work at universities tends to pick up a bit. Just having the few weeks holiday seems to slow momentum too. Another problem is that after the first term, people tend to start thinking about student union elections (if elections are in the second term) – which means that anyone who is helping with an election campaign has far less time to give to organising.

One solution to this problem may be to just "bite the bullet" and accept that more is going to happen in the first term anyway. That

means to work most effectively, it is necessary to start planning things in the summer, before term even starts. Having some events planned before the first week is normally a good idea anyway – that's when lots of freshers will be looking for things to get involved in, and generally the first month of their term is the best time to get them in (less workload!). Another idea might be to lower your sights a bit – try and have a planning meeting before you break up for winter holidays (to make the most of any momentum you have), and plan a few lower-key actions and events for the next term. That way you can keep things happening, even if it's less than before. However, it is possible to make big things happen in the second term – a good example being occupy Sussex – who held an occupation and national demonstration on their campus in the spring of 2013.

The Summer Problem

During the summer, most students go home to another city or go on holiday, and it's very difficult to organise anything. This isn't a bad thing - it's probably good for us to have some kind of enforced break from organising and studying once a year. However, there is one issue which does deserve a mention. Knowing that the opposition will be away, universities will sometimes try to make controversial decisions quietly over the summer. So by all means have a break, but try to keep some contact with supportive staff and student union officers over the summer, so you aren't surprised when you get back!

It's also worth making sure you have one last meeting before everyone starts to leave - which isn't easy as some courses finish at different times. Decide when this meeting will be before exams even start and publicise it well in advance in case people decide to go home early. You should aim to reflect back on the year (espes-

cially the positive stuff you have achieved), and make some basic plans for the next one (when the first meeting will be, how to plan the freshers' fair, etc). Make sure you leave some time afterwards for celebrating and socialising too!

The Three-Year Problem

Most students are only at a university for three-four years at a time. This means that, once you have spent years nurturing a group and building connections, it will already be time to leave. It is extremely hard to build a group that gains new members and keeps going with this kind of turn-over. Becoming 'political' and getting the confidence to organise is not something that happens overnight. But it is vital that our groups do survive – without any collective memory, we will be doomed to constantly reinvent the wheel and repeat the same mistakes as those who have gone before us. Here are some ideas that might help:

- Put lots of energy into new people: run education/discussion sessions, share skills and encourage them to take on roles in the group
- Try to welcome 'apolitical radicals' as well as people who already have a clear idea of what their politics are. Most students haven't quite thought things through enough to define themselves as anything, even if they are sympathetic
- Involve staff & phd students in your group. These tend to stick around a lot longer than undergraduates and can provide much needed stability
- Make contact with former student organisers who still live nearby – they might be able to give advice and contacts
- Be disciplined with passing on information and resources – details of contacts, posters that can be re-used, etc will all

be useful after you have left!

- Consider working on issues that go beyond the 3 year university course, that can involve school students, graduates, etc. That way people will still be able to contribute even after they have left

1.3   Meetings

Lets be honest, meetings are often dull and exhausting – but they are necessary if you want to get things done, and doing meetings well is really important. If they are undemocratic, if people don't feel involved, or if meetings last forever without anything getting done, then people won't join. However, welcoming meetings where everyone shares ideas and things get done: those can be inspiring! Sadly, there's no simple solution that will work in every situation. In a meeting of three people it would be weird to use voting or have a 'chairperson', and you'd expect everyone to speak. Compare that to a meeting of 30 – it would make the meeting unbearably long if everyone got a chance to speak to the whole group on every issue, and you would need a formal structure just to make it work. So be flexible, and don't worry if it takes a while for your group to figure out what works best.

1.3.1   Holding a Meeting

Use a facilitator (or 'chair')

The role of a facilitator is to make sure the meeting runs smoothly. This could mean taking hands when more than one person wants

to talk at once, introducing the agenda, etc. How much the facilitator has to do depends on the decision-making structure you want to use – some groups also give the facilitator a more active role of helping the group make decisions, and getting the best possible contribution from everyone there. In this case the facilitator should reflect back to the group about what they're saying and where their main differences are, point out if a few people are doing all the talking, and encourage people to speak who have been quiet. Since the person who is chairing or facilitating a meeting has influence over it, it's important that they try to be as neutral as possible – they shouldn't raise points themselves or respond to other people's ideas unless it is urgent. If you're discussing something difficult or controversial, consider bringing in someone from outside to facilitate the meeting and if not, definitely pick someone who is good at diffusing tension and isn't a big supporter of one side or another. See the contacts in Appendix A for a list of groups who provide training in facilitating meetings.

Have an agenda

Having a list of topics that will get discussed and doing them in turn makes a meeting more focussed

- This should be put out in advance so people have a chance to think about things beforehand (it's hard to make good points on something you've only just heard about)
- It should be printed out or written up so everyone at the meeting can see it
- To maximise people's involvement, get the agenda out early and ask for contributions to it, making it clear how to get items added
- If meetings regularly run over time, try setting a time limit

for each item on the agenda

- If this is a group that meets regularly, a 'standing agenda' can be useful – to makes sure that things like report-backs, etc always happen

Assign action points

When one of your decisions requires an action, this should be delegated to one or more people, and written down in the minutes as an "action point". The best action points are clear, and have a time scale (eg "Sam will design a poster for our event and send it round for people to look at before our next meeting"). Make sure tasks get shared out fairly – not all the action points should go to just one or two people! Sharing action points can help with this if people aren't confident enough to take on tasks alone, but there should always be one person to bottom-line a task. Otherwise no-one assigned to it knows whether they should be the one to take initiative and start or not, so it ends up not being done. Finally, each meeting should have a 'report back' stage, where the actions points from last time are looked over and the people assigned to them report back.

Take minutes

'Minutes' sound bureaucratic and dull, right? Only, when you get home, suddenly you don't remember what you said you'd do, or what time the next meeting is, or anything that was discussed. And for people who aren't at the meeting, minutes are their only way of knowing what happened. So, minutes are important! They also help make sure things get done. People will want to remind themselves of what they agreed to do, and minutes mean you can

look back at previous meetings to make sure things happened as they were supposed to. As a general rule, short minutes are good minutes. The important things to get down are decisions that got made, and 'action points' that people agreed to take on. There's normally no need to write down everything that got said or every discussion point that got raised, beyond a note saying 'this thing was discussed'.

Use hands

This feels a bit like being back in school to start with, but getting people to put their hands up when they want to speak really can encourage less confident people to share their ideas. To make the meeting flow more naturally, some groups let people signal that they should get priority, for example:

- 'Direct Points' (two hands in the air) are quick points that respond to something someone has just said. The facilitator should stop someone if they use this to say more than a few sentences, so it doesn't just get used to jump the queue
- 'Technical Points' (using hands to make a 'T') are urgent points that need to interrupt the meeting – for example if there is a fire, or if it's time for a break
- 'Proposals' (using hands to make a 'P' shape) are used to show that you have a proposal to make. If the facilitator feels that a discussion is going around in circles, they MAY give people with proposals priority, in case they resolve the problem

It's important that any hand signals you use are explained at the start of the meeting, or it will be very confusing for anyone new! In very small meetings things can be more relaxed – it is usually enough to just speak and only use hands when lots of people have

something to say.

Be accessible and inclusive

Make sure that your meetings are inclusive and as free as possible from sexism, racism, homophobia, and all other kinds of oppression. It's worth pointing out that you are trying to do this whenever you send out a call-out for a meeting, as this will get people thinking about oppression before the meeting starts, and let people who normally get excluded from meetings know that you're making an effort. If your planning meetings exclude people, then your events and actions probably will too. Oh, and the other obvious but neglected point about including people: if you don't, then you miss out on all of the extra ideas and energy they could bring!

- *Be welcoming* it is intimidating if you turn up at a group for the first time and you aren't used to how they run – what they're talking about, how decisions get made, when to speak, etc. So make sure all of this gets explained briefly at the start of each meeting. Get everyone to introduce themselves if possible. Some groups also give someone the job of welcoming people if they're late and bringing them up to speed on what's being discussed.
- *Have a time limit and breaks* – some of us can stay late at meetings and go on for hours without breaks – but others can't, especially people with family commitments and some disabilities. So plan regular breaks and time limits, and stick to them! If meetings run over a lot, try setting time limits for each agenda item so later items don't get missed out – and don't leave the most important stuff till the end!
- *Pick an accessible place and time* – think about how

easy it will be to get to your meeting. Is the location easy
to find? Is it in an area of town that everyone knows well
and feels comfortable in? Places like pubs can intimidate
some people, as can places where they are expected to buy
food/drinks that are expensive. Do members of your group
have childcare commitments that mean they need meetings
to be later/earlier? Will people who have to walk home alone
feel unsafe if your meeting finishes too late? The average stu-
dent lifestyle means that evening meetings between Monday
and Thursday are normally better attended than meetings at
weekends or on a Friday night. Staff often prefer to meet in
the early evening right after work. Try to avoid meal times
by meeting either very early in the evening or a bit later.

- **_Involve people who cannot attend_** – How ever hard you
  try, you will not be able to hold a meeting that everyone will
  be able to attend – so try to find ways to involve people who
  cannot make it, too. Get your agenda out early so people can
  feed their thoughts in through others. Encourage people to
  email in their ideas and say what they are able to volunteer
  for.

- **_Support members with children_** – This is rarer in student
  groups, but there are student parents out there. If anyone
  in your group has children, consider taking donations for a
  childcare fund to help them to attend meetings and events.
  State publicly that you are willing to do this, so that parents
  know they will be welcome

Don't just vote

Voting on issues is far better than letting a minority decide every-
thing, but just going with what the majority wants isn't always
a good idea either – especially in a small group. If possible you

should try to reach decisions that most people are happy with, even if that means making compromises. There are a few reasons for this:

- In a small group everyone does a lot of work, so keeping everyone involved and onside is really important. If something is decided which someone strongly disagrees with they may leave the group, which would be a real blow to everyone else
- When making decisions is just about getting enough people to pick one option rather than another, this creates tension and can make the meeting feel competitive. In big meetings there's no way to avoid this but in a small group you can often make compromises that everyone is happy with, and just go with the majority as a last resort
- Some people find it easier to get to meetings than others. For example, women tend to be expected to care for members of their family, so meetings will often have a majority of men. Just going on a simple majority may mean that men get more say than women
- Voting can be abused. Some student groups have been known to exploit 'majority rule' by flooding meetings with their members, who then force through the decisions that they want taken. In a group that one of the authors was involved in this got really silly – the SWP flooded one meeting and made a lot of decisions that were completely unacceptable to some people who'd been there from the beginning, who then felt used. So the next meeting was flooded by a different group, who reversed all the decisions of the meeting before it! All this wasted a lot of time and created pointless tension

1.3.2   Tips for making meetings good

Use rotating roles

Unless your meeting is really small (ie less than 5 people), you'll want to have people take on some roles to make sure things run smoothly – for example, a 'facilitator' and a minute-taker. The danger with having roles in a meeting is that they often end up getting taken on by the same people every time. This isn't good for the person who ends up with the role as it's tiring to be doing the same thing over and again. It's also bad for everyone else – it can mean that the person who takes on the role has power over the group, can leave others feeling less involved, and means that skills don't get shared (so when the one person who always takes your minutes leaves, no-one else knows how to do it). So, try to account for this by 'rotating' the roles regularly. During a long meeting, switch minute-takers so that they get a break. Make sure different people take on roles each time – for example by keeping a list of people who are happy to take them on, and going through it alphabetically. Also try to be aware of which groups of people always end up taking on certain roles – for example, if the facilitator is always a man whereas the minute-taker is always a woman, then you have a problem. New members need to be encouraged to do things like facilitation – for example by starting them off chairing just one part of a meeting. Finally, consider organising a training session for your group on how to chair meetings well – this will encourage more people to do it as well as making your group better.

Don't just take points

Putting hands up and then saying something on an issue isn't the only or best way for people to contribute to a meeting. For one thing, it can mean that you get an endless circle of people saying why they agree with something, when everyone is on the same page and nothing really needs to be debated. For another, less confident people often get left out unless space is made for them to speak, or if they're given another way of contributing. For example:

- *Hand signals* – people can't speak all at once, but they can make hand signals at the same time, which can make them a useful tool. For example, one hand signal that's popular is to use 'wavy hands' whenever you agree with a point someone is making – so the facilitator can see how popular it is with everyone. It's really important that these get explained to everyone in the meeting, since a group of people making weird hand signals during a meeting can be very confusing!
- *'Go-rounds'* – a 'go-round' is where the facilitator of a meeting goes around everyone in turn, and gives them the chance to speak to the whole group on something. For example, if your group is debating where to do an occupation, but the discussion is mainly two people debating with each other, the facilitator might do a 'go-round' to get other people's thoughts on the issue. These make sure that no-one is not given 'space' to speak or is left out. It can put people under pressure though – so make sure everyone knows they can pass! It's also worth speeding people up if they use the opportunity to just talk for ages.
- *Small groups* – Splitting up into smaller groups to discuss an issue, then feeding back to everyone else, can make discussion better – lots of people are scared to speak in big

groups, and it just isn't practical to give everyone a say in a massive meeting

- **_Pairs_** – As with splitting into smaller groups, it can sometimes help to get people to pair up (eg with the person to their left/right) and talk about the issue together
- **_'Temperature checks'_** – when everyone talks one at a time, there's no way to get a feel for what the whole group feels about something. So, a facilitator can ask the group to do a 'temperature check' on an issue, where holding their hands higher means they agree, low means disagree and middle not sure.
- **_'Parking space'_** – this is where there's a piece of paper up on a wall, where people can write up things to be discussed later or at the next meeting. Useful when someone has an idea, but something else is getting talked about or they need to leave

Split into smaller groups

Ever been at a meeting where a few people spend ages discussing something you don't really care about, or aren't involved in, and it keeps going on and you get more and more bored? Or at a meeting where you really need to discuss something in detail, but only a few people have anything to say about it and everyone else just switches off and looks tired/annoyed? Working groups are the solution! A "working group" takes on a specific task – such as drafting a statement, or planning an event – and meets separately from the rest of the group (eg after a meeting, or on a different day, or whatever). The working group can bring all their ideas back to the main group to be ratified if necessary, but they do most of the nitty-gritty discussion and work. They should be open to anyone in the group if possible, and should be inclusive and democratic.

That means it should be clear exactly what it is about, and everyone in the group should be informed about it. Working groups should report back to the main group in meetings (but keep it brief!). Finally, you should always mandate one person to bottom line making sure the working group meets up. More confident people are ok to just make it happen, but many inexperienced people will just leave the organising to 'someone else'.

Be actively inclusive

Challenging hierarchy and exclusion isn't simply a list of do-nots that will magically make your group perfect. To be successful, you need to actively work to make your group inclusive. This isn't a chore – having more people who are more actively involved makes your group more effective and means less work in the long run. Here are some examples of things you can do:

- Run training sessions or 'skill-shares' on facilitation and other tasks
- Educate yourself about challenging hierarchy and oppression in small groups
- Make sure people are empowered to stand up for themselves – make it clear that they will be supported in standing up for themselves or forming caucuses' to discuss issues like racism and sexism together

Have discussion as well as debate

A really democratic meeting needs a balance of three things – decision-making, debate, and discussion. Decisions need to get made, and get made by the people in the group, for anything to get done and for people to be involved. Decisions also need to

be talked over and debated – so that everyone gets a chance to convince other people of their opinion on issues. A lot of meetings only have those two – decision-making and debate. The problem with this is that what gets talked about in the first place, i.e. which issues get debated and decided on, can end up being left in the hands of a few people, or even not decided properly at all. For everyone to be involved, and for the group to be effective, it's important to also have more general **discussion** about what the aims of the group should be, what issues they can take up in the first place, etc. A meeting that takes initiative in working out how to resist university management will always be more interesting and effective than one that just responds to the issues that come up, or a group that allows it's strategy to be dictated by a few people.

Encourage autonomy

Not everything can be talked over in meetings. Part of being effective means making it clear what people should just go for without raising it at a meeting first, and working out how to keep any 'autonomous' actions accountable. For example it is probably ok for anyone to post to the group facebook page (can always be taken down again if there's controversy!), but probably not ok for someone to do an interview with the university newspaper without checking in with the group first. Remember that although these things might be clear to more confident people who've been in the group a long time, it won't be clear to anyone who is new. So if you don't want the group to end up with an 'inner circle' of people who do things on their own, formally agreeing what people can do on behalf of the group is a good idea.

Think beyond structure...

Having good processes and practises in your meetings is important for being productive and for challenging hierarchy. The thing is though, structures aren't the be-all-and-end-all – they don't solve everything, and there is such a thing as too much structure (aka bureaucracy!). If you've been in a group for a while, then what you do on a personal level is also important. Making sure you befriend new members and listen to their opinions is more likely to mean they stay members than anything listed above. No matter how careful you are, decisions and discussions won't all take place in meetings and within your structures – social relationships happen and we shouldn't try to stop that! Instead, involve people in your social circle and make an effort to ensure you don't just rely on conversations with old friends to form your opinions. Watch who you choose to encourage and speak to – is it just white men? If so, then you need to branch out. Oh, and be careful of approaching this like it's a duty – people can see through that! Conversations with people you disagree with or don't even like keep you grounded and keep you thinking, as well as benefiting the other person.

1.3.3   Crash course in facilitating

The *purpose* of a facilitator is:

1. to keep the meeting together (make sure people stick to the agenda, keep time, pick who speaks next, etc)
2. to encourage participation (point out that only a few people have spoken, suggest processes that involve more people such as splitting into smaller groups, etc)
3. to help the group make decisions and have useful discussion (suggesting go-arounds, reflecting back the mood, etc)

4. to help challenge oppression (eg people speaking out of turn, prioritising marginalised voices, supporting people calling out oppressive behaviour, etc).

Tips on facilitating:

- DO push for proposals, and ask if anyone has suggestions for solving disagreements, rather than letting debates go on and on. DO say if you feel the debate is going in circles!
- DON'T abuse your role – you should not make points at all, unless you absolutely have to. If possible, ask someone else to raise them for you. LISTEN if someone says you're being biased or unfair – facilitators have power, and it's hard to notice yourself misusing it!
- Be assertive – it's your job to say if someone is doing something bad like speaking out of turn. Everyone else should back you up!
- Don't put people on the spot! Try to give people a 'get-out-clause' before asking them to say anything
- Let people know you've seen that they want to speak, and possibly point out an order (eg "lots of points here! So we'll take you first, then you, then you, then....")
- You should regularly sum-up where the discussion is, and what the controversies are. This helps to keep everyone focussed and involved. If you get a sense that most people are feeling a certain way, then say so (eg "I get the feeling that everyone agrees on idea X?" or "people seem tired – should we take a break?"). Ask people to show whether they agree or not, by a show of hands or whatever system your group uses. "Reflecting back" like this can be really helpful to the group, because you are removed from the discussion and able to notice things that those in the heat of debate cannot
- Push people to object! If someone makes a proposal, ask if anyone disagrees. This stops people spending ages explain-

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ing why they agree with something that everyone thinks is a good idea anyway

- Make 'space' for people to speak. Ask if people have alternative ideas, and check everyone who wants a say has spoken before moving on from an issue.

Tips on helping the facilitator:

- The facilitator needs to know that people will back them up if they're to do their task effectively!
- Workshops help give people confidence to do it (see the appendices for organisations who run these)
- "co-facilitation" (two people doing it together) gives people experience, and takes some of the pressure off
- For a long meeting, switch facilitators part way through so that they get breaks – it's a tiring job!
- DO bring in external facilitators for difficult topics

1.3.4 On Consensus

Many activist groups use a process called 'consensus decision-making' in meetings. There are extensive guides for using it and solving problems commonly faced by small groups on the website 'Seeds for Change' – it's linked to in the resources appendix, and you should check it out! There are a few points that need to be made about the process. First off, it isn't right for all groups. As a bare minimum, read up on the 'conditions for consensus' – if your group doesn't meet these, the process will not be effective.

Second, it isn't simple – participants will take a while to get used to it, and 'facilitators' need to either have had training or experienced consensus meetings before. Think carefully about whether the time needed to get used to it is worth it. For a group that meets

regularly it probably is, but for a one off meeting using the full process may take more time than it is worth. Make sure that any new people have everything explained to them clearly, so it isn't too confusing.

Finally, even thought the aim of consensus is to make groups more democratic, it can be used in an oppressive way. People who understand the process better will have more influence than those who don't. Many communities and groups already have their own ways of making decisions, and activists that come in and blindly demand they use consensus are basically practising 'activist imperialism' – this is something that does happen and is worth being aware of.

That said, consensus can be a really helpful process for getting everyone in a group involved, and for making good decisions. It has been well thought out and has resources behind it that have been put together over years and years. Also, many critics of consensus don't really understand it, and are actually criticising examples of consensus being used badly! So read how the process is meant to work rather than just assuming that a group you saw using it was doing it right. And don't let the warnings above scare you off!

1.3.5   Online Meetings

There are a number of different services and websites you can use to have online meetings. IRC is something that has been used for international student meetings before, for example. A simple guide created to help people connect to those meetings can be found here – http://ismuk.wordpress.com/resources-2/organising/guide-to-ism-uk-online-meetings/. For a more secure solution, consider "cryptocat". Both of these need

a bit of technical skill to get going – so if you plan on using them it's worth having a guide to hand for your members to look through. Meetings do need to be structured a little differently when online. One format that worked fine is still online here – http://bit.ly/1IB79zh, and 'Seeds For Change' has a (very different) process outlined in the 'consensus handbook' (available here: http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/handbook)

Like any meeting, there are some social guidelines which will make a chat meeting run smoother when people follow them. Some things worth considering are:

- Avoid flooding the channel. If you send lots of lines at once, it fills up everyone's screen and is hard to read. If you're sending something long, consider using a service like pastebin, and just posting a link to it in the channel.
- Affirm people's proposals. In a face-to-face meeting it's much easier to gauge the reaction to a proposal than on the internet. Often, when someone makes a suggestion that everyone agrees with, no-one responds, and it's hard for the facilitator to work out whether that means people agree, disagree, are staying quiet, or are just thinking. Likewise if someone has expressed agreement with a proposal that comes up, say whether or not you do too, as otherwise it is hard to work out whether everyone feels that way, or if they are intimidated from speaking, or something else.
- To make things flow quicker, some meetings have used the '*' symbol to signal agreement with a proposal, rather than just typing "I agree!" all the time. If you do this and there's more than one proposal being talked about, make sure you indicate which proposal you're agreeing with!
- Try and keep to one topic at a time to help the meeting run smoother
- Make clear proposals

- Make sure that each decision has someone delegated to make sure it happens
- Don't take it personally if someone disagrees with your ideas
- Try to be friendly and avoid being aggressive when making points – not only is this less productive, it also scares away less confident people from taking part
- Most online meetings are completely open and insecure, so do not discuss illegal activity or share unnecessary information (for example, personal details of activists)

Chapter 2

Events and Demonstrations

2.1 Planning

2.1.1 Hosting a planning meeting

Try to have open meetings when planning events. Open meetings mean that more people can get involved and gives people a sense of ownership, so they are more likely to help publicise and attend. Advertising meetings also acts as publicity for the event itself – getting the idea of it into people's heads and building momentum.

Key Questions to Consider at a Planning Meeting

- What do you want to achieve with the event? What are your main goals?

- What are your resources? Does the group actually the time/energy to do what you're planning?
- Who are your target audience?
- Where should the event be?
- What day and time? (and: could it be linked to something that is already happening? For example, pancake day, or the Eurovision song contest?)
- What should the event be called?
- How will it be publicised?
- What tasks need to be done? Who will do them? When do they need to be done by?

2.1.2 Picking a time/date

This is common sense really, but: the time and date of your event is important if you want lots of people. Here's some things we've learnt...

- Check with other friendly societies what dates they have events planned, and bring that to your first meeting – a clash can really knock back your numbers
- Non-social events shouldn't be held on a Friday night
- Students are more likely to come into the university for things on weekdays – for some reason Saturdays and Sundays don't work well!
- Staff members normally prefer to have events right after they finish work (eg 5), so they don't have to go home and back again
- Try to keep your event away from deadlines or exams. The beginning of a term is almost always better than the end
- It's never possible to pick the perfect time for everyone

2.1.3   Picking an event name

An event name needs to be get people's attention – to draw them in and get them interested. So keep it snappy, and that controversy gets people's attention. It's okay to exaggerate or be playful with a topic – people expect that, and it makes the event sound interesting. A common mistake people make is to pick a name that's really accurate – but that just makes the event sound bland. Really long titles with long words that don't relate to people are a definite no-no! Basically, work out your "target audience" and imagine yourself in their shoes.

2.1.4   Location

- How easy is it to find the event/location? Should someone be at the door to show people where to go or let them in? Would a sign help? ALWAYS bring blu-tack, paper, and a marker pen in case things change at the last minute! If you're meeting in a public place – how will people recognise/find you, or get the confidence to approach? (approaching groups of people in a pub and asking them "are you Bristol Left?" is actually quite scary)
- How many people do you expect? Work out a best-case and worst-case scenario, and plan accordingly
- Is the space appropriate for the event? (ie. quiz night in a lecture hall is probably a bad idea)
- The general rule in Bristol is: further away from university = cheaper and more accessible to non-students, but you need to be really close to the university to get students to go
- It's worth being aware of local issues a bit (ie for Bristol: gentrification of Stokes Croft means you're going to attract

a very different crowd to cafe Kino or the Arts House than you would at the Malcolm X centre)

- Make sure you find out how well your location can cater for people with disabilities, in case anyone who wants to attend has any access requirements
- How are the acoustics? Will you need sound equipment (microphone, speaker) to be heard? Is there electricity available?
- It is always better to have a smaller venue which feels full, than a larger venue which feels empty.

2.2   Publicity

The key to publicity is getting it out there, and into people's heads! That means hitting the streets, talking to people, flyering, sticking your posters everywhere, even announcing your event in lectures if it's important enough! Make your publicity as memorable as possible, and as clear as possible. Everyone who sees and hears it should be able to work out 'what, when, where' without any effort. Note that while this section tries to give useful pointers and tips for publicising events, it isn't an entire guide to marketing – that kind of thing is already out there. You should try to read up on it, as well as how to use desktop publishing, how to write good text, and how to design good flyers. Research it! See the appendix for useful resources.

Note that timing is a really important part of publicity – so plan it carefully! If no-one hears about your event until half an hour before it starts, it will be empty. At the same time, people forget about it if they hear about it too far in advance. Students are especially bad at this. Ideally, you should aim to do your publicity

in several waves - get something out a couple weeks before (or more!) so that people know it's happening and can plan ahead. Then hit the streets with flyers and posters in the days leading up to the event. That way you get the best of both early and late publicity.

2.2.1   Using the Interwebs

Although we've found that the internet can help with publicity, on it's own it isn't very effective at all. What works best is combining different methods. That way they reinforce each other and remind people to go.

Writing up an event so that it's easy to see all the key information, getting it to look nice, and then sending it out over email lists and Facebook actually takes a fair bit of time. So – make a couple of standard event pictures to be re-used for smaller events (for example, meetings) – this will save time. Keep a set of 'templates' for emails and Facebook, so you always remember to include key information. For social media you'll want to assemble a list of places to share info, with links to each group and page you normally post your events to.

For maintaining an email list, you should never just copy a list of emails into the 'to' box and click send! This is bad for privacy as everyone can then see each other's emails. Instead, put the list of emails into the 'bcc' box – this stands for 'blind carbon copy' and will protect privacy a bit, put your group's email address in the 'to' field. Even better, set up a proper mailing list with an email list provider. One of the best is the riseup list service https://lists.riseup.net/www/. So as not to overload people, it's best to limit emails to one per week, and group any events you are publicising into a 'weekly email', possibly with a reminder

the day before the event. (us students don't seem very good at planning ahead or remembering things, so some kind of reminder a day or two before is always very useful!)

As well as publicising events ourselves, we've found getting together with friendly groups and sending out information about each other's events on our mailing lists to be very effective – or even running joint events.

2.2.2   Designing Posters and Flyers

- To produce something good you need to use proper desktop publishing or graphics design software. While professionals tend to use "Indesign", "Illustrator" and "Photoshop", the free open-source "Inkscape", "Scribus" and "Gimp" do pretty much the same thing. See the resources section for tutorials.
- THINK about your audience – who are they? Where will they see posters? (eg students queuing for lectures will look at what is on the walls)
- Seek out effective, good looking poster and flyers... then copy all the best bits!
- Unless you know what you're doing, never use more than THREE styles of text. Lots of different sized/coloured/shaped text looks "noisy" and unprofessional.
  - The title font (this can be playful and interesting. It must be bold, clear, and big. Very big!)
  - The big font. This is for your key information and your tagline. It should be visible a couple of meters away from the poster
  - The small font. This is for things like a description, directions to the room, list of sponsors, etc.
- Keep it short – no-one is going to stop for half an hour to

read an essay plastered on the wall. Related: keep it big. If people can't read it, they won't know what it says.

- Include key information – and make it really clear and visible. That is: Title, Venue, Date, Time, and Cost. The title, date and time should be made very big. The venue and cost too, if there's space
- If it's free – say so!
- In describing the event – pick a tagline (eg. one sentence) to make big, but keep the rest smaller. If there's too much big text people won't see the key info.
- Get people's attention – use a BIG title that catches the eye. Maybe a controversial one. Try to stand out compared to other posters nearby.
- Keep it simple – simple is achievable and often more effective.
- Make sure there is a good contrast – the background and the foreground must be different enough to stand out from each other. Orange text on yellow background = no. Black on dark grey = no. Black on white = yes. Yellow on blue = yes!
- Include contact details for your group if you can - this may encourage people to get involved!
- Don't be afraid of using plenty of 'white space'.
- Don't just use the standard fonts that came with your operating system. Head to free font websites, such as DaFont.com and FontSquirrel.com and pick your faves!
- See the appendix for a list of free software for making posters and leaflets
- Rules can be bent. They're here to make you think, not constrain you :-)

2.2.3 Flypostering

Putting posters in places without permission can lead to fines and prosecution if you are caught. It can also lead to trouble for your event, the venue it's in, or it's organisers if you are unlucky. Of course many people fly poster anyway. For example, by making a mix of either wallpaper paste or wheat-flour, then painting it on to a surface, putting the poster on, then painting over the poster, they can put up hundreds of posters in one night. All that's needed is a small bucket, big brush, a hoody and a baseball cap. Wear dark, nondescript clothing. Normally this is done on a bike to ease escape should they be detected. Event organisers can write 'not to be flyposted' on all of their posters in order to make it less likely they will have trouble if anyone decides to do this with their posters.

2.2.4 Leafleting

Leafleting is pretty simple, you print a ton of leaflets and then give them to people! The best times on a university campus seem to be during lunch breaks, and the ten minutes before and after lectures. Early in the morning more people are rushing, but it can still be worthwhile. If there are lots of commercial leafleters at your university (eg. advertising club nights), then you may have trouble getting people to take leaflets, as they'll just assume you want them to buy something. There's two things you can do to get people's attention. The first is to work on your style – make eye contact with people as they approach, smile, and say a memorable tagline so they know it's not an advert. The second trick is to get people's attention by doing something big and visible, thus 'creating a spectacle'. For example you might bring a big

protest banner with you, or get together with someone else and shout information to each other ("When's the protest next week?" "5.30pm at college green, everyone's going!").

The other way to do leafleting is door-to-door. For a niche event this isn't worth all the printing, but otherwise it is one of the best ways to get lots of people to an event who would not otherwise have heard about it. For most student residences you will need to know at least one person in the building to be able to get in, but people will often help out if you explain to them. It's also not usually all that hard to tailgate in behind someone else – trespass is not a criminal offence in the UK so you shouldn't get into too much trouble if anyone complains, which is unlikely anyway :)

Try your best to source free printing. Many PhD students get free basic printing, which is suitable for basic black and white posters and flyers. Suss out and compare all your local printshops, and memorise their opening and closing times. For small print runs of basic black and white A4 posters or flyers it is often cheaper to use your university/college printers. If you're planning a big event requiring loads of flyers then consider using an online supplier.

2.2.5 Stalls

Stalls give you a chance to show a visible presence on campus and meet new people. Although you reach less people than with leafleting, you can have more material and normally get longer conversations. For reasons we do not understand, two seems to be the best number of people for a stall – 1 or 3 and less people approach to talk. Anyway, the first thing to do is to pick a location – it needs to be a wider bit of pavement so you don't obstruct people walking, and to be somewhere visible that lots of people go past. Have a back-up plan in case you get moved on by

university/college security or police. Next, you will need materials
for the stall. Try to have a reasonable selection – too few leaflets
will look bad, but too many will be confusing. The best thing is
to have a mix of leaflets that are easy to pick up and read, and a
few bigger things (eg books, zines) for anyone who is more keen.
Bring paper and pens so you can take down the details of anyone
interested in your group, to put them on your email list. It's good
to have a banner to cover the table – as well as looking better it
makes it clear who you are. Finally, don't forget to bring tape and
weights – on a windy day the banner will flap and all the leaflets
will blow away if there is nothing holding them down!

2.2.6   Media

How to engage with media needs careful thought. Newspapers,
radio and TV can be a massive help publicising events and
getting a message out. However, the media have their own
agenda which more often than not is opposed to ours – they
can twist what you say, make things up, and portray you in a
negative light if they wish. So be careful! How you engage with
media can also disempower people – you don't want it to look
like you have a leader or spokesperson who is more important
than everyone else! This article from the road protest movement
of the 90's, exposes some of the pitfalls of engaging with the
media – http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no7/35-37.html.
However, at the same time many lazy journalists will simply
repeat a press release word-for-word rather than writing an
article – which is how the police get them to publish misin-
formation about protests. For example, after the April 2011
riots in Bristol, local press published a story condemning a
radical poster campaign telling people not to talk to police –
but in doing so they repeated all the advice word for word!

Anyway, if you do decide to engage with the media, be very clear what your purpose is – for example, do you want to get them to publish details of your event in order to get people there, or do you want them to report about it after it has happened in order to get a message out? They might not do what you expect! Once you have that worked out, there are a lot of guides to dealing with the media that have already been written – some of them linked to in the Appendix. However, here are some of the basics...

- Send a 'press release' to all the media outlets you can. This should include contact details and say when it can be released (normally immediately). See example below
- Keep any statement (including the press release) as short and snappy as possible. As well as making journalists more likely to read it, the less you say the harder it is for them to leave out information or selectively quote you. Don't say anything that could be taken out of context without the other sentences around it!
- Give the press a reason to publish. Your event needs to be interesting or controversial for it to get a mention, or at least to fit in with an issue the media is focussing on. Sometimes this means you have to accept the media taking a line you aren't happy with in order to get the story out.
- Journalists want to do as little work as possible – write your press release so that an article about it will write itself
- If the event hasn't happened yet, try to get the press to publicise it for you, by including all the details (what, when, where) in your release
- Include quotes from individual people – this personalises the story, which journalists like
- Press may call asking for a quote or even an interview. Make

sure your response has been discussed with the group before this happens. If you give an interview, remember that interviewers can be very deceptive about what they are looking for. Keep answers brief, and relate everything to your "message". When it comes to personal information or anything that could be incriminating, follow the rule "if in doubt, don't say it"

- Most important of all: prepare! Have statistics to hand, and learn what you will say to difficult questions. Don't rely on journalists being friendly – hard questions will be asked
- For TV and radio, try to get live interviews. The worst that can happen is if you freeze at an unexpected question, you look a bit silly. This is nowhere near as bad as getting misrepresented. Do not allow TV crews to "retake" shots, as this makes it easier to selectively edit what you say
- Mainstream capitalist media are never going to be totally fair to us, or report everything we want them to. So be sure to support independent media, especially radical local papers. Even better, start your own! Don't rely on the press to get your story out.

Example press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Students Plan "Day of Rage" Against Student Debt

Students at scumbag college are planning a "day of rage" against student debt this week – and are organising a march starting in the town centre at 2pm on Tuesday. According to organiser Em Goldman "the cost of student life and student debt is too damn high. We're fed up of asking nicely for change. Join us on

Tuesday to demand the education we deserve!"

The march organisers have not announced their route to the police, and are encouraging school and university students to walk out of class and take part.

ENDS

Please contact our spokesperson on media@example.com or 07313371337 for more information or to arrange an interview

2.3   Demonstrations

2.3.1   Why?

It is rare that a peaceful protest march will change anything **by itself**, unless the target is very small – for example, one shop or an individual landlord. When it does, it is normally because the people who change fear that the protest will lead to something more if demands aren't met – like a strike or a riot. It's important not to simply organise a protest because something is bad or because lots of people will come. Instead, have some clear goals and an idea of where you want to go with it afterwards. Anything else is likely to just make people cynical and to tire you out. With that in mind, here are some of the reasons people organise protests:

- **To draw attention to an issue** – Management often get away with things because no-one knows much about what's going on, or because no-one realises that other people want do something about it. Many of the things that management get away with simply wouldn't last if people tried to

resist. So attention can be a powerful tool. A visual rally on campus will be seen by lots of people. Media attention will scare management even more (although it can be hard to get from mainstream news sources, student newspapers normally respond to press releases)

- **To build a campaign** – A protest with lots of people can be really encouraging – it shows just how many people are angry and willing to do something about it. People on the edges can be persuaded to get more active when they see the amount of support there is, or hear people explaining the issues at speeches. It is also a step towards taking direct action. Many people have not even been on a protest before, let alone a strike or occupation. Protests help causes to gain momentum and build confidence, by providing a 'rallying point' for people who care about an issue

- **As a springboard for direct action or direct democracy** – Protests often lead to something else right away – for example a "people's assembly" to talk about what to do next, or an occupation of a university building. And lets not forget that time when 5000 people stormed Conservative Party headquarters at Millbank. This can lead to accusations of "hijacking" protests, and it is worth taking care not to alienate people who might kick off later given time. However, accusations of "hijacking" more often than not come from so-called "leaders" who also want to hijack movements – but for their career, not for the cause. They are only upset because it was not them doing the "hijacking"! In general, most people will accept a "diversity of tactics" if it is explained to them, and if the action does not go too far (that said, for many angry people your action may not go far enough!)

2.3.2 Things to consider when planning any protest or rally

- **Timing** – you need a date and time that lots of people can make, and that will get you seen by your target, by the public, or by the media. An end time is also good. When a protest goes on for too long, people can start to drift away – it's at this point, when numbers are lowest, that police are likely to move in and attempt arrests. So a clear end time means people can stick together
- **Type** – What kind of demonstration do you want – a march, a rally, or something more creative? The legal restrictions on a rally are less strict, so it might be good to publicise your protest as one, even if people are likely to turn it into a march later
  - If it's a rally – it's more important than ever that there is a clear end time, and that you give people something to do (speeches, chants, etc). If you are going to be silent, make it deliberate – like a vigil. If you just stand quietly and people slowly drift off then it will look awkward!
  - If it's a protest, then you may need a route, which will take some careful planning. If you go on private property (eg some campuses and town centres), then security for that area may try to stop you. If you've been talking to police, they will want to know and discuss the route with you. You also need to think about whether to take the road, or stick to pavements (if you have lots of people and you aren't totally outnumbered by the police, it's far more empowering to take the road and you will probably not get in any trouble). Unless the route is secret, publicise it well in advance so people

can make plans. An alternative to having an official route is to let the crowd do it spontaneously.

- **Slogans** – it's good to have a few ideas for chants and slogans ready
- **Banners/placards** – people will often bring their own, but not everyone. If your group can make a few extra placards and a banner to go at the front of the demonstration, it will all look more lively
- **Sound** – Sound equipment is good to prepare and bring. Get a megaphone for someone to start chants with. If you can get/make a mobile soundsystem, this will be really good for the mood – so long as you have a good music playlist ready. A good mobile soundsystem can also be used as an amp for speeches
- **Leaflets** – If one of your aims is to create a 'spectacle' so other people see your cause, bring leaflets for bystanders to explain what the demonstration is about
- **Permission** – Permission is a thorny issue. You don't need permission from the police to hold a static rally, but if you are organising a moving protest (called a 'procession' in protest law) then you are supposed to tell the police your route beforehand, and they can impose 'conditions' on the march. They don't usually arrest people just for going on an unauthorised march. They might go after the 'organisers' if they are part of an established group and they do not like the cause. However, unless your group has a leader or other named officials it will be very hard for them to prosecute anyone. Use a different group name if you are worried, but it is almost always fine to organise a march without permission. If you haven't talked to the police, then **under no circumstances** should you tell anyone about conditions placed on a march – that is the police's job, and if people do not know about conditions, they cannot be prosecuted for
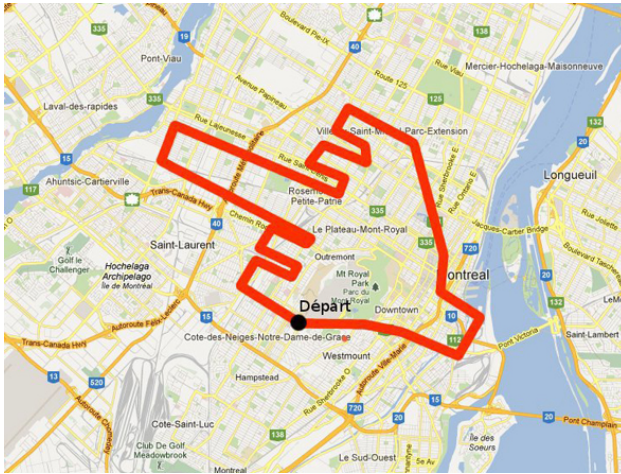
breaking them!

Figure 2.1: When police in Montreal asked students to give them a map showing their march route, the students sent them this!

- **Speakers** – If you are going to have speeches, do it in a way that empowers people. Often they are just boring and serve to pacify people. One option is to have speeches at the start of the protest instead of the end – this gives people more time to arrive, and can help stir up the crowd
- **Access** – Disabled people often can't make street protests. So, consider organising other action that they can get involved in, for example phone blockades

2.3.3 Further things to consider, when planning a big one

- **Stewards** – Stewards are used at many demonstrations, and police sometimes make having stewards a condition for hav-

ing a march. While the official purpose of stewards is to direct the march down the planned route and answer questions, unofficially they tend to act as "peace police" who prevent anyone taking unofficial action or going off-message. For example, stewards at one march organised by a certain major anti-cuts group were even given training on how to break up sit-down protests in the middle of the march. During the occupation of conservative party HQ at Millbank in 2010, NUS stewards could be seen directing people away and refusing to tell anyone why, other than "don't go that way, for your safety!". This meant that people who might have wanted to take part were denied that opportunity (though about 5000 still did). For these reasons, we recommend you have no more stewards than are absolutely necessary to make the march work, if at all. Policing people's action is obviously wrong, and having an official route puts you at a tactical disadvantage. Since pretty much all they can do for you is to help people cross roads, you shouldn't need that many stewards anyway.

- **Transport** – For a local protest make travel instructions available, like what buses to catch. If it's a national protest, it's important to get a list of "official" coaches coming up, as well as providing instructions for public transport. If you are attending a national protest, try to get good transport organised. Student Unions and Trade Unions can help with this. Try to argue for cheap/free tickets, for seats to be available to non-students and school students, and for no lists of names to be kept – police have been known to demand lists of people on Student Union buses. Buses to protests are a good place to get information out to people too, such as what to do if arrested

- **Workshops** – Consider organising workshops, debates, etc before the demo – this builds awareness and spread knowl-

edge. Good ideas for workshops include "public (dis)order training" and "know your rights"

- **Arrest Support** – Police don't always like protesters, especially when they refuse to be quiet and passive. So it's good to have some kind of infrastructure in place to support people if the police make trouble. "Movement support" groups are often willing to give training or even do the work themselves, so do give people like the "Green and Black Cross" a call.
  - "Bust cards" are cards with information on what to do if arrested (give a no comment interview, do not use the duty solicitor, etc), along with a phone number to call for advice and support. Try to get these to people on the demo and any coaches travelling there
  - "Legal observers" try to take notes and find witnesses whenever arrests and police brutality happens. Evidence from legal observers can be important if cases go to court
  - "Arrestee support" is where people try to find arrestees after a demo. This involves everything from getting them a lift home from the police station to helping them to prepare their defence
  - On some protests, people have even sent out texts to people letting them know what police are doing and where "kettles" are forming

2.3.4 Livening up demonstrations

Ideas to liven up a boring (ie NUS) demo...

- **Feeder marches** – a march before the main one that feeds into it

- **Blocs** – where a group of people with a common idea, like free education, form a "bloc" inside the march. Can lead to breakaways
- **Breakaway marches** – where people split off from the march to take direct action. These can happen in the middle of the march if there aren't too many police, but are often better when they break away from the speeches at the end – it's easier to find each other, and people are more likely to get involved
- **Follow-up action** – can be done from a breakaway, or just later in the day. Action can be anything from occupations to workshops
- **Stage invasions** – if the speakers aren't representing us, or the march organisers are shite, consider a stage invasion to present an actually radical message
- **Text-outs** – in the 2010 student protests, people made an app called "Sukey", which sent people texts telling them where police lines were. Text-outs can be great for helping people to avoid kettles, or telling people what action is happening where
- **Demo support** – consider volunteering for demo support groups, which are often independent of the protest organisers. Legal observers, action medics, etc are all always in need of more people! If protesters know they will be supported, they are more likely to take risks

2.3.5 Strike Solidarity

Students can provide valuable support to university staff during disputes with management. Past tactics have included road blockades and occupations. However, it's important that this is

all done in a sensitive way. We suggest reading the following SolFed article: "How Students Can Support Striking Higher Education Staff" http://www.solfed.org.uk/ewn/how-students-can-support-striking-higher-education-staff

2.4   Ideas and Tips

2.4.1   Film Nights

Film nights are very simple, and are a good social event. The main thing that can go wrong is your equipment not working, so make sure you do a test run with the projector and sound system you're using before you start.

Really Political stuff

- Kala Tara – http://www.tandana.org/Video/watch-kala-tara-dvd-online.html – documentary about the Asian Youth Movement
- Still The Enemy Within – http://the-enemy-within.org.uk/ – documentary about the miners strikes 1984-1985
- The Take – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sug7bWxTuSo – Film about the factory occupations that happened in Argentina in the early 2000s
- Schmovies – http://www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies/
- Riots Re-Framed – http://riotsreframed.com/ – documentary about the 2011 riots
- Street Politics 101 – documentary from SubMedia about the education strikes and street protests against tuition fees

in Quebec – `http://www.submedia.tv/stimulator/2013/05/26/street-politics-101/`

- anything by Ken Loach (left-wing director)
- anything by John Pilger (journalist who often documents imperialism) – `http://johnpilger.com/`
- Behind the Rent Strike – story of the 1973 Kirkby rent strike – `http://nickbroomfield.com/Behind-The-Rent-Strike`
- Not in Our Name – `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W79qdHvNms`
- Alanis Obomsawin's "Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance" – `http://www.submedia.tv/stimulator/2013/03/28/the-oka-rebellion/` – documentary about the Oka rebellion in the 90s, where indigenous people fought back against attempts to build over a mohawk burial ground
- Taking Liberties – Short film about the loss of civil liberties and the right to protest under the last Labour government (trailer: `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUsNQkV6o04`)
- Paths Through Utopias – Documentary about attempts at living in sustainable communities around Europe (trailer: `http://vimeo.com/18815492`)
- The Weather Underground – Documentary about The Weathermen, a radical left-wing group in the US that aimed to "create a clandestine revolutionary party for the violent overthrow of the US government". Could create some interesting dialogue on the question of non-violence (trailer: `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QR8pepqS-QA`)
- Capitalism, a Love Story – Slightly annoying film by Michael Moore that introduces anti-capitalism in a really accessible way (trailer: `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeROnVUADj0`)
- The Baader Meinhoff Complex – Film about an left-wing ex-

tremist group in Germany that took part in a string of bombings, could start some interesting debate (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IVKAAsqcrI)

- In the Name of the Father – based on the true story of an Irish man framed for taking part in an IRA bombing and tortured by the English police. Heavy but with a heartwarming ending (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOff5KjZ7vM)
- Sir, no Sir! – Documentary about resistance to the war in Vietnam from within the US army itself (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix0Gk8k8E78)
- The Legend of Bhagat Sing – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CY37_al1IRs – Hindi film about Indian revolutionary Bhagat Sing, whose popularity rivalled Gandhi
- The Poll Tax Revolt – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zpGZYtVpf0&list=PL34BB5B139AA49C92 – short film on the resistance to the poll tax, where 17 million people forced the government to repeal the hated tax

Vaguely Political stuff

- Thankyou for Smoking – comedy about a tobacco lobyist, highlights how big companies use lobyists and the media to spin the truth (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsicuKSzmpU)
- Network – Film about a news reporter who looses it and starts telling the world what he really thinks (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQUBbpvXk2A)
- Lord of War – About an arms trailer who travels the world selling weapons (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ke79K4bO4P8)
- The Trotsky – Comedy about a Canadian student who

thinks he is the reincarnation of Leon Trotsky (Russian Socialist), who tries to start a revolution in his high-school. Great subversion of the typical high-school comedy (trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtU7ERJ3cTw)

- Welcome (2009) – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t40ANH4Pe14 – film about a migrant trying to make his way into the UK

2.4.2   Talks and Panels

If you invite someone to speak, here are some things you will need to talk over with them:

- Accommodation requirements (if someone is hosting them)
    - How many nights do they need? Just the night before? Or the one after? Or both?
    - Dietary needs – whoever is hosting them will need to provide food!
    - Any other requests? (ie do they need a proper bed, can they climb stairs ok?, that sort of thing)
- The event
    - Check the event description and make sure you are on the same page about what they will be speaking on
    - Do they want an introduction? If so how would they like to be described?
    - Will they be taking questions after? If so who will facilitate this?
    - How do they like to speak? From a platform? Sitting down?
    - Do they have any audio/visual requirements, such as a projector, sound, or a laptop?

- – Do they have books/leaflets they want to make available/sell?
- Transport to the event – can they walk ok? Will they need to be located close to the venue?
- Payment – are they expecting any? Transport and accommodation costs? A donation to their organisation?

Don't forget to look through the checklist at the end of this chapter – especially the part about checking sound!

2.4.3 Debates

Organising debates can be a really useful way to raise an issue. The best way to do this is jointly with your university's debating society, if it has one, since they have experience facilitating debates, finding speakers, publicising, etc. Apart from that...

- It is important to pick a title that will interest people who don't already have a strong opinion on the topic. So "Is protest futile?" is going to get a lot more people than "What do we want to achieve from Demo2012" – even if the later is what you are actually going to talk about.
- If you are speaking, then make sure you prepare. Try and think what arguments your opponent will use, and how to respond to them. Practise speaking with a time limit. Get a friend to field you difficult questions. Look through the ideas you want to put across, and try to express them as simply and clearly as possible – using the shortest words and least jargon possible. On the day – just remember to speak slowly and clearly, and don't forget to pause for a moment to think before you open your mouth – thinking is fine and makes you look like you're taking things seriously and don't think you

have all the answers :-). Above all remember that you aren't in the debate to change your opponent's mind – you're in it to convince the audience and to spread your ideas.

2.5 Checklists

2.5.1 Planning

- Decide on a date and time
- Find a location and book it
- Write a general description, title
- Work out what equipment you will need (eg soundsystem, projector)
- Divide up tasks among your group

2.5.2 Resources

- Facebook event (do this first, so the link can go on publicity material)
- QR code (so posters can link to facebook event)
- Design posters, flyers
- Draft email
- Draft press release if necessary
- Proof-read everything
- (and don't forget to check designs, wording, etc with the group before going to print!)

2.5.3   Publicity

- Draw up a rota for distributing flyers
- Start a facebook thread/google doc to co-ordinate postering
- Send email spam
- Invite people to facebook event
- Spam friendly social media (eg other societies facebook pages, twitter, etc)
- Send out your press release if you have one

2.5.4   On the Day

- Delegate someone to arrive early
- Bring material to make signs, in case of last-minute changes
- Set up the room
- Test any technical equipment
- Check access – will everyone be able to get into the building and find the room? Do signs need to be put up with directions?
- Delegate someone to start off – introduce the film/speaker/meeting

Chapter 3

Organising Your Department or Faculty

In 2012 in Quebec , a quarter of a million students went on "strike". By all walking out of class (as well as holding militant street protests and occupations), they paralysed the education system and forced their local government to back-track on planned fee rises. This movement was possible because of the way they organised – from the bottom-up.

Inspired by the radical student union "ASSE", students held regular "general assemblies" in each department of their universities. Because these meetings were on behalf of a smaller number of people than usual (a department or faculty rather than a whole campus), it was possible for everyone to be directly involved. This in turn meant that when they made decisions (like calling a strike), people could be confident that the majority would be behind them. Meetings used "direct democracy", voting on each issue rather than electing representatives. This meant that people felt in control of their movement, and there were no leaders for the government to

pressure into selling out.

This chapter, written by people involved in the movement, explains how to replicate what happened in Quebec – how to start and run a general assembly in your own department or faculty.

(used with permission, based on the original "Creating Departmental or Faculty Associations", version 1.0.1 by Rushdia Mehreen and Matthew Brett. Published on Organise 2013 – http://organise2013.wordpress.com/ – and written for Free Education Montreal as part of the Strike Documentation Project. October, 2012)

3.1 Introduction

In addition to covering how to create a student association, this document includes how to build a core team (mob squad) that can do outreach and mobilize for the creation of an association and/or to hold a general assembly.

An ideal situation would be to have a couple of people who can organize the first general assembly (taking care of the logistics and such) and the rest doing the mobilization work.

You will find a brief overview of each of these aspects in this document.

3.1.1 General assemblies at the Departmental or Faculty-level

At the core of this document is the departmental or faculty-level student general assembly (GA). The GA is *democratic* for several reasons:

- A GA is *directly democratic* as it allows everyone to express themselves and have an equal say — everyone can propose and amend motions (propositions);
- It opens up space for *discussion and debate* and allows collective decisions.
- A few people (union or association executives) do not decide on behalf of others. Those *elected are accountable* to the General Assembly, the most democratic body.
- It can be called at any time by the student association, as well as by *any* member who collects the minimum amount of signatures required by the association's by-laws (regulations);
- It allows for *local sovereignty* within the department or the faculty;

A general assembly is also important because the discussion and debate helps students to consider *new opinions and solutions*, and to decide what can be done collectively.

(Adapted from ASSÉ/CLASSE's Ultimatum Newspaper, May 2012)

3.1.2 Authors

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Sections 3 and 4 of this document were presented at workshops given by Rushdia Mehreen (with Irmak Bahar and Alain Savard respectively) at the Ontario Strike Training Camp, Toronto, July 2012.

3.2 The Importance of Organising and Mobilising from the Grassroots

Creating departmental or faculty associations is more effective, democratic and participatory than centralized structures. Departments are where people spend most of their time, working and meeting with people in their discipline. The formation of mobilized and ideally militant departmental associations built upon structures of direct democracy insures that people come together to make decisions collectively.

Collective decisions in turn have higher chances of being implemented because all students implicated in taking decisions feel responsible to carry out actions (going on strike or showing up to a demonstration, for instance). The general assembly structure empowers all members giving them more power — shifting power dynamics, from the hands of the few executives to the members at large — to decide on the direction of the association as a whole as well as to have a say in the way the association functions, the events it organizes and campaigns in which it takes part. Holding executives responsible becomes more feasible when the decision making process is transparent via general assemblies.

An association would also cater to various needs of all of its student body (membership). Ideally, students should be able to bring any issue that is of interest to them to a general assembly and engage in collective discussion and decision making. Special general assemblies, such as strike GA would have a specific agenda, otherwise the agenda would be open so that students can bring any issue to the table.

Departmental or Faculty Level?

An association can be made within a department as small as 10-20 students or a faculty as large as 4,000 people. The key to determining the best scale is identifying the level of cohesion within a faculty or department. In general, it is preferable to organize at the departmental level. This is a more manageable scale, and people have an easier time playing an active role in the decision-making process. We encourage readers of this document to adapt this model to their needs and particularities. What we suggest here, by no means, is a final word or the only way of organizing.

3.3 Creation of a mobilising team (the "mob squad")

The first critical step is forming a core group of committed activists (2 or 3 people at least) in your department. Find people who want to organize a department or faculty-wide general assembly and exchange contacts (email and phone). This will form the base of your mobilization or "mob squad."

Mob Squads would meet at least on a weekly basis during times of significant mobilization. Make these meetings inclusive so that your mob squad can grow. Advertise the meetings and have a sign-up sheet for the departmental mob squad and try to get more people to join the team. Having meetings with food (a pizza, for instance, before or after the meeting) makes meetings less intimidating and allows new members to join and integrate easily.

3.3.1   Tasks of the mob squad

1. If your membership does not care about austerity or broader political issues, then it is important to engage in dialogue and spread the word about what is going on and why it is important. This would be the first task of the squad, even before creating the association.

2. Collect the email addresses of **everyone** in your department, if you do not already have a list from the department secretary. Going to classes and passing a simple sign-up sheet (so everyone can be contacted with events, updates and for the GAs) would be one of the best ways of getting ***ALL*** emails. The collection of emails can be done jointly with announcements in point (1) above – educating the membership of the situation/upcoming events. Thus, for example, making class visits about an upcoming departmental general assembly to discuss austerity and what to do about it and collecting contact information at the same time.

3. For details on mob-squad tasks/doing outreach, see the mobilization section below.

3.4   Creating a departmental or faculty association

At least three ways can be followed for creating an association! The purpose of making a departmental association is to make the association relevant to its members. If at the time of creating the association, the members do not care about austerity, choosing a different issue that students are concerned about (ex. something campus or department related) could help mobilize the members.

For example, at McGill University in Québec, students were mobilized around the issue of a student-run cafeteria that administration was closing down because of a contract with a multinational supplier on campus. The three methods of creating a departmental association are outlined below...

Method 1: By-laws first (could be relatively long process)

The mob squad drafts a set of by-laws, which could be fairly extensive or quite basic (The terms constitution and by-laws are used interchangeably in Quebec. No matter what they are called, only one document is used as a master guideline for the way associations are run). For a detailed example see Geograds by laws – http://geograds.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/geograds-by-laws.pdf During the drafting process, the growing association membership should be invited to give feedback on the draft by-laws. A few iterations would be required to make the by-law writing process inclusive and to insure that no aspect of your constituency is forgotten.

Once the by-laws are revised and ready, they are ratified in a general assembly of the department (some minor revisions could come up in the ratification GA). Make sure the quorum you set out in your by-laws (to be ratified in this GA) is met in the GA itself. The key to having enough people in the GA is to do proper outreach (see mobilization section below).

During the mobilization, make sure certain members of the association (department or faculty) are willing to take up the responsibility of being on committees (executive and otherwise) and to be accountable to the membership. It is preferable to have an executive structure without hierarchy. For an example of stu-

dent association and its structures, see http://www.sogeecom.org/page/instances

If the creation of the association and its elections are well advertised, the election of the executives and other committee members can be held at the GA itself. It could also take place during a GA at a later date.

Method 2: Through a General Assembly

The GA is called by the mob squad and it is made very clear (in the mobilization material as well as in class visits, etc.) that the association structure will be created in the GA, along with other business.

A committee is voted on to write the by-laws and present at the next GA. An interim executive (a group of people) is also voted into place in order to follow up on the tasks adopted during the GA until by-laws are created and a formal association is in place. In this case, it is the GA that mandates the creation of an association via a by-law committee.

This process is interesting (as long as you can hold a GA with, say, from 1% to 5% of the membership) because the initiative to create the by-laws and the association comes from the members themselves and not only from the few people in the mob squad. This way, members take higher ownership and are more involved in the process as well as in the association itself.

Method 3: Through a petition

This method is mostly used for calling a GA when an association already exists but when they are so-called "party associations"

– that is, either apolitical and not actively defending the rights of their membership or overly politicized to the detriment of the broader membership. Thus, this method is more to revive an existing association. Note, however, that this method can also be used to call a GA and then create an association as discussed in the above section.

Petitions are good for a number of reasons, whether it be to call a general assembly or to demand an action. They allow students to get involved in an active way from the moment a member of the mob squad gets in touch with them. By signing their name onto the petition, a member is implicitly committing to action. For a GA, this is what you need, so the petition approach for a GA can be a good means of insuring well-attended GAs! Evidently, signing the petition does not mean they will automatically attend the GA. Dedicated mobilization is still important (see the section on mobilization below).

Write a petition explaining the situation (austerity, for example) and why you would like to create an association. Depending on the existing by-laws or other rules, a certain number of members (quorum) need to sign a petition to make it valid or have value. Normally, a quorum or a slightly higher number of signatures is required. In the absence of a set quorum, aim for 1% to 5% of the membership.

The petition is a golden chance to stop a passer-by in the hallways or to enter a classroom to talk to students. Refrain from putting petitions on a website to get signatures, as it increases the chance of passivity. The online option could work only in the situation when only aim is to collect signatures and ascertain the symbolic support. The petition method is effective, particularly if there is an active and eager mob squad to get the numbers and do the talking.

3.5 Outreach / Mobilisation

3.5.1 Creating Mobilisation Material

It is important to create flyers/pamphlets/posters with all of the relevant GA information; however, no need to spend much time on making the information material (most of the time and resources should ideally be spent in talking to people!). Resources exist that allow anyone without expertise in design software to put together information material. Posters and flyers can be downloaded from this sharing based Quebec students' website http://www.latotale.info/ and modified as per your need. The site can also serve as a source of inspiration! For other samples, also see http://www.stopthehike.ca/materiel-dinformation-2/depliants/

Collect background information from existing resources or research basic information so that you can distribute leaflets/pamphlets to people for an in depth understanding of issues.

3.5.2 Mobilisation Tips

One-on-one mobilization: this is **THE MOST** important way to mobilize! Sit or stand patiently with people in your department. Discuss the context and importance of the political conjuncture, austerity measures and the upcoming GA. Listen to their personal concerns and interests. Encourage them to take an active role in organizing their GA and creating their association. Only in rare cases is mobilization a numbers game. Meeting with less people is preferable if meaningful and empowering discussion is held. Encourage people to talk to others!

Flyering: make sure you say a phrase or two about why you are holding the event (the GA, a speaking event, a meeting, etc.) as you give out the flyer. This is another occasion to have a one-on-one chat about the issue at hand!

CLASS visits! This is one of the most important aspects of mobilization, as you can speak to a class full of people at once. Here is one suggested way of proceeding:

- Draft a document with the course listings for the entire week in your department. This should include the course name, time, location, professor name and a column to insure that someone visits each class (ex. individual names can be listed next to each class).
- Go 5-10 minutes before the class starts
    - Ask/inform the professor that you are going to make an announcement, and that you need a minute or two to do so
    - Pass a sign-up sheet or petition in the classroom before or after the announcement depending on how many students already know about the cause. It is also nice to have materials to hand out (flyers, symbols, stickers, etc.)
    - Finish the announcement with an invitation of comments or questions
    - If announcing an event (GA etc), make sure to write the key info (date, time and place) on the black board before stepping out

Poster: put them up everywhere! Most importantly, put them in places where students remain and wait for long time, such as areas around elevators, near queues for meals, inside bathrooms, etc. Cluttered spaces or spaces of transition are not likely to grab your attention.

Tabling: tabling can be very useful, particularly during times of high campus mobilization. You want a table placed prominently on campus or in the department with a large and clear sign identifying the table. Things to have at a table: Sign-up sheets and a pen, key information and dates, flyers, tape, string, etc. All of these materials can be put in a "tabling box" readily available for any mob squad member to table.

The table can be the hub for class visits! The class schedules can be placed at the table where people can sign up for speaking at a class. The person tabling can, thus, coordinate the class visit.

Flash mobs: creative flash mobs are a great way to attract attention! While one group engages in the flash mob, have a few individuals designated to engage in conversation with people passing by and to hand out flyers.

Make a video: make a video that can be shared on facebook or other media depending on what your constituency is into. Engineering students will want to see familiar faces, and so on.

Banner drops: you know the deal! A really good banner drop would inspire some sense of awe. Be bold, be visible. Giving flyers to people as they pause to look at the banner would be strategic.

Speaker session: invite a professor (or anyone else who would draw a crowd) to give a talk at lunch or some other time on the topic of austerity or a relevant issue. You can then, or perhaps even your invitee can, speak to students about the upcoming GA or other events.

3.6   Holding a General Assembly

The department or faculty-wide GA would ideally be the highest decision-making body of the department or faculty student association. Ultimately, this means that it is the students themselves who make decisions, and not a handful of people (elected executives or any other committees) who do so on their behalf. Having a set of by-laws allows the association to follow a set of clear guideline.

Election of a facilitator and the secretary by the members themselves helps ensure unbiased proceedings. The amendment and approval of the agenda by members allows the membership to bring the issues that are important to them to the table, making the GAs relevant to the members.

In order to save time in this process, however, the first item of the agenda for your first GA could simply be to vote on a committee that will draft bylaws for the next GA. Another item could be to designate a couple of people to follow up on any tasks and mandates voted in the GA.

If it is the first general assembly and it is being organized in a short timeframe, priority should be given to mobilizing. The association can then be formalized in subsequent weeks (method 2 or 3 above for creating the student association). Discussing bylaws and constitutional matters at the first GA could turn out to be discouraging and uninspiring. The key is stressing that these documents are nevertheless vital and can be developed over time.

For the smooth functioning of the GA, however, a set of basic rules would be required. See "Special by-laws" of the Geograds by laws. http://geograds.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/geograds-by-laws.pdf Also see basic rules for running a smooth meeting at GSA Concordia: http://gsaconcordia.ca/information-2/what-is-a-general-assembly/

Make sure the GA is consultative, allowing students to express their concerns and instigating debate and discussion.

3.6.1 General Assembly Preparation

Many of the key mobilization points were addressed above. A few additional logistical points to consider...

Room bookings

It may be difficult to estimate the turnout of a GA, particularly the first one! This really depends upon the level of mobilization and awareness leading up to the GA. Be sure to book and confirm a sufficiently sized room well in advance. Look at department course schedules and attempt to pick a time that is accessible for most people in the department.

Technology and materials

Depending on the size of the GA, certain technologies may be necessary (projectors, computers, microphones, speakers, screens, outlets, power bars, extension cords). Make sure relevant material is printed and available on a table at the entrance of the room

(voting cards, secret ballot cards – just in case needed, propaganda materials, etc.)

It is good to have the minutes visibly displayed on a projector so that people can collectively agree upon the wording of motions and so on. This is always the preferable method.

Draft agenda

1. Appointment of facilitator, minute taker (and mood checker, if possible)
2. Explaining procedures
3. Reading and approval of the agenda
4. (Creation of committee for writing of by-laws / ratification of the by-laws)
5. Discussion (committee of the whole)
   (a) Current conjuncture (ex. austerity measures, tuition, program closure, etc.)
6. Motions/propositions (often comes out of the discussions)
7. Next GA
8. Adjournment

Chapter 4

Occupations

4.1 The Beginning

4.1.1 Why Occupy

In the UK, some occupations have come out of student union meetings, but most have been started by small groups of people aiming to 'escalate' struggles they are part of. Aims normally range from putting direct pressure on university management, to 'creating a space' where radical ideas can be discussed. Occupations have been especially effective at providing a base to organise from. This guide focusses on that type of occupation – but there others. For example in 2009 students from Zagreb, Croatia, wrote 'The Occupation Cookbook' – which describes how they took over their entire faculty and ran it based on principles of direct democracy, open to everyone. Occupations run by the majority of students are also a good tactic, and that guide is worth reading as well as this one. Bear in mind that while occupations have

been used to win demands, this needs a LOT of perseverance and won't happen by just taking a lecture hall for a few days. For example, the "Free Hetherington" occupation at Glasgow University won some big concessions (including no further cuts to courses and no compulsory redundancies), but only after six months of occupation (see `https://freehetherington.wordpress.com/2011/08/14/student-protesters-declare-victory-as-glasgow-university-sit-in-ends/`)

Before you start picking a location and preparing, try to get some idea of what you want to achieve. If the main thing is to run workshops and events, you will need a big space with good access above all else. If you want to hit the university managers economically and stay as long as possible, then a place that can be well-secured is essential. How long you want to stay is also important to think about. Traditionally the answer to that would be "as long as possible!", but over the last couple of years people have used a tactic called "shock-upations", where a building was taken for no more than a few days, then left again. This means less cost to university management and less time to run events, but is also more sustainable and easier to defend.

4.1.2 Choosing a Location

It is important to choose targets for political effect, but don't forget to consider access, visibility, and security too.

- **Disrupt management where possible.** Get in the way of what they do. If you don't, you might as well not be there. Don't just take a building because it looks impressive – you will soon find yourselves looking irrelevant.
- The less doors you have to cover, the easier the building will be to secure.

- Make sure there is access to running water and toilets. You will regret it if there isn't.
- Kitchens are really really useful. Food that you bring with you should be practical: fruit and nuts will keep you alert and happy! Go skipping the night before for free supplies.
- Try to take somewhere that can have a quiet space or turn off all music when people need sleep. Lecture theatres can be uncomfortable for sleeping.
- While lecture theatres are easy targets, the university will normally just cancel all the classes that would have been in them, rather than rescheduling (even if you want to let classes continue!). This pisses off a lot of students and staff – so it is better to occupy administrative buildings rather than teaching spaces if you can.
- Try to occupy somewhere with a photocopier so you can print as much propaganda as you like.
- Bring laptops! Choose somewhere with Internet access, or make sure you bring internet dongles that you've checked are working.
- Also, check the space has phone reception.
- Make sure there are windows which you can open! Lots of lecture theatres lack these, and they are useful for fresh air and banner-drops – not to mention getting supplies and people into the occupation.
- Think about whether your space is wheelchair accessible: this is far more likely to be the case in new builds than old builds. This is both a practical and political concern, in terms of how inclusive your protest is of the whole student community.

4.1.3 Taking the Space

One major mistake in occupations has been this: people take hold of a space but not the doors. This leaves you open to losing access to the space, and having your occupation prematurely closed down. **Take the doors, not the space!** You can take relatively large spaces with surprisingly few people if you follow this advice. Sometimes student union officers will tell you that taking control of doors causes unneeded arguments with university management. **ignore them.** Taking doors back later is much more difficult than taking them in the first place (although it can be done.) So once again, **take the doors, not the space!**

How your occupation begins will depend a lot of things, such as what type of institution you are occupying, how many occupiers you have, and the politics of the student union. At the beginning, try to get as many people there as possible.

- If you know where you are going, get a few people in before you announce it. This will help stop security guards keeping you out.
- Scope out the building beforehand. What sorts of doors will you have to lock down, and how many? What sorts of furniture are available for building barricades? Are there security cameras? What tools will you need to bring to secure the space? Are there escape routes?
- Have backup plans incase you cannot get in.
- Make sure you get important materials in right at the start – sleeping bags, food, etc. Blankets and sleeping bags are good because universities have a habit of turning off heating in occupied spaces.
- Delegate a few people to go speak to any staff that happen to be in the building, and explain what is going on (even

if you don't expect anyone to be in!). Any management or security staff should be asked to leave

- When you assemble people to go into occupation do NOT assemble at the place you are going to occupy.
- If you think you it's a good idea, and your student union isn't too dreadful, consider organising an extraordinary general meeting of your Students' Union and pass a motion to occupy.
- **Do not announce the location of your occupation publicly before it happens!**
- Colonise the campus beyond the immediate space: if a part of the university is occupied, make it feel as though the whole university is. Make big flyers and banners and hang them off important buildings/in public areas. **Spam propaganda everywhere.**

Some tasks can be done better from outside of the occupation, especially if you end up in a 'siege' situation (ie if uni security won't let anyone who leaves get back in). Also, some people can't commit to being in an occupation full time but want to help out in other ways. So if you can, get a group together beforehand that can commit to taking on some of these tasks, for example getting food into the occupation, contacting and answering calls from the media, drumming up support through leafleting and doing stalls.

4.1.4   On Demands

Occupations **may or may not** have demands (some of the best have had none, only to say "we are taking this space and using it for what we feel it should be used for.") It is important that your opening meeting decides on whether there should be demands, and what they should look like.

- The "no demands" strategy alleviates a lot of the stress of having to negotiate with bastard bureaucrats. It will make clear your antagonistic stance towards the institution and its management, while allowing you to get on with all sorts of useful things in your occupied space.
- If you do make demands, at least a few should be easy to meet. There is nothing more disheartening than being defeated on everything. An example might be demanding a public meeting with the Vice-Chancellor.
- On the other hand if your demands are too "realistic", then you will have nothing to compromise on when you negotiate. University management will want to look like they have not given in to everything you asked for
- Even if you have no others, you should have a demand for "no victimization of students, and no punishment for those involved in protest." (Reassure everyone by saying that you will occupy again if any student is victimised.)
- Do NOT make a huge list of demands. To anyone outside of the occupation you will look like lunatics. As far as political statements go, less is often more.
- Often a university will want to go into negotiations with occupiers. If they do, then decide as a group if you want to take them up on this or not. If possible, record all discussions and make sure they are fully relayed to the whole group. Definitely keep documents of EVERYTHING.
- **Do not get bogged down in negotiations. If you feel negotiations are going nowhere, you're probably right.** They may be used by manag/wement to sap your energy.

4.1.5   Checklist of Things to Bring

- Bedding, tents for privacy if it's an open space
- Tools, bike locks, etc for securing doors
- Food for first night, water
- Laptops, mobile internet USB dongle
- Banners
- Flashlights
- Occupation phone + sim. (get both new and in cash for better security)
- Megaphone

4.2   The Middle

4.2.1   Internal Politics

It is important that occupations are inclusive, democratic and accessible, but exactly what this means should be decided internally.

- Many occupations have been run on the basis of "consensus decision-making" – a system where people try to make decisions acceptable to everyone, rather than just the majority
- Consensus decision-making can help to avoid fracturing the group, and is often the most practical option, but can sometimes stop decisions actually being made
- If there's a mix of political backgrounds in the room, then have a mix of decision making systems: some votes, some consensus.
- It's probably a bad idea to have a leader. **Leaders tend to end up being dicks**, and also make people far more

culpable to the authorities. People who act like leaders need to be told to shut up.

- Do not set up a "steering committee" for the same reasons, rather appoint working groups for specific tasks that are then dissolved once the task is complete. **Everyone should feel in control of the occupation as everyone else.**

- Make sure that student union sabbatical officers don't take over the occupation. They almost always have their own agendas, which likely will not be shared. Have no qualms about telling them you disagree with something, and don't accept what they say just because they got a few hundred votes in some election. Also don't let them take over all negotiations with management.

- Do not let "political factions" take over your occupation. Of course people from all political backgrounds should be welcome, but it is very unhealthy to let one clique run the show. We are yet to meet a political party that does a good job of running an occupation, and often when these groups take over (or 'caucus' before meetings and try to push decisions through) it becomes very alienating for everyone else.

- Occupations should be "safer-spaces", in which any discrimination based on gender, sexuality, disability, race, and ethnicity are actively combated. People ought to be sensitive and self-aware of their position within the group. At least one occupation has had a women-only sleeping space

- People that get sidelined and ignored in the 'real world' (for example queer folk, women, people of colour), often find the exact same thing happening to them inside occupations. If this happens to you, it's totally acceptable to organise to stand up for yourselves. Other people should support the demands of anyone trying to make the occupation a safer and more inclusive space.

- It is sensible to have a general meeting at least once daily at

a set time, so that developments can be discussed. Let these meetings run the occupation.

- **Meetings should not be allowed to go on for hours and hours.** If something complex needs doing it may be good to set up a working group, who then report back.

4.2.2 Media

Media can be massively important for any occupation. Doing good media work will allow you to get your story heard, gain support and solidarity, and exert far greater pressure. But you should also be aware that journalists may smear you, and you may have a difficult relationship with the mainstream media. Some occupations just want to be quiet and stealthy, to disrupt the university without creating a media spectacle. Here are a few things you could think about doing:

- Make a facebook group (Perhaps set up facebook account so that this is anonymous)
- Create a twitter account
- Get an email address – Gmail gives you a lot of space for free, riseup is more secure
- Make a website, where people can get quick access to information about location, updates and news, photographs, and have links to your facebook, email, twitter etc. Most occupations so far have used wordpress and run websites in a blog format as it's free and easy to use. **(See appendix B for activist-run blog services, and other online resources)**
- Do not let a single person control all of the online presence. Instead they should be collectively run.
- Someone should have a decent camera to take print-quality

photographs as newspapers will avoid sending photographers if they can. Remember to bring the connector cable for your camera!

- It's important to put out press releases at the beginning and throughout the occupation. These should be sent to local and national press, posted on your website, reddit, twitter, etc. Don't forget to send to alternative press too (like Freedom News, Strike, Occupied Times)
- Set up an email list for people who want to get updates on what has been happening in the occupation. Make sure you use it relatively regularly (an update email once a day while you're in occupation is good, detailing news, and requesting things like food or blankets).
- If possible, have a phone where you can be contacted. A new sim card with a number just for this means that you can share round the responsibility. Put this number on all your leaflets and posters
- Assign people in a rota to respond to incoming communications. You will be bombarded, but people should be responded to, and all incoming emails must be read. It is a hard job, but you must keep on top of it.

Be aware though, that **journalists are not always your friends**. Many occupations will have a "no journalists" policy, and generally it is better if you have as much control over the outgoing media as possible. Be aware that so-called "activist-journalists" can be a total liability if they do not understand the boundaries between being an activist as part of a consensual group and being an observer trying to write a story. Also, student newspapers can really dick on you. Press should be made aware of what is off limits (i.e. meetings or the whole occupation). Three things to remember:

- No-one should be photographed if they don't want to

be. People have many reasons for not wanting to be photographed and these should always be respected.
- People should use pseudonyms when talking to press.
- Unless you have absolute consensus, no meetings should be filmed or recorded other than for internal minutes.

4.2.3 Security

- Have a rota of people on "security" duty at doors 24 hours a day. It's tiresome, yes, but necessary for the occupation to keep going
- You will need a minimum two people at night. Best is to have two four-hour night shifts, and a few day shifts if necessary
- Write up a procedure on the door saying who to let in (e.g. no bailiffs, security, or zombies), and what to do (eg if uni security say it's an emergency, only let one in and make sure they are alone before you open the door)
- Security will need a megaphone or something so they can wake people up if there's an eviction attempt.
- When you are on shift, you should never acknowledge you can hear any police or court officer if they're attempting to read something (eg a statement telling occupiers to leave), or agree to pass on any messages. No court papers should be accepted.
- It's good for security to have a camera. If they record themselves telling a cop "we can't see your injunction and we won't pass it on the occupiers because that's your job", then that could prevent people in the occupation getting convicted later

4.2.4   Wellbeing

- Make sure it's not always left to the same people to do the boring work (security, emails, etc.) just as the politics and press shouldn't be taken over by a clique.
- You might consider making your occupation a drug-free space. It's not always great to get done for smoking a doobie when you're making serious political points. Eat fruit instead.
- Although hopefully not used, it's sensible for someone to have a first aid kit.
- Make a 'safe space' agreement so that it is clear what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Where possible, at the end of the occupation leave buildings as you found them. You do not want to get arrested for criminal damage. Photograph all rooms before you leave them as evidence in case you are accused of damage.
- That said, be aware of where CCTV cameras are and cover them where possible.
- **And if you are going to do something illegal, cover your face.**
- Have fun! We've seen everything from Christmas Dinner at Canterbury Christchurch, to socialist magic at the Mansion House at Middlesex. Do everything you can conceive of. Make trouble
- Pace yourself – get lots of regular sleep. If you do guard duty, try to always do the same shift so that your sleeping-patterns adjust. Make sure everyone takes breaks and gets some nights away from the occupation
- Sleep is important – try to have some of the building where lights are out and there's no noise after 10. Let people have a lie-in if they're knackered, too. Everyone has different

sleeping patterns, especially if some people are doing security

- Good food and plenty of it is vital! Have a catering group
- Many a protest camp has been ruined because everyone got sick. Have one or two people do all the washing up for a meal, rather than each person doing their own – this stops disease spreading. If you're ill, go home and rest
- Encourage supporters with regular updates – but don't stretch them too far with lot's of "omg we will be evicted tomorrow!" messages. Panic wears people down

4.2.5   Occupation as an Open Space

Having your occupation as an open space can be great. If possible, put on public meetings and events. This will help people understand what you are doing, and may attract sympathetic students to join your cause. More people getting involved also reduces the risks faced by the original occupiers. That being said, watch out for tories coming in to cause trouble, and keep all security staff and management out.

Flyer the local area with information about the occupation. Say on the flyers what it is and what it's about. Getting local support and support from students who don't personally want to occupy can be crucial to keeping an occupation going.

One good way to help people to support you is to get a phone for the occupation. Put the number on all your flyers, etc, so people who want info or who want to join can contact you. The phone can also be used to send out texts asking for support if there's an eviction. Big protest camps usuallu also have a separate phone for their media contact so that roles (welcoming, media) can be shared out better.

4.2.6   Working with Trade Unions

Universities are as much workplaces as they are places of learning. Trade unions active on campus (normally UNISON and UCU, but also sometimes UNITE) will often be sympathetic to occupations and you should get in touch with them. Ask them what you can help them with and they may be able to help you. Occupations also present an opportunity to highlight bad working conditions that often exist on British campuses, where Vice-Chancellors may earn Â£400,000 a year, while cleaners will work on the minimum wage.

4.2.7   Supporting Other Occupations

If you're lucky there will be a whole load of occupations going on at once. Here are some tips on what you can do to support each other, and keep the movement going.

- When you hear of another occupation starting, email them or phone them to send your support. Everyone loves this shit.
- If you can, send a speaker to other newer occupations to tell them about your experiences and offer support and guidance.
- Keep other occupations up-to-date with concrete changes in your conditions (i.e. what management and the courts are doing, how you have responded.)

4.2.8   Legal Advice

There is legal advice linked to in Appendix B (resources), and various organisations you may find useful are listed in Appendix A (contacts). If you are threatened with eviction the best people to contact for practical advice are the 'Advisory Service for Squatters' as they really know what they are doing! They have published a book called the 'squatters handbook', which has an excellent section on opposing evictions in court.

Many occupiers are understandably worried about the university claiming legal costs from them, if they attend court or else are named on an injunction. The issue of costs isn't simple so it is strongly recommended to get advice from people with experience of challenging evictions in court. However, squatters regularly attend court hearings and it's rare that they have to pay costs - mainly because they need your real name to be able to claim any!

4.3   The End

4.3.1   Ending the Occupation

Decide together when to leave. Organise a rally, have a demonstration, make a whole lot of noise. Contact all your supporters and ask them to greet you outside the building when the time comes. If you are being threatened with disciplinary or legal actions people must be allowed to make their own choices on whether they want to stay or leave.

If management take out injunctions on occupiers, **do not panic!** Contact a good lawyer (if you can find someone who specialises

in property law, this is very useful). Often solicitors will be over-cautious (it's their job). There is normally no need to leave until the bailiffs arrive and manage to gain entry. Police may be on the scene of any eviction. Do everything you can to avoid arrest. Consider leaving as a big group and linking arms to prevent police picking people off. If people do want to get arrested, then this is a personal decision that they must judge themselves.

4.3.2   Why resist eviction

Resisting eviction will mean you get to keep the space you have occupied longer – if they think you will resist then it takes a lot longer to plan and prepare for an eviction. Just *preparing* to resist doesn't mean you will have to – making it clear that you can is often enough to deter bailiffs. Barricades, etc all need to be assessed before an eviction attempt is made, which takes time. That's not the only reason to resist though, resisting eviction also. . .

- Costs university management more money (furthering the aim of the occupation)
- Means you leave on your own terms, rather than theirs

Note that this section is about **physically** resisting an eviction of an occupation. There are other ways to resist – through the courts, for example. And there's no harm in retreating to fight again elsewhere! This section does not discuss what is legal or acceptable. The most effective ways to resist eviction are not necessarily the best thing for your campaign, or what you are comfortable with personally.

4.3.3 How an ordinary eviction happens

A normal eviction roughly follows the pattern below. Not always – sometimes security will just bust in on your first day, sometimes the first eviction attempt will be massive – but on average, this is what happens:

1. **Papers** – The university will give you papers, telling you to leave by a certain date or that there is a court date you can attend to defend your right to be there (exactly what they say depends on the legal route the university is taking). There is almost always a chance to go to court either to appeal or to challenge the university's right to evict you, even if they get an injunction. It's worth going in order to slow the process down – though sometimes university lawyers will screw up and you will be able to use a technical defence. At the end of any court process, you will be given a date you have to leave by – an eviction can happen any time after this date!

2. **First attempt** – Don't count on it, but the first attempt at eviction probably won't be all that big, and will usually be on the date you were told to leave by (but once again, don't count on it). The reason for this is that it is cheaper for bailiffs to turn up with small numbers at a reasonable hour on the off chance that this is enough to make you leave. If they do this, a decent crowd and a bit of resistance from inside should be enough to see them off. If your occupation is very high profile, they may just skip this first attempt entirely and start big. . . .

3. **Second attempt** – If you manage to resist the first attempt, the next one will be far greater. For one thing, they will al-

most certainly come at first light or just before (night-time evictions happen but are a bit of a health and safety nightmare, so it isn't common). They will come with a well prepared force of bailiffs and police, which will be even harder to resist because your supporters are all asleep and far away. If it doesn't look like you will be able to stop them getting in, it's probably best to either escape out the back or let them take you out peacefully. By and large they will just let people walk out if they've stopped resisting (once again, don't count on it!). Getting your stuff back may be a problem, so keep anything expensive/important with you when you go, to make sure it doesn't get lost or seized by the police. These attempts can happen on any day and at any time – but are more likely to be during week days (weekends can mean overtime pay, and more people around to resist), and as it was said above – tend to not be during evenings and the dead of night.

4.3.4   What works...

There are three things that will convince the university management not to evict you:

1. **Image** – some management teams are afraid that a violent eviction will cause 'brand damage' to their university, and will avoid it for this reason. This may help you up to a point, but if your occupation becomes enough of a threat to them, then this concern is unlikely to hold them back. At the end of the day, hurting a few students will not really concern them, and definitely will not bother any bailiffs or police carrying out the eviction

2. **Cost** – if it looks like it will cost too much to evict you,

then sometimes management will not bother. HOWEVER, once they have committed to an eviction, it isn't normal for them to pull out even if it will cost lots of money. This is because backing down will make them look weak, and encourage more occupations everywhere. What costing them money does do is make them more likely to accept your demands beforehand, and listen to students more generally, in order to avoid an occupation in the first place. For example, during the road protest movement of the 90's, corporations and the police would spend millions evicting protest camps, because even if the cost was not worth it in the short term, the danger of backing down was too great. However, the threat of protest camps did scare them away from starting projects in the first place – that was their main effect.

3. **Physical Force** – ultimately, it normally comes down to this. Physical force can be passive, like a barricade that is hard to move, or a person chained to something. It can also be active, like a person holding a door shut, or a crowd of angry people stood outside the occupation. All passive barriers can be removed in the end – barricades can be dismantled, and lock-ons cut. HOWEVER, when combined with active resistance, it isn't always possible to remove them. It's one thing for a calm bailiff with plenty of time to break down a door, but very different if that bailiff is getting pushed and shouted at by a crowd, or if that bailiff has to worry that someone inside will jab him with a snooker cue. Squatters throughout Europe have successfully used active resistance to defend spaces from the police for long periods of time. Note that with active resistance it isn't what you actually do that is important – it is what the police think you are prepared to do. If **they** think that you are prepared to resist vigorously, then they won't even try to evict without a clear advantage in numbers.

The key to active resistance is time – your barricades and security need to be good enough that people in the occupation will have a chance to get themselves together and start defending before bailiffs/police get through. If the people inside can force the bailiffs to retreat then that's all well and good, but if not – the key now becomes getting a crowd of people outside. This will make the police less likely to break the law, and they will normally retreat when the crowd outnumbers them. So, the people inside need to hold the bailiffs off long enough to get a crowd of people outside.

Tips

- There seems to be some kind of health and safety regulation in place that means police without climbing training do not climb anything above six foot in height – at least, they're hesitant about it. Use this to your advantage!
- Bailiffs hate having to get people down from roofs. If you can get people onto one, you will probably be able to stay up there for ages! (the reason is that roofs are easy to fall through – and bailiffs have been seriously hurt trying to get people off of them in the past)
- An eviction can happen at any time, be prepared! However, the big ones are most likely to happen towards the end of the night/at first light, so be ready to get woken up early
- Have an escape plan – sometimes it's best to get out once resistance has been worn down
- Get together phone numbers of supporters so you can text them as soon as an eviction starts and get them to help as soon as possible. Many phones have an option to set up 'distribution lists' to do mass-texts quickly – so try and get one of these for your occupation, and keep enough credit to text everyone in an emergency

- Be careful of sending too many call-outs for help to supporters – it will wear them down and then they won't come to the real thing (remember the story about the boy who cried wolf?). If you must send texts out, try to be accurate, like "there's lots of police outside and we think it's an eviction, it may not be but please come down asap anyway!"
- Make sure all doors are at least a bit barricaded. Even if your barricades can be broken without much effort, you'll know something is happening, and it stops security just wandering in at night and getting you to leave
- Be careful what people take pictures of – for example pictures of barricades or people making them! Images on social media can be used to work out the weakest points when planning an eviction, and anything that police think is criminal damage could get someone arrested. If there is an eviction resistance, anyone the university can identify being involved will risk getting in trouble
- If there's an illegal eviction, consider calling the police – even if it is the police doing it! The legal system is stacked against us, but police sometimes help when they are obviously in the wrong. Police must also log all calls, so calling the police on the police could help in any court cases later
- Beware of panic – police and bailiffs want to wear you down so you have less energy to resist when eviction really happens

4.3.5 Lock-ons

Lock-ons (where people lock or chain themselves to things) can help resist eviction – for a time – but there are a few things worth noting. First off: they are effective at making the eviction take ages and cost more money, so used at the right place and time

they are good. However, there is a lot of bad. For one thing, being in a lock-on is risky – the point of lock-ons is to make it unsafe to move you, but by definition this means you take the risk of them trying anyway and seriously hurting you. So it is EXTREMELY important that anyone in a lock-on has supporters with cameras on them at all times, and that there are clear signs posted up (like 'if you open this gate the person chained to it will die!'). Some bailiff firms (for example, Constant and Co) will still happily break your legs in order to evict you. The other problem with passive resistance involving people is that it actually blocks people taking active resistance. For example, if there is someone chained to a door of your occupation, the police know they can enter that way safely, without anything getting chucked at them or anyone fighting them – because to do so would endanger the person chained to the door. So in some circumstances, lock-ons can make you easier to evict, rather than harder. Finally, if you are in a lock-on there is no way for you to get away – so if it is breaking the law, you will almost certainly be arrested and prosecuted. The court process may then take away a lot of your time and energy, long after the occupation is over.

That said, here are some tactics that protesters have used in the past:

- **Nets** – nets suspended from a high ceiling are hard to remove, and need bailiffs with specialist climbing equipment
- **Tripods** – a tripod is made of either three big pieces of scaffolding or three lengths of bamboo. When set up with someone at the top of one, they are hard to move without hurting the person at the top. Police sometimes need a cherry-picker to get someone down. These are more useful for blocking roads, but could be used inside of a big building.
- **D-Locks** – bike 'd-locks' fit snugly around your neck, and can be attached to doors and other people. There is a tool

that can remove a d-lock in seconds, but if police did not expect to need it, then it will take them a while to get hold of one

- **Arm-tubes** – since handcuffs are easy to get off, most people link themselves together these days by attaching their hands inside of an 'arm tube', made of metal. To remove one of these either means the police must use a special tool to get inside the tube and release the locking mechanism (normally a caribena), or else use a tool to cut through the tube without also cutting the arms inside.
- **Barrels** – like the arm tube, but instead of having one person at each side, one end of the tube is immersed in a barrel of concrete. Once again, police must either get a tool into the tube and release the locking mechanism, or cut through the barrel

See "Delia Smith's Guide to Basic Blockading", for more information on making these (link in appendix B)

4.3.6   Know your enemy

There are four groups of people that could be involved in your eviction – Uni Security, Police, Bailiffs, and Vigilantes.

Uni Security

- Have crowbars and bolt-croppers **at most**, and so rely on physical strength to get you out
- Can respond the quickest
- Are (mostly) inexperienced with evictions and the law
- Are VERY unlikely to climb to evict you

- Work with students a lot so may be sympathetic (for this reason, universities will often bring in private security from outside to deal with protests)
- Have limited numbers

Police

- Need a pretext to evict – a possession order or ordinary trespass isn't enough for them to be involved – there needs to be a crime (such as 'aggravated trespass' or 'criminal damage'), or an 'interim possession order' (IPO) in place
    - BUT they will often 'assist' evictions – hitting occupiers for the smallest thing and turning a blind eye whenever the bailiffs break the law
    - It is worth filming the police as they often do more than they are allowed to
- Sometimes have experience of evictions, but also sometimes the police that get sent won't have a clue what they're doing
- Police can gather HUGE numbers – but it will take a long time for them to mobilise and they will be reluctant to do this, as it means paying overtime
- Are not supposed to climb above six feet without climbing training, and may not even have a climbing team present
- Have special tools (eg for d-locks), battering rams, circular saws, angle grinders, and more. BUT it will take time to get these if they weren't expecting to need them
- May have cherry pickers and rope teams if they plan to enter via the roof or upper windows

Bailiffs

- Don't always follow the law – sometimes they're far-right or other "wrong-uns". If you find out which firm will be evicting you, ask local squatters for advice about them
- Legally, tend to need a court order and will be employed by the university
- Are VERY experienced in evictions – it's their job
- If it's a serious attempt at eviction, are likely to have all of the tools
- May have cherry pickers
- **May** have a climb team – but they don't normally like it, as bailiffs have been injured falling through roofs in the past
- Will normally make at least two attempts – one at a reasonable hour with few bailiffs to try their luck and get a feel for the place, then a serious one at 5am with large numbers and police backup

Vigilantes

- There have not been any recent cases of this at UK student occupations, but **very rarely** it has happened at other protest camps and squats
- Can be very dangerous – willing to break the law and injure people
- Tend to be haphazard, and often drunk
- Best dealt with by, ironically, vigilance and robust self-defence. DO NOT rely on police help

4.3.7 Barricading

No barricade will last forever on its own – it needs someone to defend it. So, the point of barricades is to buy you time – to wake up and get ready, or to gather a crowd of supporters to help you resist.

Doors

Doors opening into the occupied space are the easiest to secure because you can barricade them closed. Unfortunately doors in newer buildings tend to open outwards, which is a pain as you have to secure the door independently of the barricade. Different doors have different types of handles and are thus secured in different ways. Be creative! When you plan your barricading, remember to think about whether each door can be a potential escape route, a covert entry, or a fire escape. Doors which you'll want to use later need barricades that can be easily dismantled from inside!

Some tips for all kinds of doors . . .

- With all doors, make sure that once they are secured, they cannot be opened even an inch – any opening can be used by bailiffs to get cutting tools inside and break locks. For doors that you need to be able to open again, D-locks or even carabiners can be used to make it easy to un-lock from the inside.
- One good way to stop a door being opened inwards is to use 'bracing', where a strong, short length of wood is placed between the middle of the door and the floor, to make a triangle. This only works if it is tight against both surfaces, so it's hard to do unless you have the exact right length of wood. It also needs to be against something fixed on the

door and something solid on the floor. Many squatters do this by fastening one block of wood to the floor, and one to the door, measured to fit the length of wood exactly (see Figure 4.1)

Figure 4.1: Using bracing to secure a door

- If you are willing to damage doors, it is possible to use a hand drill to add bolts, etc. Local squatters may be able to show you how to change locks. But be careful, as this could get you in trouble with the law!
- Speaking of damage, think about how likely it is that management will be willing to damage doors to get in. If the doors are old or historic, they may not want to let bailiffs run a circular saw through the middle! Use this to your advantage
- To make something hard to cut through, use a mix of materials. A wood door is easy to get through with a circular saw, but not if it has a layer of something else behind it (eg metal). Angle-grinders are not supposed to cut plastic, especially polystyrene as it can melt onto the disc
- External screws attached to barricades can be ground down or covered up, as bailiffs will go for them when trying to dis-

mantle the barricade. (Beware that this will make it harder for you to dismantle when you leave, though!) The best bolts for securing a barricade to a wall are 'anchor bolts' - these expand when they are tightened and are very strong

- "Weighted barricades" are good, so long as you have enough junk and don't want to use the door/opening again. The idea is to pile things against a door so that they will fall onto anyone who forces it open. Stairs can be secured in a similar way, if you have something big to lean from the steps to the ceiling

- Finally, remember that there are two ways to force a door open – battering it from outside, obviously, but also by crow-barring it. So you can't rely on it only opening in one direction forever. A lock is only as strong as the door it's on, a door is only as strong as it's frame.
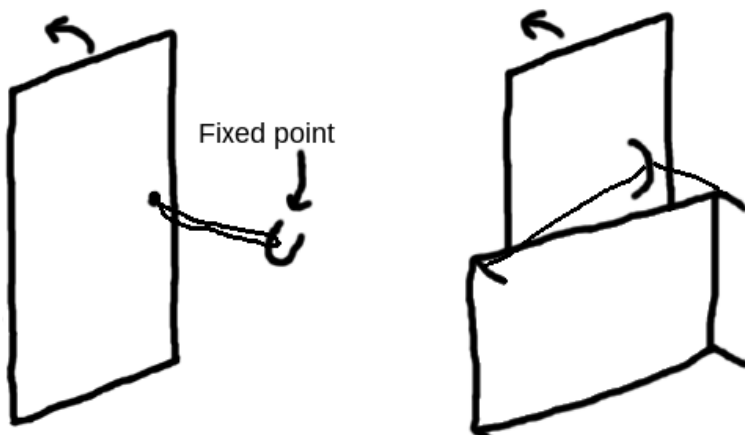
Here are some examples . . .

Figure 4.2: For doors with handles that open outwards, tie one end of a cable lock around the door handle. Tie the other end to a structural support (eg a pillar) or other fixed point. If no structural supports are available, use a piece of furniture or a large block of wood that is bigger than the door frame.
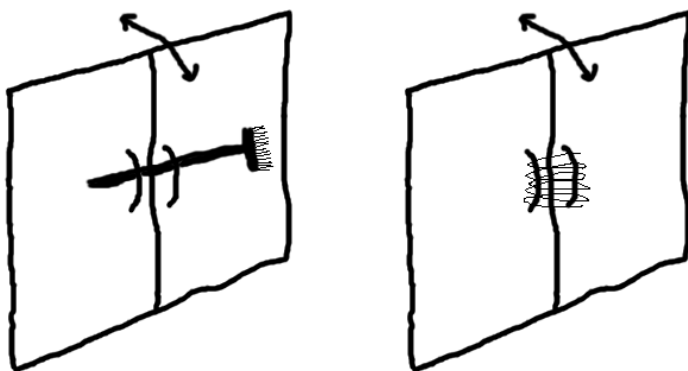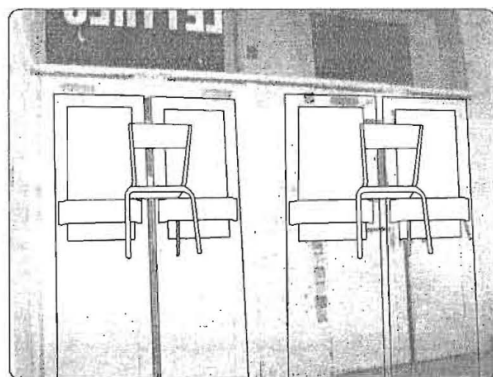

Figure 4.3: For double doors, shove a broom between the handles! Even better, use a metal bar. Alternatively, tie the handles together. Make it tight – there's no point if the door can be opened wide enough to cut the rope

High school occupation during anti-CPE struggle, France 2006

Figure 4.4: For doors with bars (eg fire doors), you can stick a chair between the bars, or tie a cable around the bars as above - so long as there is space between the bars **(image source – Occupation: a Do it Yourself Guide)**
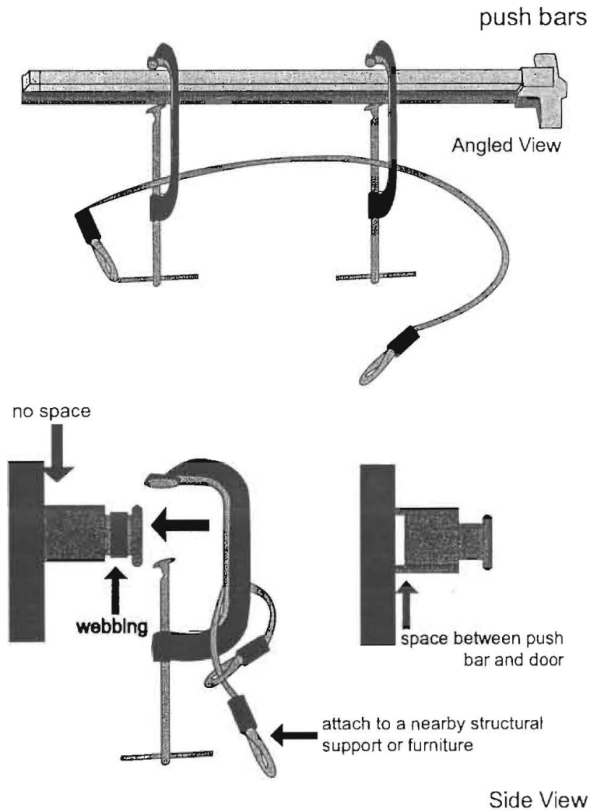
push bars

Angled View

no space

webbing

space between push
bar and door

attach to a nearby structural
support or furniture

Side View

Figure 4.5: When doors with bars have no space for a cable, secure a "G-clamp" to the bar. Loop a cable lock (or rope, or cable tie) through the space created by the clamp. Note that some fire doors can't be opened from outside anyway, and won't need barricading at all. **(image source – Occupation: a Do it Yourself Guide)**
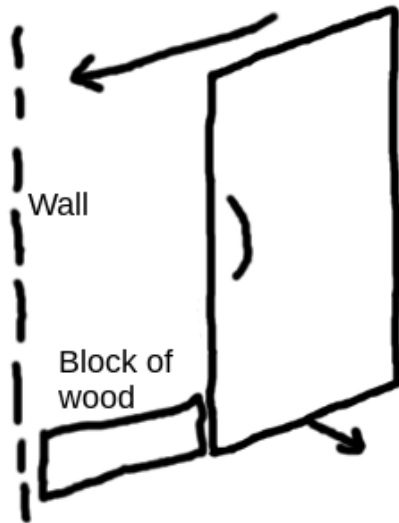
Figure 4.6: Sliding doors can be blocked from sliding open easily, using a block of wood that's the right size. Many sliding doors can still be pushed open with force, so think about using other types of barricade too.

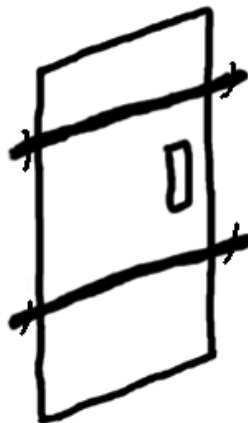(a) Attach bolts to a door so you can get out if needed.

(b) Hinges are strong, so good for quickly securing a door to the frame.

Figure 4.7: Other options...

(a) Change the door! If it is too hard to secure a door that opens outwards, just remove and reverse the hinges.

(b) Though it takes time, installing a bar across a door adds a lot of strength AND can be removed easily when leaving.

Figure 4.8: Other options...

Figure 4.9: If nothing else works... Build a giant wall of "tat". The combined weight stops the door from opening inwards, and if it's opened outwards things will fall on whoever is opening it. Keep materials on hand to pile on to doors which bailiffs are trying to open.

Windows

Windows are a nightmare to secure – they can be smashed open and the locks are often weak. Ground floor windows are the worst – if you can avoid these or simply isolate them, then you should (eg by securing the door to the room the window is in instead, or securing the stairs to the first floor). Upper-floor windows aren't safe, though they are much harder for bailiffs to get through. However a serious eviction attempt will have a cherry-picker, and may even have "climb-teams", so watch out.

The good news about windows is that whoever is evicting you cannot get lots of people through at once, and may be hesitant about breaking them. If you are not in a "siege" situation (eg you aren't expecting a big eviction attempt), you may be safe to just ignore them, so long as they are kept CLOSED. Windows do gain an occupation a lot as well – visibility, and a way to get supplies and people inside. So there's something to be said for just accepting the risk.

Roofs

Roofs are good points for defence (it's hard to get people down), but are a risk too. Check if any of the roofs around you have access to the occupation. Doors from the roof may need to be secured. Windows next to a lower-level roof are also a risk. The key with a roof is to take it first – and they can be a good look-out point for anyone on night watch if they are safe. The danger from falling is so great (bailiffs and police have been injured by falling through roofs in squat evictions), that just having people up there can be enough to deter an eviction. Climbing teams need to move slowly at heights, so a group of people free to move around and

evade them can last as long as someone "locked-on" to a barrel of concrete in this situation. So long as you look dangerous, police and bailiffs will not want to try and get you down from a roof. Especially if there are things up there that could be thrown down – even if you know that they will never be used that way, police don't!

4.3.8   The Aftermath

A big mistake is to just assume after an occupation that momentum will keep going and things will keep happening – but it doesn't. Once there is no longer a central location where people are together a lot and where meetings take place, it takes a lot more work to make anything happen. So have some idea about what you want to do next before you leave.

At the least, you should organise a 'debrief' for everyone who was active in the occupation, especially if you got kicked out. This can be used to assess what you did well/badly, but the main purpose is to help people think through their feelings and to get the group together. In the aftermath of a massive effort a lot of people will be burnt out and need support, and if you had a violent eviction some people will be at risk of trauma. Taking care of each other and working out a sustainable pace is vital if you want to carry the energy from your occupation forward to something else.

Appendix A

Contacts and Organisations

A.1   Movement Support

A.1.1   Technical

- RiseUp! – `https://riseup.net/` – provides secure email, lists, tech advice and other services
- NoFlag – `https://noflag.org.uk/` – provides secure web hosting and email to progressive groups
- Network23 – `https://network23.org/` – secure, activist-run blog service
- NoBlogs – `http://noblogs.org/` – another activist-run blog service

A.1.2 Training/Resources

- Seeds for Change – `http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/` – provides guides and training on consensus, facilitating meetings, working with the media, and more
- Tripod Collective – `http://tripodtraining.org/` – provides training on organising and direct action, covering things such as consensus decision making, using the media, non-hierarchical organising
- London Roots Collective – `https://network23.org/londonrootscollective/` – provides workshops/skillshares
- Green and Black Cross – `https://greenandblackcross.org/` – provides "know your rights" trainings
- Students for Cooperation – `http://www.students.coop/` – has an extensive list of resources about student organising in general, as well as resources for setting up student co-operatives. Also able to provide training, for example on consensus decision-making and facilitation
- Libcom – `https://libcom.org/organise` – has a number of articles on organising, as well as a large number of radical texts available for free
- SolFed `http://www.solfed.org.uk/` – provide training on organising in the workplace
- The IWW – `https://iww.org.uk/` – also provides training on organising in the workplace
- Anarchist Action Network – `https://www.anarchistaction.net/` – may be able to do workshops, for example on being effective at demonstrations

A.1.3 Legal

- Local arrestee support/defendant solidarity groups:
  - Bristol Defendant Solidarity `http://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-solidarity/`
  - GBC local groups (currently London, Brighton, Leeds, Leicester, Manchester, Wales) `https://greenandblackcross.org/get-involved/local-groups/`
- Green and Black Cross – `http://greenandblackcross.org/` – provides things like street medics, legal support, etc
- Legal Defence and Monitoring Group – `http://ldmg.org.uk/` – provides legal observers, court support, advice on arrest, etc
- Stop Watch – `http://www.stop-watch.org/` – campaign group monitoring the use of stop and search by the police, especially racist stop-and-search. Has statistics, know-your-rights information, etc
- Activists' Legal Project – `http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk/` – leaflets and info on direct action and the law
- Scottish Activist Legal Project – `https://scalp.noflag.org.uk/` – protest law in Scotland has important differences to the law in England and Wales (for example, "Breach of the Peace" is a serious offence in Scottland). This site has guides put together in 2009 about some of the main differences

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A.1.4   Alternative Media

- Freedom News – http://freedomnews.org.uk/
- Resistance (newsletter of the Anarchist Federation) – http://www.afed.org.uk/publications/resistance-bulletin.html
- Catalyst (newsletter of the Solidarity Federation) – http://www.solfed.org.uk/catalyst
- 325 – http://325.nostate.net/
- Indymedia (open publishing) – http://www.indymedia.org.uk/
- Rabble – http://rabble.org.uk/
- Corporate Watch – http://www.corporatewatch.org/
- Libcom – https://libcom.org/
- Reel News – http://reelnews.co.uk/
- Dissident Island Radio – http://www.dissidentisland.org/
- The Occupied Times – http://theoccupiedtimes.org/
- Strike! Magazine – http://strikemag.org/

Many towns and cities have their own alternative newsletters – ask around!

A.1.5   Misc

- Activist Trauma Support – https://www.activist-trauma.net/ – information for activists who have experienced trauma and other mental-health issues
- Counselling for Social Change – http://www.counsellingforsocialchange.org.uk/ – provides affordable counselling for people "working to make a difference"

- Network for Police Monitoring – http://netpol.org/ – "Netpol seeks to monitor public order, protest and street policing, and to challenge and resist policing which is excessive, discriminatory or threatens civil rights"
- Defend the Right to Protest – http://www.defendtherighttoprotest.org/
- Electronic Frontier Foundation – https://www.eff.org/ – U.S-based digital rights campaigning organisation
- Tactical Technology Collective – https://tacticaltech.org/ – organisation dedicated to the use of information in activism. Provides security information and more
- Active Distribution – http://www.activedistributionshop.org – Radical publishers of books, zines, stickers, etc
- AK Press – http://www.akpress.org/ – Radical publishers
- Advisory Service for Squatters – http://www.squatter.org.uk/ | (020)- 3216-0099 – an unpaid collective of workers who have been running a daily advice service for squatters and homeless people since 1975

A.2 UK Student and Education Worker Groups

A.2.1 National Student Groups

- Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Universities Network – http://universities.caat.org.uk/
- Youth and Student Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – http://www.yscnd.org
- IWW Student Workers – https://iww.org.uk/students

- National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts – http://anticuts.com/
- Student Assembly Against Austerity – http://www.thestudentassembly.org.uk/
- Students for Cooperation – http://www.students.coop/
- Students Against TTIP – http://www.studentsagainstttip.com/

A.2.2 National Education Worker's Groups

- Education Workers Network – SolFed – http://www.solfed.org.uk/network/ewn
- IWW Education – https://iww.org.uk/education
- UCU – http://www.ucu.org.uk/
- UCU Left – http://uculeft.org/
- Fighting Against Casualisation in Education – http://fightingcasualisation.org/

A.2.3 Local groups

(all in alphabetical order of the university they are with)

- **Aberdeen Defend Education:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/883164551797033/
- **Aberdeen Student Left:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/aberdeenstudentleft/ | aberdeenstudentleft [at] gmail.com
- **Defend Education Aberystwyth:** https://www.

facebook.com/groups/aberradicalforum/ | aberstudentsagainstcuts [at] gmail.com

- **Bath Students Against Fees and Cuts:** - https://www.facebook.com/freeeducationbath | bathstudents [at] gmail.com
- **Bath Spa Activists:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/421615544571979/ | https://www.facebook.com/BathSpaActivists
- **Defend Education Birmingham:** https://www.facebook.com/defendeducationbrum | https://www.facebook.com/groups/234496556716798/
- **Bloomsbury Fightback:** https://www.facebook.com/bloomsburyfightback | bloomsburyfightback [at] gmail.com
- **Free Education Brighton:** https://www.facebook.com/defendedbrighton
- **Bristol Reclaim Education:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/bristol.left/ | breducation [at] riseup.net
- **Cambridge Defend Education:** https://www.facebook.com/camdefendeducation | camdefendeducation [at] gmail.com
- **Chichester For Free Education:** https://www.facebook.com/FreeEducationChichester
- **Libertarian Left Collective Dundee:** https://www.facebook.com/pages/Libertarian-Left-Collective-Dundee/464145450294560 | libertarianlfront [at] gmail.com
- **Edinburgh University Anti-Cuts Coalition:** https://www.facebook.com/EdinUniAntiCuts | edinburghanticuts [at] gmail.com
- **Edinburgh University Anarchist Society:** http://euas.noflag.org.uk/ | equalitylibertyrespect [at] gmail.com

- **Zapatista Solidarity Group Essex:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Zapatista-Solidarity-Group-Essex/318692894816225` | `https://www.facebook.com/groups/855799271111758/`
- **Essex Autonomous Students:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Essex-Autonomous-Students/800565496635921` | essexautonomousstudents [at] riseup.net
- **Exeter Defend Education:** `https://www.facebook.com/groups/682427521769717/` | `https://www.facebook.com/defendeducationexeter`
- **Exeter Socialist Students:** `https://www.facebook.com/Exetersocstu` | exetersocialiststudents [at] gmail.com
- **Gloucester Students Campaign Information:** `https://www.facebook.com/groups/593902747330479/`
- **Goldsmith's Solidarity Network:** `https://www.facebook.com/solidaritygoldsmiths` | goldsmiths.solidarity.network [at] gmail.com
- **Goldsmith's Disorganised Left:** `https://www.facebook.com/disorganised.left` | disorganised.left [at] riseup.net
- **Occupy Goldsmith's:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Occupy-Goldsmiths-Free-University-of-London/377711675763865`
- **Occupy Kings College London:** `https://www.facebook.com/OccupyKCL` | okingscl [at] gmail.com
- **Lancaster University Occupation:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lancaster-University-Occupation/1495233677404136` | autonomousstudents [at] riseup.net
- **Lancaster University Anti-Capitalists:** `https://www.facebook.com/groups/lancsuniagainstcuts/` | lancs-uni-anti-capitalists [at] lists.riseup.net

- **Leeds For Free Education:** `https://www.facebook.com/leedsforfreeeducation`
- **Leeds Student Resistance:** `https://www.facebook.com/LeedsStudentResistance` | leedsstudentresistance [at] riseup.net
- **Leicester Left Network:** `https://www.facebook.com/leicesterlefties`
- **Free University of London:** `https://www.facebook.com/FreeUniversityOfLondon/timeline` | freeuniversity-london [at] gmail.com
- **Occupy LSE:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Occupy-LSE-Free-University-of-London/403346286492972`
- **Free Education Manchester:** `https://www.facebook.com/freeeducationmcr` | freeeducationmcr [at] gmail.com
- **Free Education MMU:** `https://www.facebook.com/FreeEdMMU`
- **Newcastle Free Education Network:** `https://www.facebook.com/ncluniocc/` | contactnfen [at] gmail.com
- **Defend Education Northumbria:** `https://www.facebook.com/pages/Defend-Education-Northumbria/193854947488503`
- **University of Nottingham Free Education:** `https://www.facebook.com/UoNFreeEducation` | `https://www.facebook.com/groups/919202964774360/`
- **University of Nottingham Left Society:** `https://www.facebook.com/UoNLeftSoc` | `https://www.facebook.com/groups/UoN.Left.Soc/`
- **Oxford Defend Education:** `https://www.facebook.com/oxforddefendeducation`
- **Royal Holloway Anti-Cuts Alliance:** `https://www.facebook.com/RhulAntiCuts` | royalhollowayanti-

cutsalliance [at] gmail.com

- **Free University of Sheffield:** https://www.facebook.com/thefreeuniversityofsheffield | freeunisheff [at] riseup.net
- **Sheffield Autonomous Students:** https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sheffield-Autonomous-Students/812354595452700 | sheffieldautonomousstudents [at] riseup.net
- **SOAS Anarchist Student Society (SASS):** https://www.facebook.com/pages/SASS-SOAS-Anarchist-Student-Society/538020539627334 | soasanarchistsoc [at] riseup.net
- **SOAS Anti-Cuts:** https://www.facebook.com/Anticutssoas | https://www.facebook.com/groups/242832632432432/
- **South West for Free Education:** https://www.facebook.com/SW4FreeEducation | https://www.facebook.com/groups/628475047258600/
- **Sussex Anarchist Society:** https://www.facebook.com/pages/A-Soc-Sussex/922724157762491 | anarchist [at] ussu.sussex.ac.uk
- **Free Education Sussex:** https://www.facebook.com/freeedsussex | freeeducationsussex [at] gmail.com
- **Teeside Free Education Campaign:** https://www.facebook.com/TeesFreeEducation | https://www.facebook.com/groups/156106277742122
- **York Campaign for Free Education:** https://www.facebook.com/yorkforfreeeducation/timeline
- **Occupy UAL:** https://www.facebook.com/occupyual | occupyual [at] gmail.com
- **UCL Defend Education:** https://www.facebook.com/ucldefendeducation | https://www.facebook.com/

groups/710928335646750/

- **Defend Education UEA:** https://www.facebook.com/DefendEducationUEA | https://www.facebook.com/groups/454483321345627/
- **Free Education UWE:** https://www.facebook.com/FreeEducationUWE
- **Warwick for Free Education:** https://www.facebook.com/groups/1479037302370939/ | https://www.facebook.com/WarwickFreeEducation
- **Warwick ASN:** https://www.facebook.com/WarwickASN | http://warwickasn.wordpress.com/
- **Protect the Public University – Warwick:** https://www.facebook.com/ppuwarwick | warwickagainstprivatization [at] gmail.com

A.3 Global Contacts

The International Students Movement: http://ism-global.net/

- Revolutionary Student's Collective (Burma): https://fb.com/pages/Revolutionary-Student-Collective/267652743425169
- Et Andet Universitet (Denmark): https://fb.com/etandetuniversitet | etandetuniversitet [at] gmail.com
- Solidaires Étudiant-e-s (France): http://www.solidaires-etudiant.org/syndicats/ | https://fb.com/solidairesetudiantes
- Conférence Universitaire des Associations d'EtudiantEs (Geneva): http://www.cuae.ch/
- Free Education Movement Marburg (Germany): http://

www.freedumm.net

- Indonesian Students Union (SMI): https://kppsmi.wordpress.com/
- Malaysian Youth and Students' Democratic Movement (DEMA): http://demamalaysia.com/
- Student Union for the Change of the Educational System in Morocco: https://fb.com/uecse
- All Nepal Free Student's Union: http://annfsu.org.np/
- National Student Federation (Pakistan): https://fb.com/nsfsindh
- League of Filipino Students: http://www.lfs.ph/ | lfsphilippines [at] gmail.com | https://fb.com/elepsPH/
- Students for a Democratic Society (US) http://www.newsds.org/
- L'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (ASSÉ, Quebec): http://www.asse-solidarite.qc.ca/ | https://fb.com/asse.solidarite

Appendix B

Resources

B.1 Organising

B.1.1 Direct Democracy

- Direct Democracy on Campus Powerpoint (Organise 2013)
  – http://organise2013.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/direct-democracy-on-campus11.pptx
- Why We All Need Safer Spaces (Floaker) – http://floaker.net/2013/03/31/organised-safer-space-2/
- Consensus decision making & facilitation handbook (Seeds For Change) – http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/handbook
- Direct Democracy, Grassroots Mobilization and the Quebec Student Movement – http://thisisclasswar.info/mehreen.html
- The Occupation Cookbook –

http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/
uploads/2011/03/occupationcookbook-web.pdf
(also available from AK Press)

B.1.2   Meetings

- Idiots Guide to Meetings (Schnews) – http://www.
  schnews.org.uk/diyguide/idiotsguidetomeetings.htm
- Organising Successful Meetings (Seeds for Change) – http:
  //www.seedsforchange.org.uk/meeting
- Making Meetings Accessible (Seeds for Change) –
  http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/accessiblemtg
- The "Master Suppression Techniques" is a useful tool for
  understanding how people get excluded from meetings –
  https://theviolentminority.wordpress.com/2013/06/
  02/how-to-oppress-people-in-meetings/
- Guide to online meetings – http://ismuk.wordpress.com/
  resources-2/organising/guide-to-ism-uk-online-
  meetings/

B.1.3   Events and Campaigns

- Guide to public speaking (Rising Tide) – http:
  //risingtide.org.uk/resources/factsheets/speaking
- Guide to organising events (Student Action for Refugees)
  – http://www.star-network.org.uk/images/uploads/
  documents/7._Events_guide_full_version_2012-
  13_.pdf
- Access Issues at Events (Seeds for Change) –
  http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/access

- Planning a Campaign (Seeds for Change) – http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/strategy
- Road Protest Camp Tips (contains some good advice on basic campaigning) – http://www.eco-action.org/rr/
- Ideas for encouraging people to join and stay in your group (Seeds for Change) – http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/checklist.pdf
- Good publicity and outreach (Seeds for Change) – http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/publicity

B.1.4   Legal Support

- How to set up a legal support team (NetPol) – http://netpol.org/monitoring/legal-observers/how-to-set-up-a-legal-support-team/
- How to be a legal observer (NetPol) – http://netpol.org/monitoring/legal-observers/how-to-be-a-legal-observer/
- Guide to Police Station Support (GBC) – https://greenandblackcross.org/guides/police-station-support/
- Guide to Court Support (GBC) – https://greenandblackcross.org/guides/supporting-people-when-going-to-court/
- If your friend is arrested. . . (GBC) – https://greenandblackcross.org/guides/friend-arrested/
- Supporting someone through the legal system (Bristol Defendant Solidarity) – https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-solidarity/resources-and-advice/supporting-someone-through-the-legal-system/

B.1.5   Media

- Dealing with the Mainstream Media (Seeds for Change) – http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/media
- Urban75 guide to exploiting the media – http://www.urban75.com/Action/media.html
- 10-step guide to a hard-hitting action media team – http://www.mediafire.com/download/z4t8tz70dskdkev/ActionMediaTeam.pdf
- Guide to dealing with the corporate media (LibCom) – http://www.libcom.org/organise/guide-to-dealing-with-the-corporate-media
- Independent Media Guide – newsletters, flyposting, stalls, etc (LibCom) – http://www.libcom.org/organise/independent-media-guide
- How to set up a local newsletter – http://www.eco-action.org/porkbolter/howto.html

B.1.6   Mental Health and Sustainable Activism

- Sustainable activism and avoiding burnout (Activist Trauma Support) – http://www.activist-trauma.net/assets/files/burnout_flyer_rightway.pdf
- Emotional First-Aid card for activists (No Borders Stockholm) – https://web.archive.org/web/20130509213131/http://www.noborderstockholm.org/uploads/EMO-card-pdf.pdf
- Mindful Occupation – Rising up without burning out – http://mindfuloccupation.org/

- Class struggle and mental health: Live to fight another day (libcom) – http://libcom.org/library/class-struggle-mental-health-live-fight-another-day

B.1.7 Security

- Activist Security Handbook – https://web.archive.org/web/20151006155614/http://www.activistsecurity.org/
- EFF Guide to Surveillance Self-Defence – http://ssd.eff.org/
- Riseup guide to computer security – http://help.riseup.net/en/security
- Security and Counter-Surveillance (advanced guide to security) – http://325.nostate.net/library/security-countersurveillance.pdf

B.2 Action

- How students can support striking higher education staff (SolFed Education Workers Network) – http://www.solfed.org.uk/ewn/how-students-can-support-striking-higher-education-staff
- Fighting Back – A Guide to Protests, Police, and the Law for Student Activists (Bristol AFed) – http://bristolaf.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/booka4_booklet2.pdf
- Blockade, Occupy, Strike Back – a how-to guide from Montreal about occupations, security awareness, street demonstrations, and more (Montreal Counter-Info) –

http://mtlcounter-info.org/blocage-occupation-greve-sauvage/?lang=en

- The Occupation Cookbook –
  http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/occupationcookbook-web.pdf
  (also available from AK Press)
- The Squatter's Handbook (Advisory Service for Squatters)
  – http://www.squatter.org.uk/squatters-handbook/ | http://www.scribd.com/doc/31078102/Squatter-s-Handbook-England-13th-Edition
- Guide to "public order" situations (Manchester Earth First!)
  – http://www.earthfirst.org.uk/publicorderguide.htm
- Bodyhammer: Tactics and Self-Defense for the Modern Protester – http://www.sproutdistro.com/catalog/zines/direct-action/bodyhammer/
- Guide to blockading and other direct action tactics (Network for Climate Action) – http://networkforclimateaction.org.uk/toolkit/action_resources/da2010.pdf
- "Delia Smith's Guide to Basic Blockading" – http://www.schnews.org.uk/diyguide/blockadingforbegineers.pdf
- "Banner drops, stencils and wheat-paste" – https://tucsonabc.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/banner_drops-stencils-wheatpaste.pdf
- The Art and Science of Billboard Improvement – http://www.billboardliberation.com/ArtAndScience-BLF.pdf
- Subvertising: Smashing the Image Factory – http://www.eco-action.org/dt/smashing.html
- Street Theatre guide (Street Acts) – http://www.streetacts.org/
- Affinity Groups (Seeds for Change) –

http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/affinitygroups
- Stay Safe: Stay Anonymous (FitWatch)
    - part1 http://v.gd/EKlWZM
    - part2 http://v.gd/GKfuAg
    - part3 http://v.gd/ngonnO
    - part4 http://v.gd/JQwflY
    - part5 http://v.gd/rLjKUp
- Dealing with the Police (Bristol Defendant Solidarity)
    - https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-solidarity/resources-and-advice/dealing-with-the-police/

- Implementing Safer Spaces (Coal Action Scotland) – http://coalactionscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Safer-Spaces-Ideas-for-Implementation.pdf
- "No Comment!" A defendants guide to arrest (LDMG) – http://ldmg.org.uk/files/No_Comment_5th_Edition.pdf
- An activists guide to basic first aid (LibCom) – http://www.libcom.org/organise/an-activists-guide-to-basic-first-aid
- UK Action Medics (dead group, good advice) – http://actionmedics.org.uk/
- How to cope with being attacked by the cops [1] (Activist Trauma Support) – http://www.activist-trauma.net/assets/files/coping_with_police_brutality.pdf
- Beating police repression: what to do if they publish

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[1]while it's important to be aware that police brutality does happen, and how to deal with it, it is also very important not to be intimidated by it. It does not happen to everyone and what gets left out of news reports is that more often than not, in the midst of it, protesters looked after and defended each other. Often people get scared away from protests when they hear about police actions – and this is exactly what they want

your photograph (FitWatch) – `http://www.libcom.org/`
`library/beating-police-repression-after-student-`
`occupation`

- Direct action animation (Brighton Uncut) –
  `http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SMQd3vm2qc`
- Public order animation (Brighton Uncut) –
  `http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYT2GQqpQ-Y`

B.3   Legal

See appendix A links to a number of groups that can help with legal issues, arrest support, etc. NOTE that the law is not the same across the UK - for example Scottish protest law has important differences with protest law in England and Wales.

- Stopped and Searched? (Bristol Defendant Solidarity)
  – `https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-`
  `solidarity/stop-search/`
- Talking to Police poster (Bristol Defendant Solidarity)
  – `https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-`
  `solidarity/resources-and-advice/poster-talking-`
  `to-the-police/`
- Student Protest on Campus (Activists Legal Project) –
  `http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk/Campus%`
  `20law%20briefing.pdf`
- Occupations: Legal Considerations (Goldsmith's Student
  Union) – `http://ismuk.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/`
  `occupations-handout.doc`
- GBC Protest Law Guides – `https://greenandblackcross.`
  `org/guides/`

- Scotland Legal Guide (Scottish Activist Legal Project) – https://scalp.noflag.org.uk/legal-guide/index.html
- The Squatter's Handbook (Advisory Service for Squatters) – http://www.squatter.org.uk/squatters-handbook | http://www.scribd.com/doc/31078102/Squatter-s-Handbook-England-13th-Edition
- Short "Bust Card" in multiple languages (LDMG) – http://ldmg.org.uk/bustcards.html
- GBC Legal "Bust Card" – https://greenandblackcross.org/bustcard/
- "No Comment!" A defendants guide to arrest (LDMG) –http://ldmg.org.uk/files/No_Comment_5th_Edition.pdf
- List of recommended solicitors (Netpol) – http://netpol.org/solicitors/
- Getting the best defence you can from a solicitor (LDMG) – http://ldmg.org.uk/files/about_solicitors.pdf
- UK Legislation (government website) – http://www.legislation.gov.uk/
- Chambers and Partners (website that ranks law firms) – http://www.chambersandpartners.com/
- The Impact of Arrest and Criminal Convictions (Activists Legal Project) – http://www.activistslegalproject.org.uk/Impact%20of%20Arrest%20and%20Conv.pdf
- How to set up a legal support team (NetPol) – http://netpol.org/monitoring/legal-observers/how-to-set-up-a-legal-support-team/
- How to be a legal observer (NetPol) – http://netpol.org/monitoring/legal-observers/how-to-be-a-legal-observer/
- The Protest Handbook (Garden Court Chambers) –

http://www.theprotesthandbook.com/book/
(book on protest law)
- Supporting someone through the legal system – https://bristolabc.wordpress.com/defendant-solidarity/resources-and-advice/supporting-someone-through-the-legal-system/

B.4 Software and Online Tools

First off, check out the Tech Tools for Activism booklet! – https://en.flossmanuals.net/tech-tools-for-activism/

B.4.1 Communication and Social Networking:

- Riseup email (free, secure, email) – http://mail.riseup.net/
- NoFlag email/hosting – http://noflag.org.uk/
- Riseup mailing lists – http://lists.riseup.net/
- Crabgrass (platform for organising online – like a secure version of facebook) – http://we.riseup.net/
- Loomio (platform for discussion and decision-making) – https://www.loomio.org
- Trello (platform for managing projects, so people can see which tasks need to done, are in progress, or are completed) – https://trello.com/
- Network23 ("free anonymous wordpress blogs for activists and agitators") – http://network23.org/

- Tachanka (offer secure privacy-concious website hosting to radical and grassroots groups internationally) – http://tachanka.org/

B.4.2 Software:

- Gimp (free image-editing tool, good for designing posters and photo editing) – http://www.gimp.org/
    - tutorials on the official website: http://www.gimp.org/tutorials/
    - some tutorials on youtube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC5B3750CE8219376
- Inkscape (free image-editing tool, good for designing diagrams, logos, and illustrations) – https://inkscape.org/en/
- Scribus (free "desktop publishing" software, perfect for making flyers, posters, newsletters, etc) – http://www.scribus.net/
    - getting started: http://wiki.scribus.net/canvas/Get_Started_with_Scribus
    - video tutorials: http://wiki.scribus.net/canvas/Scribus_Video_Tutorials
- TorBrowser (tool for anonymous web browsing) – http://www.torproject.org/
- VeraCrypt (encrypt and hide data on your computer) – https://veracrypt.codeplex.com/
- Eraser (delete files on windows so they cannot be recovered) – http://eraser.heidi.ie/
- Meta-data Anonymisation Toolkit (removes data from files so they cannot be traced back to you) – http://mat.boum.org/

B.4.3   Online Tools:

- cyptocat (private, encrypted chat software) –
  http://crypto.cat/
- Riseup etherpad (tool for collaborating on documents online)
  – http://pad.riseup.net/
- Titanpad (like etherpad) – http://titanpad.com/
- privnote (sends 'notes' that 'self-destruct' when read – useful
  for sending passwords, etc) – http://privnote.com/
- Econvenor (automatically organises meetings for you!) –
  https://econvenor.org/

B.4.4   Computer Security Advice:

- EFF Guide to Surveillance Self-Defence –
  http://ssd.eff.org/
- Riseup guide to computer security –
  http://help.riseup.net/en/security
- Activist Security Handbook –
  https://web.archive.org/web/20151006155614/http:
  //www.activistsecurity.org/

Appendix C

Glossary

"Language is powerful. It can open the world up like sunrise and it can block out the sky like prison walls" – from Mindful Occupation, Rising Up Without Burning Out

Some people on the left use unusual words to explain oppression and resistance, which can be helpful. The problem though is that not all of us understand what these terms mean – which in itself can exclude people! So, here's a glossary to help:

- **Ableism** – Exclusion and prejudice against people that society calls 'disabled'. This can happen directly or by simply not making an effort to meet accessibility needs
- **Apologist** – A person of group that makes excuses for, tries to rationalise or plays down the impact/importance of horrible, horrible things. e.g. a Nazi apologist would say "you know the Third Reich did some good things too"
- **Autonomous/autonomy** – A group that is self-controlled (without the influence of a party, outside leader or other meddling busy body) is autonomous

- **Binary** – A system where only two options are allowed, and people are expected to be one or the other with no space in between. This is applied to a lot of 'social categories', for example the gender-binary. Binaries are almost always wrong.
- **Capitalism** – *"An economic and political system based around exploiting those forced to sell their labour, in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit"* (from the Anarchist Federation's "The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation")
- **Cissexism** – Exclusion and prejudice against transgender people and their perspectives, and the assumption that the sex you were assigned at birth is all there is to gender
- **Consensus** – A decision making system famous for getting people to show they agree by using jazz-hands (waving hands in the air), rather than by voting. This isn't all it's about - it is also a well thought out process that tries to ensure the views and opinions of all those involved are respected and heard. See the resources section for a proper explanation of the process and how to use it.
- **Democratic Centralism** – The belief that groups can be both centralised and democratic – normally held by Marxist-Lenninist groups. A typical "democratic centralist" structure will have most decisions between meetings made by an elected secretary or committee. The committee or "secretariat" is also responsible for making these decisions happen, which essentially gives them the power to derail any proposal they do not like, even if the majority have asked for it. The fact that they do more work than others can also create resentment against the rest of the group, who are always asking for them to do things. On the other hand, supporters claim it leads to faster decisions, and that it is possible to hold the central committee accountable. Compare this to

it's alternative – direct democracy (see below)

- **Dialectical** – A theory that says change comes from conflict between opposing forces. Put simply, there's a contradiction between factor A and factor B. The conflict between them creates a new factor C. Some Marxists use this (in very complex ways) to describe everything that ever happened or will happen.
- **Dichotomy** – A bit like a binary. Where two alternatives (say, capitalism and state-socialism) are presented as being totally opposed to each other, and the only options to chose between. When a dichotomy isn't true it's called a "false dichotomy"
- **Direct Action** – Direct action means using our action to force things to change, rather than asking politicians, bosses, or Vice Chancellors to change things for us. This can be done by making it impossible for the university to work unless our demands are met – for example through an education strike against tuition fees. It can also be done by changing things right now – for example, by all getting together and refusing to pay rent for over-priced student housing
- **Direct Democracy** – Where all decisions are made by people in the group (normally by voting at meetings) rather than by a representative elected to make decisions for them. When a decision needs people to implement it, the meeting will assign a "working group" or "commission" to carry it out, which will then dissolve as soon as the task is complete
- **Diversity of Tactics** – Where people try to work together even if they use different tactics (normally, this means pacifists and non-pacifists not condemning each other). As Malcolm X said: "Our people have made the mistake of confusing the methods with the objectives. As long as we agree on objectives, we should never fall out with each other just because we believe in different methods or tactics or strategy

to reach a common goal."

- **Economic Class** and **Social Class** – Everyone seems to mean something slightly different when they talk about 'class'. Is it just about wealth, or has it got more to do with culture? Are you born into a class or is it something that you can change? Some people try to make things simpler by using the terms 'economic class' and 'social class'. Economic Class is about your position in the economy – you are "working class" if you have no choice other than working for a wage or living on benefits. Social Class is more about your social status – how other people perceive you, the cultural background of your family, etc. Your social class is working class if you come from a working class background, hold working class values, and are not treated as a member of the 'middle class' by society

- **Facilitate** – To allow or make it possible for something to happen, without being in control or taking credit. Most consensus based meetings have a "facilitator" rather than a "chair person".

- **Fash/Fascist** – Very often misused against anything a bit authoritarian. Fascists (or 'the fash') are usually violent, racist, ultra-nationalists who want to suppress workers' rights, enforce 'traditional' oppressive hierarchies, centrally control all of society and boot anyone they don't think fits into their version of the nation out of it. Very bad people. (see Dr. L. Britt's Fourteen Defining Characteristics Of Fascism for more)

- **Heteronormativity** – is a description of how society's idea of "normal" is for everyone to fit into two genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life and who are "meant" to only be attracted to their opposite. Being homosexual, transgender, or simply not fitting society's idea of a "real man" or "real woman", then becomes "not normal" or even

criminalised. Thatcher's law that banned "promotion of homosexuality" in schools is a good example of heteronomativity.

- **Intersectionality** – An annoyingly complex word to describe a pretty simple concept. Put briefly, the idea that oppressions - such as racism and sexism - don't exist separately from each other but overlap, intersect and are equally important.
- **Kyriarchy** – This is a term used to describe the total system of all oppressions – the combination of patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, etc
- **Libertarian** – Concerned with upholding and increasing the liberty (autonomy, freedom of choice etc.) of people. For example, 'Libertarian Communists' believe in communism without a state telling people what to do. Recently the word has been hijacked by right wingers and rich people who only care about the liberty to make money.
- **Manarchist** – Someone who claims to stand for the liberation of all and a free and equal society, but still acts like a sexist, misogynist or macho person around anyone who isn't a man.
- **ML** – Marxist-Leninist – a person or group who think the Soviet Union was great, despite Lenin's secret police, prison camps and state sponsored strike breakers.
- **Neo-Liberal** – The dominant political/economic way of thinking the Western world since the 1970s. Borrows the 'free trade' and free movement of money from 'classical' Liberalism but forgets all about the freedom of people. Very keen on privatising services and spending lots on the police and army. Often similar to the right wing usage of 'Libertarian'.
- **Participatory Democracy** – Democracy that aims for ev-

eryone to participate in how it is run and the decisions that
are made. Normally linked to direct democracy, but with
more focus on including people and creating systems that
encourage involvement

- **Patriarchy** – *"Patriarchy is a term used in feminism to de-
scribe the system of gender-based hierarchy in society which
assigns most power to men, and assigns higher value to men,
maleness, and 'masculine traits' "* (from the geek feminism
wiki). This term is often used instead of sexism, as it high-
lights that patriarchy is a result of systematic exploitation
and oppression, rather than just simple prejudice and stereo-
types
- **Picket** – A line set up by striking workers in front of their
workplace in order to dissuade non-union members from en-
tering and undermining their campaign. An important and
valuable tool in workplace struggles, crossing a picket line is
deeply disrespectful and is only done by scabs.
- **Proletarian** – Working class, but with connotations of flat
cap wearing and factory work like something from the 1930s.
- **Reactionary** – Not actually someone who reacts to situa-
tions, but a person or idea that is anti-revolutionary or op-
pressive. Most often just applied to anyone who disagrees.
- **Revolution** – A total transformation of society, hopefully
from the bottom up, empowering the downtrodden and op-
pressed. A revolution can be a 'political revolution' (re-
placing one King/president/ruling class with another), or a
'social revolution' (where 'social relations' are changed, for
example getting rid of private property)
- **Safer spaces** – "Safer spaces" are radical 'spaces' (eg an
occupation, a meeting, etc), where people are more included
than normal because the group tries to make the space safer
for people. Normally this means enforcing a 'Safer Spaces
Policy' that says what kind of things aren't acceptable

(homophobia, abusive behavior, racism, etc). Safer spaces aren't automatically created just because they have a policy, but because they attempt to deal with oppressive behaviour when it happens.

- **Scab** – A person who breaks a strike, disrespects a picket line of striking workers or otherwise betrays their class or the struggle for a better world.
- **Sectarian/Sectarianism** – A group that attacks or trash talks another group (or 'sect') on the left in order to make their own group look better and more relevant. Usually used to silence criticism, or even as an accusation to attack or trash talk another group with!
- **Single Issue** – A campaign or group which has one specific goal (ie stop child poverty) as opposed to one with a wider political program (ie dismantle the economic structures that causes poverty, combat the racism and classism that compounds it, construct a sustainable and decent life for all etc. etc.)
- **Solidarity** – The act of standing with others, recognising the importance of their struggles to your own, and acting alongside them (not for them). More often just chucked around like the lefty equivalent of 'I'll pray for you', totally devoid of all meaning. The slogan "Solidarity means attack!" is used by some people to say that, in order to mean something, solidarity should involve taking militant action rather than just signing a letter
- **Trigger** – A word used in psychology for a symptom that people with PTSD sometimes get. Being 'triggered' happens when something (the 'trigger') reminds a person of a traumatic event, causing a strong emotional or psychological reaction. For example, someone who has experienced a violent eviction might find themselves getting flashbacks simply because someone uses the word "raid". People who

have experienced sexual assault also often find discussion of assault triggering. This is not the same as finding something upsetting, though lots of people mistake it for that. It is not always possible to avoid triggering people or to predict what things could trigger them. However, you should be aware that there are some things (eg sexual assault, racist attacks) that have been experienced by lots of people. So you need to be careful how you discuss some issues as it's likely that people could be triggered by it. In general, try to warn people before talking about sexual assault, domestic violence, police brutality, self-harm, warzones, etc. And especially avoid graphic descriptions!

- **Trigger Warning** – Trigger warnings, often abbreviated to TW, are warnings we use when we are about to discuss content that may trigger someone. They are like a content warning you get on films which helps the audience decide whether this is the right film for them to watch. Trigger warnings that are commonly used include those that warn of violence, including sexual violence. However, it's probably best to say "Content Warning" instead. More people know what that means, and there are plenty of other reasons people might not want to hear about something (eg just finding it upsetting)
- **Trot** – Trotskyist – a person or group who follows the ideas of Leon Trotsky and see him as some kind of socialist messiah, despite his repression of worker's struggle and other revolutionaries when he was in power
- **United Left** – What left groups appeal to when they want other lefties to support them instead of other left groups. A major cause of (and supposed solution to) sectarianism
- **Vanguard** – A self selected group of revolutionary VIPs, who plan to lead the rest of us into revolution because we're too thick to do it ourselves

- **White Supremacy** – The system which gives white people power over black people in society. This term is often used instead of racism, as it highlights that white supremacy involves the systematic exploitation and oppression of black people (and others considered non-white), rather than just simple prejudice