

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

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Strategy and Networks

This is a response to a critique of the Eclipse project posted on LibCom here

The Eclipse Committee

2026-01-26

Firstly, we thank the comrade for their concerns and for giving us an opportunity to clarify what it is we are trying to do and why we have positioned the Eclipse project the way we have.

Many members of the Eclipse committee are also part of other anarchist organisations that do have a more specific strategic outlook and a tighter organisational structure. Eclipse started out of discussions within the Anarchist Federation, but has grown to include organisers from Bristol Anarchist Bookfair, Manchester & Salford Anarchist Bookfair, and Swansea Radical Community Festival, as well as members of IWW, Solidarity Federation, Suffolk Anarchists, Wessex Solidarity, and independent anarchists otherwise cut off from much of the wider movement. Most of those involved do have strong opinions on anarchist strategy and organisation, are already members of groups that align with those opinions, believe that the anarchist movement in Britain needs to develop a solid strategy to be effective, and that a pluralistic network will not

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usa.anarchistlibraries.net

be sufficient to defeat fascism or the general system of state and capital.

However, since many of us have been part of organisations that have a more specific strategic and organisational outlook, we have also seen first hand how that model of organising on its own has not worked either. Such groups have often struggled with maintaining their political purity at the expense of becoming isolated and irrelevant, or have diluted their strategic and organisational principals in order to achieve short-term practical goals, acting more like NGOs stemming the bleeds within Capitalism rather than revolutionaries actively working towards its destruction, and either way have struggled to maintain an active membership and have any serious impact in British society. New groups with specific strategic and organisational principles are unlikely to act as a focal point around which to rally the anarchist movement as a whole, and are more likely to end up just another faction within the existing movement, which is too small and isolated to meaningfully implement an effective strategy.

From this experience, and not from abstract theory, we have come to believe two things that have fundamentally motivated our broad approach to Eclipse. Firstly, that a pluralistic network is the best starting point from which to develop greater strategic and organisational unity beyond our existing involvement. Secondly, that a pluralistic network is an important piece of supporting infrastructure that anarchism in Britain needs, regardless of if we ever reach any kind of broad agreement on what we should be doing. Even without changing society ourselves, every step that brings us closer to this is in the right direction.

To develop the first point; any strategy that is going to be widely adopted enough to be put into meaningful practice is not going to be the brainchild of any single anarchist organisation but is going to have to come out of conversation and diplomacy between groups, communities and individuals

within the existing anarchist movement, and within society at large. Likewise, tighter organisation and cooperation between anarchists is not going to come out of anarchists flocking to one group or single approach, but is going to have to be built out of practical solidarity and cooperation between existing groups. We currently lack the existing framework to do this, and so may struggle to even imagine the potential that such a convergence of our movement could create.

One of the hopes that we have for the Eclipse project is that it will act as the core infrastructure on which to build tighter strategic and organisational agreement within the anarchist movement in Britain. Individual members of the Eclipse Committee certainly want to use the first gathering as an opportunity for discussion around how we build a more unified strategy and deeper cooperation and mutual learning within anarchism. We hope the gathering to be the kind of place that the comrade who wrote this critique could put forward criticism and proposals for strategy and organisation to a broader anarchist milieu, and find like-minded collaborators that they might otherwise have been isolated from.

But for the Eclipse project to act as a focal point around which the broader anarchist movement can start to develop deeper strategic agreement and tighter organisation, we feel that as much of the anarchist movement as possible should feel welcome to attend Eclipse gatherings. Because of this we have avoided putting out our own strategic ideas in too much detail – for one thing we do not agree entirely among ourselves – but also those discussions are something we want to save until the gathering, where a wider section of the anarchist movement in Britain can put forward their own ideas.

To develop the second point; there is a lot of shared infrastructure that anarchists could benefit from regardless of their level of strategic agreement, which is best handled by a pluralistic, decentralised network, and in fact probably should not be maintained by a more specific organisation to avoid conflicts

of interest. One of the recurring problems that many of us have faced is that groups with specific strategic and organisational principals end up getting sidetracked by trying to maintain this necessary infrastructure, when it would make far more sense for this stuff to be maintained by the anarchist movement as a whole, but we currently lack many of the structures needed to enable that. Again, we have not really talked in detail about this as it is another thing that we want to raise at the gathering, and ask those who attend what kind of infrastructure they would find useful.

Likewise, regardless of our level of strategic and organisational unity, there are still ways that anarchists who disagree can mutually support each other to the benefit of all involved. Building bonds of trust and solidarity through such mutual cooperation is one of the methods through which we believe the anarchist movement as a whole can actually come to widespread shared strategic understanding. But again, right now the anarchist movement as a whole does not have the structures in place to systematically enable this, meaning that the anarchist movement is less effective as a whole regardless of any strategic divisions it might have within it, as well as less likely to find ways to resolve those divisions by developing shared ideas out of joint action.

Even if we do achieve strategic and organisational unity across large parts of the anarchist movement, there are always going to be minority trends that take a different approach, or address a specific intersection or fight for a specific oppressed group through anarchism, and having those differing strands of anarchism isolated from each other will only weaken anarchism as a whole. There will likely still be opportunities for mutual support and opportunities for anarchists who disagree or have different enhanced experiences of oppressive forces to develop better versions of their ideas and practices through mutual critique, and that will require the kind of shared infrastruc-

ture of communication and coordination best provided for by a pluralistic network.

So, do we believe that pluralistic networks on their own are enough? No, many of us have also seen them fail. But do we believe the specific organisations on their own are enough? Also no, as many of us have been involved in such organisations for long enough to see the pattern of them going nowhere in isolation. We believe that a strong and effective anarchist movement is going to need both, and that they should be mutually supporting wherever possible instead of hidden away from each other, kept at arms length rather than embraced as fellow anarchists in a common struggle against the state and oppression.