

Meet the Green Boss, Same as the Old Boss.

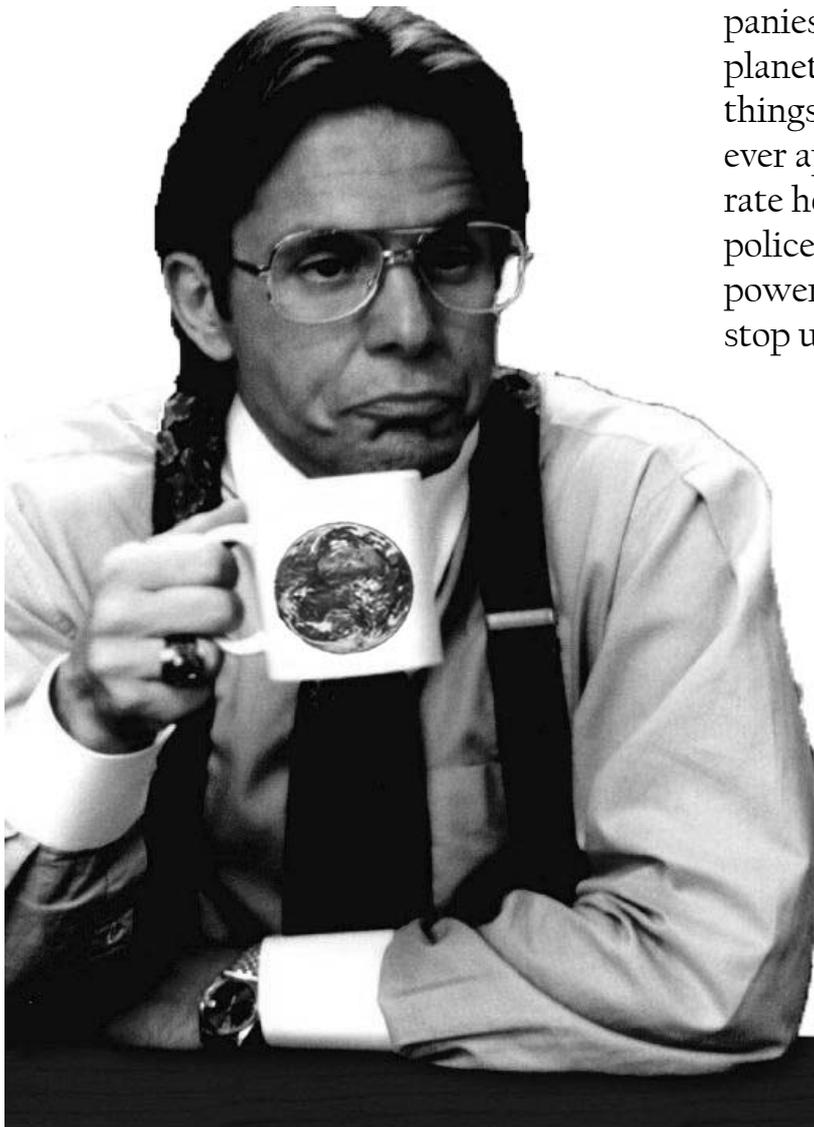
- Anarchist Federation -

We all know why Climate Camp's so important, right? We all know how quickly climate change is getting out of control, we've all heard the terrifying predictions about just how bad things are going to get, and we've all reached that point where we realise that apathy and terrified paralysis just aren't good enough, and we need to start acting now.

But actually, there's more to camp than just that. The actions and the big debates aren't the only valuable things about Climate Camp; it's also exciting because of the way it's run – from the bottom up, with everyone

having a chance to get involved in decision-making. This openness is a huge contrast to our everyday lives, where (whether we work, study, or try to survive on pitiful state benefits) we have little or no say over what we do or how we do it. At its best, Climate Camp isn't just a way of helping us move towards a saner world, it's a tiny glimpse of what that world might look like.

Just as we can overlook some of the things that make camp so great, it's also easy to miss some of the dangers that we face. At first, the enemy seems obvious – it's the fossil fuel industry and all the other companies making big profits from killing our planet. But when we start trying to act, things get more complicated – before we can ever approach the power stations or corporate headquarters, we have to deal with the police, who are there to protect the rich and powerful, and are happy to use violence to stop us having a say. And, of course, the police don't act independently – they're just the most visible part of the state, that massive body that's decided that direct action is a crime, but environmental destruction is not, and will come down hard on any challenge to its authority. And the problem doesn't end there – before we can take on the state, we also need to tackle the arguments of those people inside our movement who insist that, because the crisis is so urgent and the state is so powerful, we need to be using that power to stop climate change.



When anarchists say that we can't use the state for our own ends, that's not us rejecting ideas that work because of our own abstract principles - that's us rejecting ideas that don't work because they don't work. Unlike Climate Camp, the state is not democratic, the violence it uses to crush opposing voices (like the camp in London during the G20 earlier this year) makes that clear. Calling for the state to tackle climate change means calling for the state to be made stronger, which in turn means making us weaker. Companies don't care about the climate because they exist to make money, and the state exists to protect the market economy, so any real, meaningful action against those companies can only be against the state, not through it.

What does all this mean in practice?

We don't have all the answers, no one does, but we have a few suggestions about how our movement can be most effective. First, we should openly celebrate the camp's roots in the radical, anti-capitalist environmental movement, and the way that those roots influence the camp today. Living and making decisions communally as part of the camp is better than the crap we have to put up with in normal life, and we shouldn't be shy about saying this.

Secondly, we need to avoid getting divided over the question of militant vs. "fluffy" tactics - the police attacks on the London camp

earlier this year showed that they're willing to attack totally non-violent protesters, so there's no point in avoiding militancy to try and avoid provoking the police. We'll never stop climate change if we stick to the limits of what the police will let us do, and at times it will be necessary to use force to break out of their control.

Third, we need to be a lot bigger than we are now. That means that we need to be careful to avoid seeming elitist or moralistic. Yes, changing our lifestyles is important and it's frustrating that people are so slow to realise how big the problem is, but no-one will want to listen to us if we come across as telling them off for not being better people. Collective action is far more effective than individual action anyway, so our priority has to be persuading people to get active, not lecturing them about renewable lightbulbs.

Fourth, of course, we need to constantly be on the watch for our enemies trying to find ways to use us. Green is big, and getting bigger, so we're already having to deal with capitalists and politicians trying to find ways to use our arguments to boost their popularity or bank balances. From biofuels to carbon credits, they've got no end of ideas that won't do much to fight global warming, but are great for making money. Whether it's buying green products or trusting the government to pass green laws, we need to expose these dead-end paths so we can be clear about putting forward real alternatives.



Anarchist Federation

A New World In Our Hearts.

The Anarchist Federation is a growing organisation of anarchist-communists from across the British Isles who aim to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal world, without leaders and bosses, without wars or environmental destruction.

www.afed.org.uk

info@afed.org.uk