

Direct Action

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Managing
Consent



Unhealthy Profits

Global Fiction

THE CHUMBAWAMBA INTERVIEW

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Enough. New Labour - the honeymoon is definitely over. I don't feel let down, I never had my hopes up in the first place.

We are witnessing yet another exercise in illusion - and yet new heights of party political rhetoric. Lies and promises, repackaged and updated in 1998 colours.

Let us manage, give your consent. Strong leadership, but with smiles. Trust it; Tony's in control.

Election voting is - giving consent for things you don't know about yet. Handing over the controls to people you don't know or trust. People with a new job, new attitude. They 'come into power'. The power to manage. It visibly changes them - it goes to their heads.

Managing Consent is not a flash-in-the-pan topic for election campaigns. It's an *all the time* topic. New Labour had a humble, hardworking, sympathetic face before May 1996. Now the face has changed. The distorted features emerge - authority, sternness, war, threats, cuts, power. They have assumed complete consent. The rounded, soft smiles are now hard, sharp, forced grimaces.

We manage, and you give your consent. Strong leadership, but with smiles. Trust it; Branson's in control.

Capitalism is in transition. The Management are continuously re-inventing themselves. Currently, you can feel the quality, look how streamlined everything is. All the

'dead wood' stripped away bare. A lean and mean production machine. All downsized to just the right proportions. Everyone is 'teamworking' and quality-checked. So everyone feels like they are pulling their weight, and everyone feels like they have a fair stake (ignoring the creamy wages and profits, which always float to the top).

Hold on a minute, if you have worked, shirked and generally licked your way up, surely you deserve the right to use and abuse those below you? That's why you went to all that trouble. It's the way things are. Whatever the latest teamwork con-trick, the manager still can't let go. He (sic) still has to be able to impose his will, and feed the anxious ego.

Give your consent. Freely. Smile, it will be virtually painless, I assure you. Don't flinch, it disturbs the others.

Management is a delicate trick of carrot and stick. The carrot is you don't have to worry, we'll take care of everything for you, just sign here. We have the training and the confidence to see you alright in the big bad world. The stick is if you don't stay in line, it will hurt until you do.

Without managers we would all be at each other's throats. Life would be uncontrolled, unmanaged, disordered, nasty, brutish, and short. Full of bad people eating their fill of us. Or would it? Who are these nasty people? Now it all clicks, it's OTHER MANAGERS - all jostling for a slice of the action, a piece of power. So we are being protected by our managers

so other managers don't get us? Minders, all. They need us, but we are dispensable and replaceable. Does that work?

No? But go with the illusion. Life is a millenium dome of fun. Life is interesting; full of bright colours, flashing lights, distractions. There must be so much going on backstage.

Give your consent. We need your consent. Your consent is now mandatory.

And remember, it's a 'stakeholder economy' (but not the T-bone variety). We are a part of it. The more we work, the more 'society' will profit.

We work, or else. Or else there is a New Deal on the table for you. And the New Deal is, er, well, a bit like the old deal, only more so.

We vote, or else. Or else we will be made to vote. A new law will ensure our consent, to the satisfaction of those who feel the need for our consent.

You need us to give you security, we have your consent. We will make you secure. There is no other way.

It is all wrong. They are talking opposites. There is no security. We did not give our consent. There is another way. Mutual respect.

But who's going to get mutual respect while managers take all the credit, the profit, and constantly threaten their 'teamworkers'. That's fear, not respect.

There is another way.

Unmanage consent. And start organising non-consent, dis-consent, disobedience, and reality. 

Get in touch

Readers' views are welcome. Whether opinions, additional information or letters responding to articles or raising issues of interest, we want to hear from you. If you have questions for the DA Collective, or would like to know more about us or the Solidarity Federation, drop us a line. Do not expect high pressure sales, paper-selling requests or demands for this or that, do expect a reasonably prompt reply.

Notes for Contributors

If you would like to contribute more than brief opinions, we request you send articles (between 500 and 1500 words if possible) in hardcopy and on disk in either Word for Windows PC version not greater than 7 or ASCII format. Contact us for electronic mail addresses or alternative formats. Failing that, any decent typewritten script will do, or even neat handwriting, if necessary. While unsolicited articles are welcome, they can only be returned if a SAE is enclosed.

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You don't get Owt for nowt

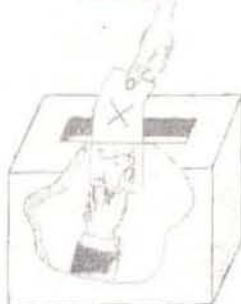


Millions of people do not vote in British General Elections. At every General Election there is a concerted effort on the behalf of anarchists to encourage potential voters to abstain. Why is abstention considered to be of itself a 'good' thing?

In the last election in May 1997, when Tony Blair was swept to power on a 'landslide vote', 28.4% of those registered and able didn't vote; the highest post-war percentage and noticeably up from 1992. Is this a success? Over a quarter of the eligible population didn't vote, and anarchists advised them not to, coz anarchists are against voting ...well, maybe not.

For a start, there is little evidence that the majority of those abstaining do so deliberately. Of those who do not vote the vast majority do not persistently abstain, most vary

*..the largest
rise in non
voters at
the last
election
was
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those who
identified
with the
Tories*



from election to election as to whether they turn out or not. Of those who at any one election do not vote, when asked, two thirds of them give reasons for not voting which could be classed as involuntary, e.g. sickness, unable to get time off work and, by far the single biggest category; on holiday. Of the one third of non-voters who could be said to deliberately abstain, most do so because they could not be bothered to vote, not because they chose not to vote, or made a political decision not to vote.

Non-voting is slightly more common amongst the young working class in London and metropolitan areas than elsewhere. However, while surveyed differences in attitudes between voters and non-voters are not generally big, the largest rise in non voters at the last election was amongst those who identified with the Tories. Those that don't vote generally express a slightly lower level of interest

in politics, very rarely discuss it, and have a weaker grasp of current affairs and politics. Then again, those who vote regularly, generally also have a fairly low level of interest or knowledge. Various surveys have found that around 40% of those who always vote have no real interest in politics outside voting in elections.

Turning our attention to an active, political minority - anarchists are not against voting. Well, I am not. I am opposed to Parliamentary Democracy as we know it and I am against voting for representatives as a political and social system because it is not in most people's interest. A negative campaign against each election based purely on the lines of 'don't vote, a vote every five years for a crooked liar who merely claims to "represent you", and who is more likely to rip you off' is not really to the point. A more constructive approach would be to spend

the whole of the five years working using the tools of direct action and direct democracy, fighting and organising in terms of self-management and mutual aid (solidarity) in the community and workplace. Then, when the election comes, rather than sitting around waiting for it, we can just say "oh yes that; I don't want a system that is inherently unfair, in which I get a minor say in appointing a representative who is beyond my influence once elected, and who, even then, will probably only have a negligible role." We can point to our way of organising, point out that the parliamentary system is all about keeping the powerless where they are whilst giving it a shine of respectability. Calling for not voting is not a goal. It is not really a useful tool in itself. It is largely irrelevant whether someone votes in a general election or not.

Is it really so bad if someone votes to kick out an incumbent, as long as they recognise full well the bankruptcy of the system and how minor their representative's role is in it? I can see the joy of putting a cross to get rid of Michael Portillo and his ilk, even if it is purely for personal satisfaction rather than political ends. I can even dream of the same thing happening to Jack Straw! But we need to see this for what it is; a negative thing.

The apathy trip

When people vote against someone, let's not get in a tizzy about it. They are not voting for the system - although the act of voting is used as a case for legitimising it by its supporters. What we need to do is to channel people's anger and frustration into the desire to achieve something more positive - direct democracy, with mandated recallable delegates and officers, appointed only for a limited period: Decisions taken with everyone taking an active part in the process.

Anarcho-syndicalists definitely do vote. We vote for mandated, accountable and recallable delegates

Apart from the in-built bias in the capitalist democracies against anything that seeks to challenge in a meaningful way the power of the city and other elites, one of the major

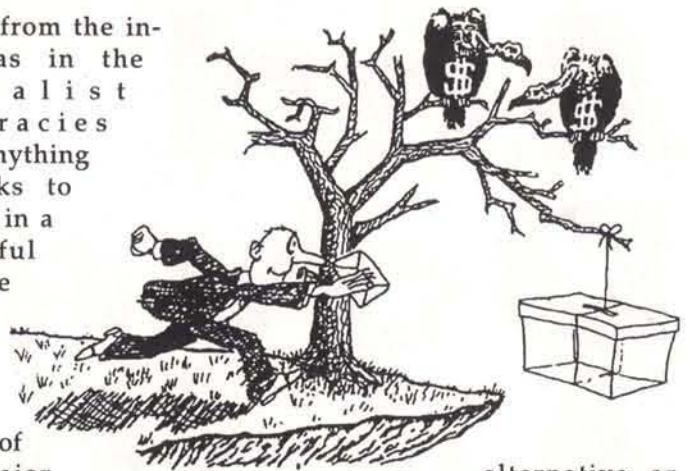
problems is that it actively encourages apathy. The act of voting in a general election takes little effort, even less thought, and from that little effort and little thought, the individual receives little in the way of direct influence.

Making a difference

Which brings us back to the large proportion of the electorate who, when asked, express little or no interest in politics, rarely if ever discussing politics with friends or family (not even using BT). Even amongst those who state that they always vote, around 40% still claim they have no interest in politics.

We need to move away from the idea that not voting is something we do (or rather don't do). Anarchosyndicalists definitely do vote. We vote for mandated, accountable and recallable delegates. We vote for motions and we vote for actions - we prefer to work by consensus and a genuine consensus should always be sought. What anarchosyndicalists don't do is vote for someone to go away and take all our decisions away from us.

Given the appalling nature of the New Labour Government, it is all too tempting to sit back and say 'told you so' to the despondent people around who put a lot of hope in change of government. And why not? But what needs to be addressed is how we let people see the fundamental flaws in the current system - and that there is a viable



alternative or two. We need to point out that those who actively seek to 'represent' us, who use hierarchical institutions and who rise in them, are those that are best at manipulating hierarchical structures to gain positions of power. To expect them to actually give a toss about anything except the maintenance and development of their own position is naive. We need to point out that voting in modern western democracies is one of the lowest forms of political involvement going. It involves little conscious thought or inconvenience. It gives even less benefit. We need to point out the real alternatives.

Crocodile tears

Crocodile tears of politicians over the apathy of the electorate are just that; as long as people are content to come out to vote once every five years and do nothing in between, then politicians are happy enough. It can only be an abject and rather sad need for self-justification which makes them think about forcing us to vote by law.

But apathy to us is something to really cry about. It is not possible to build a movement based on direct action and direct democracy unless that movement is based on activism. That requires active interest and involvement, in all aspects of our social and political movement.

In short, apathy and successful anarchosyndicalist organisation are not compatible. Structures on their own don't make things democratic; activists do. 

And Dover Again



Perhaps it is the white cliffs of Dover, symbolic of Englishness, that brings the fascists back. The mythology of English nationalism begins here, recalling the dark days of World War Two when 'England stood alone'.

It is a curious twist of irony that an English jackboot should march where a German one did not. Rather, it is a dirty undertow of racism in the mythology itself that has brought the Nazis to Dover. The ugly resentment toward the foreigner festers beneath the surface; it is the refugees who stand alone, while the fascists pine hopelessly for a resurgence of English nationalism.

The main target of the propaganda has been the Roma families who have fled the same mythologies of the new Eastern European Democracies. Isolated in ghettos like Pisek in the Czech Republic or Kosice in Slovakia, with unemployment often at 95%, they are the victims of the countless and increasing number of skinhead and police attacks, as documented by the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest (ERRC).

The latter's 'Time of the Skinheads' (Jan 1997) indicates that there are three main sources of anti-

Roma hostility: the 'skinheads', the police and the civil authorities. These operate against a background of popular indifference or support. (Dover as a community reflected a similar mixture of indifference and hostility to the Roma, leading up to the first NF march). Taking the skinheads first, their effect on the public atmosphere is immense, in comparison to their low numbers. Many are from the old state apparatus; they are responsible for the most numerous isolated attacks, frequently resulting in death, as in the case of 18-year-old Mario Goral on the 21st July 1995, in Ziar nad Hronom in Slovakia. Stabbings of Roma are frequent, as on the 22nd December 1996 of a father and son in Handlova, the father dying from his injuries.

The police refuse to accept reports of racially motivated attacks, as those made after the beating of A.B. in Presov on the 16th December 1994, and the beatings received by four Roma a year later at Puchov (both attacks by skinheads). They also take part in and instigate attacks themselves.

One example of a police attack happened at Jarovnice on July 20, 1995. Over a hundred masked special force and unmasked police entered the Roma ghetto around 5.00 am, shouting racist slogans and

assaulting residents. One 15-year-old witness said she was beaten and assaulted with an electrical prod.

47-year-old Vojtech Cervenak told the ERRC;

"...it was like a horror film.. My son was beaten, I was beaten and my son's eight children were beaten. A one-year-old girl in our family was beaten so bad I thought she would die. The police beat her on her feet and put a blanket over her face..."

This brings us to the reaction of the civil authorities. The mayor said, after this raid, 'one action every two years is not enough. Our citizens reacted very positively towards this action'. When questioned by the ERRC about the raid, Mayor Kropuch changed his story with each development: it was a raid to locate thieves, to react to an attack on police, to punish the unruly Roma, etc. The raid on the ghetto lasted 3 hours. During the raid many more people were beaten, slashed with knives, and taken off in police vans. The action was defended by the government.

As the slogans accumulate, "Gypsies to the gas chambers!" (Slovakia), or "Gypsies go home!" (Dover), so officialdom continues to encourage the misguided, and so nurtures the mythologies of hate. 



The police beat her on her feet and put a blanket over her face

More Magnet WORLD DAY '98

With the Liverpool Dockers strike over (see p8-9), more effort than ever can be put into the Magnet strike. Solidarity Federation has joined in picketing, but the Magnet strikers need more hands. There are 200 showrooms across the country, so there is one reasonably near anyone! Free leaflets are available, contact us at DA or Magnet Strikers at 109 Jedburgh Drive, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 9UP. Send them messages of support, buy their merchandise (£1.50 a badge, £5 a shirt), and/or send them donations for the depleted strike fund. Send protest letters to the man responsible; Alan Bowkett, c/o Berisfords, 1A Baker St, London, England, and the man who sacked them; David Williams, Magnet PLC, Royd Ings, Keithley, Yorks., England. 



Thousands of demonstrators will be at Hillgrove Farm to mark the World Day for Laboratory Animals on 8th April 1998 at 1pm.

Hillgrove Farm, Dry Lane, Witney, Oxfordshire belongs to Chris Brown, who has been breeding cats and kittens for the vivisection industry for 27 years. Hillgrove Farm has been condemned by Vets, the RSPCA, MPs and local Councillors. At the end of the day, Chris Brown is a smug businessman (charging £400 per kitten) who is laughing all the way to the bank.

Since last summer, the number of protestors at Hillgrove has increased dramatically, with over 1,000 people at the last one on 22nd February 1998. Thames Valley Police were out in force and are now dubbed "Hillgrove's Private Army". Chris Brown seems able to get away with employing just two security guards and relying on the police to guard his property. Thames Valley Police couldn't give a damn about the cats and

enjoy nothing more than pushing people around.

At one peaceful all night vigil there were 494 police officers for 34 demonstrators. Could Chris Brown be a freemason? Supt. Davies admitted "We are de facto becoming a private security force for him".

Hillgrove Farm was raided in 1997 and many cats and kittens are now safe in loving homes, having narrowly avoided a horrific death in a laboratory. Save the Hillgrove Cats won't be beaten and expect Hillgrove Farm to close down. They are asking people to dress all in black for "World Day". Also bring whistles, drums, etc. to make a noise.

If you would like more information about the campaign or details of coaches going to World Day contact-

Save the Hillgrove Cats

Box CB,

111, Magdalen Road
OXFORD OX4 1RQ



Saturday 28th February saw the Nazi National Front out in force, marching in Dover - all 29 of them, bussed in from Berkshire under heavy police escort.

The NFs turn-out was even more pathetically small than their last visit to Dover back in November (see DA5). Over 200 anti-fascists were there to 'greet' them, but were largely prevented from doing so by a massive police operation. Dover was swamped by hundreds of police from Kent and further afield, equipped with riot gear, vans and dogs.

Police surveillance crews littered the rooftops and streets as they waved their cameras in people's faces. They systematically took our names and addresses. No evidence of lawbreaking was present or being sought - police were simply and blatantly collecting political information and trying to intimidate us.

Waves of police attacked our anti-fascist demonstration and police and dogs inflicted many minor injuries. Snatch-squads dived into the crowd and made 24 arrests, many of whom were those who had been bitten or injured. All were later released without charge when the police (and their dogs) could not think of any reason for having arrested them.

So it was that the sad pathetic two dozen or so, huddled in the centre of a vast crowd of police, stumbled along the Dover seafront.

However, the procession halted before the docks and the town, the bus was brought in, and the two dozen fascists were escorted back to Berkshire, leaving us to spend the rest of the day raising the profile of the Roma struggle among the people of Dover. 

The Spirit of Liverpool

The Liverpool Dockers have been compelled to settle, sold out completely by New Labour and the unions. But the Dockers are still looking forward. Since the dispute ended, there has been a march and rally in London, and plans for a second March for Social Justice. Throughout the 28 month struggle, they have built up an extensive network of supporters, and are not about to let that momentum disappear.

Meanwhile, before the strike was over, Manchester Argos was blockaded by activists from across the north-west, in support of the Dockers. Prominent groups present included E! and Dockers, as well as SolFed. We picketed outside



the shop and occupied inside, turning shoppers away and generally enjoying the yuletide cheer. Eventually, the fire alarm went off and everything got a bit hectic. The point was made, along with not very many purchases in Argos that day. Remember, Argos are still scabs; they never stopped.

Climate Criminals

In December, Londoners were treated to a message about Climate Change Criminals. The 2 minute pirate piece was broadcast over the airwaves of Capital Radio. The centrepiece was a spoof sketch around the world leaders' pathetic

greenwash conference at Kyoto, Japan, where hardly anything was agreed about controlling global climate change.

Sad Bradley

On 24th January, Keith Bradley MP was having his surgery in Withington, Manchester, when the pickets struck. Mr Bradley is one of the social security ministers. The action was to protest against Labour's attack on the benefits of disabled people. Mr Bradley was boarded in his den, and was left in no doubt what we think of him and his Party. We felt this action was more productive than the tactic of some anti-JSA activists, of singling out fairly lowly paid Job Centre workers for 'three strikes and you're out' treatment. 

New Deal much worse than the old deal

The New Deal, introduced in pilot form in January 1998, is yet another means by which people will be forced off the dole. But it is more venomous than the Tories attack on benefits, because this time it will have a direct effect on accelerating casualisation and worsening job conditions for those in work too.

Phrases like Corporate Slavery are not far from the truth; workers will get virtually nothing out of it, but will be constantly under the threat that if they don't perform, they will lose benefits. If you are already working, your job will be undermined by New Deal. As it subsidises low waged work, low waged workers will be casualised and undermined in their position - if the Labour government gets its way, any employer will be able to demand even permanent workers to accept worsening conditions - or they'll be 'New Dealed'. This will work its way up the employee profile - ALL jobs will be less secure as a result.

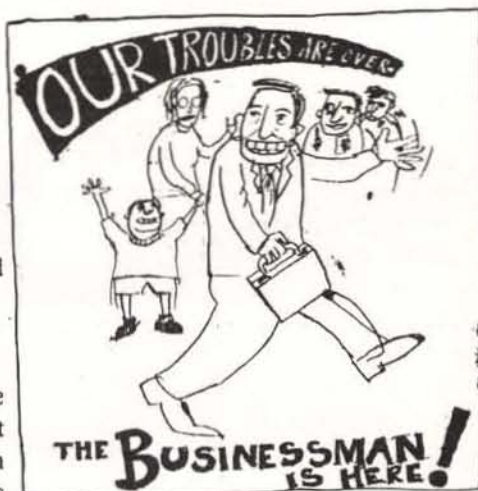
Meanwhile, on the employers side, it is no wonder so many are signing up. Employers who had signed up at the beginning of March were getting a total of £3,600 PER MINUTE for being

involved. They get £750 to train each person and £60 per week per person for...extra profit.

New Labour = Cheap Labour

New Deal goes UK-wide in April 1998. Anyone seeking unemployment benefit and in the target group (basically under 25 or long term unemployed - most people), will have the following choice;

- 1) 6 months with an employer, with one day per week training. The employer is supposed to pay a standard wage - suggested £90/wk minimum. After the 6 months, employers can replace these subsidised workers with other subsidised workers. The plan is that 40% of New Deal participants will get this option.
- 2) Work for a voluntary organisation for 6 months. You get benefits plus £15 per week and one day training (13% uptake target)
- 3) Work on an Environmental Task Force. Same conditions as voluntary sector. (23% target).
- 4) Full time education, on existing benefits. Only available for those without NVQ level 2 qualifications (25% target).



New Labour say there will be 'no 5th option' i.e. staying on benefit is impossible. When the Tories did this for 16-17 year olds, the results were; (1) Labour outrage (which we knew was feigned and now have proof) and; (2) thousands of young people destitute and homeless on the streets, because they couldn't or wouldn't comply. What is going to be different this time? That's right, (1) won't happen, but (2) will happen more. What can be done about it? Resistance. There is no 2nd option. 

Get involved, contact your local Solidarity Federation Group - write to us at DA for details or ring 0161 232 7889. Or try Haringey Solidarity Group, PO Box 2474, London N8; or Edinburgh Claimants, Tel 0131 557 6242.

For the last twenty years, politicians and much of the media have attempted to portray the unemployed as scroungers. It would seem that the great British public remain unconvinced. In the fourteenth survey on social attitudes, two thirds of those questioned thought that unemployed couples were either "really poor" or "hard up". Only one in 50 thought that the jobless had enough to live on. When those questioned were told what benefits actually were, 87% of those asked said the unemployed were hard up or worse. They weren't asked whether the New Deal businessmen would make a difference.



Direct Action - Better than Prozac

I'm a 35 year old political activist and officially diagnosed lunatic. I've tried (generally I've been coerced into) several "cures", ranging from the latest wonder-drug, to being hospitalised, but the most effective and liberating one has been my involvement in the Liverpool Dockers Dispute. This also happens to be politically the most important dispute for at least a decade, and probably several decades.

For those who don't already know, the background to the dispute was this. 80 young Dockers, who worked at Liverpool docks for a subsidiary company called Torside, were sacked when their management reneged on an earlier overtime agreement. They set up a picket line at the Seaforth Terminal, where Dockers of up to 30-40 years service worked. These Dockers refused to cross the picket line (as workers worldwide know, you never cross a picket line), and they were sacked for breach of contract under the Tories' (now Labour) anti-union laws. The Dockers turned to their comrades internationally for support, and anyone else who was interested; like myself.

When I first learned of the dispute, I was mainly involved in Women's Politics, due to my own discontent with male dominated, sectarian political parties. When I heard Doreen McNally from Women of the Waterfront (WOW) speak, I was immediately hooked. I've since written a song about this "evening that changed my life", where I mention her shyness and the "passion within her heart" - I felt her anger and emotion, and the dispute encapsulated what I'd learnt intellectually, particularly from Marxism and Feminism. This was a momentous occasion for me personally, and my life now had a real and meaningful focus. It took a little while to get into the swing of getting up at 4 or 5am for a demo or picket, but the solidarity and comradeship I experienced from the Dockers and WOWS soon made these events something exciting to look forward to.

In the first few months, I learnt a huge amount from people I'd never met before. For example, Turkish and Kurdish comrades, some of whom had been imprisoned and tortured, told me that solidarity = love, and that was how I grew to feel about the Dockers, WOWs, and the

movement I was involved in.

I was not brought up to be political, my dad was in the RAF and my parents are 'working class Tories'. I lived in Doncaster for 10 years, which included the 84/85 Miners' Strike, when the town was virtually under siege from the police. I became more political at this time, and I saw at first hand the devastation of people's lives caused by the brutal destruction of the mining industry. I reluctantly moved to London for college, where my life's distress was uncontained and my tutor (a power-hungry trainee psychoanalyst) was more interested in my sexuality than getting me through the course - a series of crises ensued.

Therapy (with a trained woman therapist from the Women's Therapy Centre) has helped me through, but the Dockers dispute has been far more meaningful and allowed me to move on in my life. Since the war and particularly through the Major and Thatcher years, people have become more and more fragmented, isolated and -in Marxist terms- alienated. This leads to a whole number of states of mind which can be labelled by psychiatrists (e.g. schizophrenia, manic depression) but generally means that one feels like shit, and can be prone to self harm, self neglect, lack of motivation, and losing touch with reality.

As a society, we're yearning for a unifying experience, the mass grieving of Princess Diana was, I think, an attempt at gaining one back. However, for more thought out political people, the Liverpool Dockers Dispute provided this, with much more wide reaching conclusions for the future of humanity.

The first year of the dispute was really painful for the Dockers, as there was felt to be a conspiracy of silence by the British Media. However, the Dockers kept their dignity and their non violent picket line (exceptions being violence from the Operational Support Division of the police and some "scabs" who have burnt down the Dockers caravan several times and been violent towards sacked Dockers).

Meanwhile, other alienated and disaffected people became inspired; notably young environmentalists like Reclaim the Streets (RTS). On the first anniversary of the dispute, international actions took place around the

world, and in the UK, a major effort was made to get the dispute publicised. Dockers, RTS and others demonstrated and occupied gantries and the roof of the offices of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Company - the action gained publicity world-wide and in the UK. Again, it was emotionally momentous for me; I felt great pain at the efforts being required to move the dispute forward. In therapy, this was likened to memories of child sexual abuse being suppressed and my efforts to warn other children and communicate to those who might help being thwarted.

The dispute moved from strength to strength. The March for Social Justice in April '96 led by the Dockers was inspired by the Chartists who demanded the vote and more control over their lives. It brought 35,000 people on to the streets and united women, Unions, black people, Irish groups, lesbians, gays and disabled people, chanting slogans like "The Dockers fight is our fight". The Dockers had to deal with real hardships and changing roles. I too adjusted my life to the needs of the dispute. I may not have always got the boundaries absolutely right, given previous problems in this area, but everything has been dealt with in a comradely way.

The end to the strike is not the end to the struggle. The Dockers and WOWs are used to hardship and are full of history, determination and imagination; they'll never give up, even though now their union TGWU (which was formed by Dockers) has effectively dumped them. This is a struggle for human dignity, for the right to show humanity/solidarity to other humans and not to be controlled simply by the needs of the capitalist system (casualised).

I've already had my personality split in two, have tried to end it, but I've been put back together by the NHS and my therapist. It's not necessary for this to happen any more and we have a real chance to change things forever. Battle lines are being drawn, the media will try to demonise our fight as they did with the miners. In future years, people will ask, "what did you do during the Liverpool Dockers dispute?" - what will YOU answer? 

Author: Pauline Bradley (updated). From Psychology Politics Resistance News 5, Spring 1998 (see reviews, p27).

Schools for Sale

New Labour's determination to think the unthinkable goes on unchecked. Having eagerly embraced the Tory education reform they so bitterly opposed in opposition, it now seems the Government are prepared to go much further than the Tories ever dared. It is now emerging that Labour is toying with the idea of introducing the privatising of state run schools.

The Labour government plans to set up 25 "education action zones", each with about 20 schools, in areas where pupils do "badly". A committee made up of parents, teachers, councillors and businesses will control each zone. Schools in the action zones may be allowed to drop the national curriculum and teachers' unions national

agreed pay and conditions.

If these proposals were not bad enough, it was announced at this year's North of England Education Conference in Bradford, that Labour is considering allowing private firms to take over the complete running of schools in action zones. It was later disclosed that Labour has been holding behind-the-scenes discussions with a number of private companies. Those firms expressing an interest in taking over the running of schools include Nord Anglia, a stockmarket listed education conglomerate, which owns a chain of private schools; CFBT, a firm that runs careers advice services and carries out school inspections; and Capita, a management service firm.

Like much of Labour's thinking, the idea of privatising schools was developed in the USA. The private company, Education Alternative, recently won contracts to operate 12 schools in Arizona. At the same time, an increasing number of the new "charter schools", which are publicly funded but are run independently



of local school boards, have been handed over to the private sector - two of which were a firm making soap and a management services firm. Given that the Democrats' aim is to create 3,000 charter schools, the scope for school privatisation is massive.

The growing threat of privatisation in the USA has resulted in the merger of the two biggest teaching unions, the moderate National Education Association, with 2.3m members and the more militant American Federation of Teachers, with a membership of 950,000. The result is the largest trade union by far in the USA. However, as we have found in Britain, creating bigger unions does not in itself lead to greater power. Let us hope that in this case it does, and that the new teachers' union is able to prevent the handing over of the minds of children to big business. 



Recordbreakers

Greenpeace occupied the platform in April 1995, and battle began against Shell with the widespread boycott of Shell petrol and attacks on Shell filling stations in Holland and Germany. Shell has not learnt and is keen to emphasise that Brent Spar was a "one off"; Shell has not given up the idea of dumping decommissioned platforms at sea.

There are believed to be more than a hundred off-shore installations up for decommissioning, and the struggle is far from over.

Direct action here has produced a victory which has resulted in the creation of jobs. Re-use and recycling as opposed to dumping are now on the agenda. The Shell management have had to take

factors other than profit into consideration. Here is a clear victory for people power and direct action. The impotent political left can only bleat and whinge. New Labour has been elected and already has been found wanting.

Meanwhile, direct action is now proven. Anti-Shell action goes on, most notably in Earth First!-sponsored confrontations with the Shell corporation.

Why pick on Shell? Well, in short; they rob \$300million a year from Nigeria and have ruined the Ogoni people's heartland with pollution and military action; they have played a leading role in de-

recognition of oil workers' unions; they lobby strongly in favour of ignoring global climate change and rejecting anti-pollution measures, and; they make profits alone of over

£5,000,000,000 a year, yes; they are the MOST profitable company in the UK. And the most polluting.

Top Moneylenders

As if to prove that the biggest profits always 'belong' to the biggest criminals, HSBC, which owns Midland and First Direct, is the world's most profitable bank and is just behind Shell in the UK in terms of profits (a measly £4.9 billion plus a year). However, this is clearly not enough - the moderate Banking Insurance and Finance Union recently had a run-in with Midland because they refused any pay rise at all for 20,000 of their staff. On average, every worker at the bank earns Midland £40,000 per year. Are there rip-off records being broken here? 



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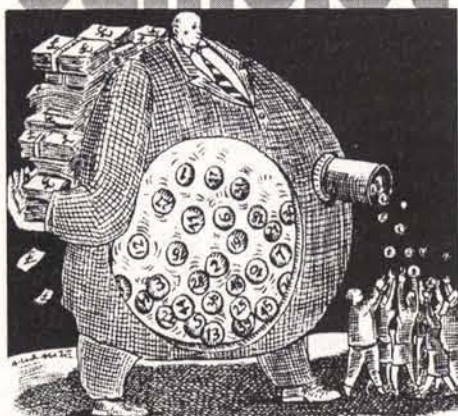
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Scam-a-lot



It's a lottery - or is it? Predictable winners of the world's biggest lottery - the UK National Lottery - are Camelot, who are owned by GTEch, one of the most corrupt and profitable organisations on the planet. Despite their corruption being 'found out' in the British courts, they are here to stay, it seems. Apparently, the only guaranteed winner of a multi-million payout for no effort twice a week every week - is Scamelot. "Sorry to all the sad willing punters, thanks for your cash", a Camelot spokesman said last night. Labour sources (also last night) said they intended to keep Scamelot involved in what they called the National voluntary tax on the stupid, "...and one which is doing quite nicely".

TOTAL CONTROL MADE EASY

One hundred and fifty years ago the victims were boys climbing chimneys for a living or rag trade workers in the sweatshops of London's East End. Today the victims of Industrial tyranny are the 200,000 call centre workers who answer phone inquiries 24 hours a day, claims a recent report.

Staff work in an Orwellian world where a computer watches every move, say two academics from the London School of Economics (LSE), in a report for the Government-funded independent research group, the Centre for Economic Performance.

Call centres are Britain's boom industry, employing 1.1 per cent of the workforce - more than the combined staff of the coal, steel and car making industries. Banks, insurance companies, stores and airlines are amongst the firms relocating sales and help-desk staff at the centres. Most are on greenfield sites in the North, where labour is cheaper and the workforce has regional accents which, studies show, are trusted by the public.

Sue Fernie and David Metcalf, of LSE, say that call centres are the factories of the

future and their workforce the most closely supervised ever.

"The tyranny of the assembly line is but a Sunday school picnic compared to the control that management can exercise in computer telephony," said Ms Fernie. The advertising for one popular call centre software package is headed "Total Control Made Easy."

In most centres, says Ms Fernie, the operator has no control over whether or not to answer a call and as soon as one is over another is put through.

The technology enables managers to monitor every aspect of an operator's performance, from listening in to check they are adopting the correct cheery tone, to calculating whether they take too much time to persuade the customer to part - with their cash.

The researchers cite one London borough which uses a call centre to collect parking and clamping fines via credit card. Calls must be answered within 15 seconds, logged and the caller persuaded to part with a credit card number in less than three minutes.

Reprinted from The Guardian 21/2/98

Unison Witch-Hunt

On paper, the merger between the old public service unions NALGO, NUPE and COHSE was a good thing, bringing manual and white collar workers together in the same union (Unison), where united action would be easier. Unfortunately, one needs to ask on whose terms that unity is and, in the case of Unison, it's very definitely those of the bureaucracy.

The Old Labour/Stalinist machinery that runs Unison has launched an attack on left wing branches and activists, targeting the broad left Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic Unison (CFDU). After wasting thousands of its members money backing a Labour election campaign which it knew was not going to stop privatisation or reverse the cuts of the last twenty years, it seems they've still got cold feet about doing anything that might offend Blair.

Several branches have had members targeted, often in conjunction with the media and the police, including Sheffield, Nottingham, Leeds and Lewisham in London. Recently, action has been initiated by Bromley Council against Unison branch

Secretary Glenn Kelly, who is also secretary of the CFDU. Bromley (one of the few Tory councils left) have accused him of 'abusing facility time', and have written to the unelected regional official asking for his views on the CFDU. The role of the Unison officials is very murky in all of this. Some have furnished information to national newspapers. This well illustrates why unions should not have full time officials, or at least that any such officials are held strictly accountable.

It is clear that no views are to be tolerated inside Unison other than those of the bureaucracy. This particularly rubs against the culture of the largest of the constituent unions, NALGO, which had a member-led democracy. However, not all in Unison is doom and gloom. Sheffield Unison branch have brought out a newsletter about their fight against the cuts and building solidarity against the witch-hunt. Part of the justification for the attack on Sheffield is that the branch has been infiltrated by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), who have managed to get the branch to agree (after 4 attempts) to make a donation to Socialist Worker,

as it is apparently the only paper to cover strikes(!). Much as I disagree with the faulty logic behind the donation, this is just a pretext. What Bickerstaffe (Unison leader) & co. are upset about is that Sheffield have successfully fought cuts.

The SWP influence is visible in the bulletin and they are active in selling it across the country. The content is mainly about their fight against the regional and national officials who are only interested in stopping anyone from rocking the boat, and calling for them to fight the cuts rather than their members. SWP influence tells most visibly with the 'We Didn't Vote for This'. But the SWP did; they had posters all over the country saying 'Vote Labour or Socialist'. The Labour manifesto was quite clear about what Blair intended, but I guess you reap the illusions that you sow.

Anyway, the newsletter is 20p from Sheffield Metropolitan Unison Branch, Arundel Gate Court, 175 Arundel gate, Sheffield S1 2LQ. Unison is a far from ideal vehicle for change, but if the bureaucracy succeeds, it will be significantly worse.

Global Actions

India

It was a scene Mahatma Gandhi would have applauded. After months of secret preparations, the 10,000 villagers travelled in complete silence at the dead of night under a full moon.

Led by women and dodging police roadblocks by taking to little-known paths between villages and through forests, they reached their destination at dawn. In the half-light, they streamed down the steep valley to the huge partly-built dam on the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.

Within minutes they had surprised the few guards and cut radio communications between the construction camp and the outside world. By 6:30am one of the largest peaceful sit-ins in Indian history had begun.

The Maheshwar dam is part of the £3 billion Narmada Valley Development Project, which involves plans for 30 big dams, 135 medium-sized ones and 3,000 small ones in the valley. The World Bank pulled out of the controversial project five years ago because of fierce local and international protests against proposals that would have displaced more than 100,000 people.

The 400MW Maheshwar dam, the first privatised hydroelectric power project in India, will submerge the homes of more than 2,200 families in 61 villages and destroy thousands of acres of cotton, chillies and wheat. Opponents claim it will produce electricity for only a few hours a day, and that it has quadrupled in cost in 10 years. They say they have received no compensation and that the dam will destroy the economy of a large area. The government of Madhya Pradesh says the project will bring electricity and economic development to areas hundreds of miles away.

Protests against the damming of the Narmada began more than 10 years ago and thousands of women have said they are prepared to drown rather than move. This is the first time that all work has been stopped on one of the dam sites.



Chiapas update

On December 22nd 1997 45 indigenous civilian members of the Zapatistas were massacred by pro-government paramilitaries in Chiapas, Mexico. This event was followed by army raids on many Zapatista communities, destroying food and housing, and stealing money and equipment.

The subsequent crackdown by the Mexican immigration authorities on foreign observers in the southern state of Chiapas has led to accusations of a government campaign of xenophobia and of attempts to cover up the "low-intensity warfare" against pro-Zapatista (EZLN) communities.

Expulsions of several US citizens from the region for allegedly violating the terms of their tourist visas is further evidence of the Mexican government's desperation.

While most government statements have been cautious, leaders of the ruling PRI and the rightwing opposition party, the PAN, have called for the detention and expulsion of all foreigners engaging in "political activity".

The PRI's senior spokesman on international affairs, Alfredo Phillips, said there were foreign interests at work in Chiapas that sought to "internationalise the conflict".

A PRI senator, Alvaro Vallarta, said the government should continue to apply the

law to all foreigners who "subvert the legal order and incite the indigenous people of Chiapas to rebellion".

No evidence has been provided so far that foreign agitators are doing this.

Despite the obvious threat, the presence of foreign observers in Chiapas has increased substantially, to the irritation of the army and civilian authorities, who's efforts are continuing to clear the area of foreigners.

Mexican and independent journalists have suggested that the rise of rightwing paramilitary groups in Chiapas is directly connected with USD involvement in military training of Mexican officers. The creation of paramilitary groups is an important component of US counter-insurgency doctrine, and the US is now training Mexican officers at a rate of 1,067 a year at 17 bases around the US, according to a front page report in the Washington Post on February 26th.

This also explains why the expulsion of US citizens from Chiapas for no evidential reason does not appear to have concerned the US government unduly.

Zapatista's get hacking

At the beginning of February, supporters of Mexico's Zapatista rebels hacked into a government home page on the Internet and defaced it with anti-government propaganda.

The Zapatistas pioneered use of the Internet by a guerrilla group, creating a home page to encourage international support.



Canada

Le Comité des Sans-Logis (Committee of the Homeless) and other French activist groups gathered at the Canadian embassy in Paris, February 5, to demonstrate their support for the Montreal activists arrested at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel last December.

In the original action, December 3, a commando of 20 militants raided the hotel's buffet and gave the food to those gathered at the demonstration. The action was called to draw attention to the growing problem of hunger in Montreal. All 108 people present at the demo were arrested and spent twelve to twenty-four hours in jail. Forty-eight have been charged with mischief, theft and conspiracy. The Paris demo was timed to coincide with the first pre-trial hearings.

(February 18) Montreal police arrested three activists without arrest warrants, and sent out four more *avis de recherche*. The seven "wanted" activists were all involved in the anti-hunger demonstration at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel. The charges levied at the activists range from assault to conspiracy.

Those arrested appeared in court at the Palais de Justice on February 19th. The Crown told them that they could regain their freedom if they agreed to six conditions: to remain in the jurisdiction of Montreal; to inform the authorities of changes of address; not to communicate with each other; to abstain from going to the municipal courthouse; to abstain from possessing a weapon; to keep the peace.

They turned down the deal on political grounds, to make a statement against the Crown's attempts to criminalise political dissent.

France

For the last few months, the unemployed in France have been demonstrating for better benefits but also for better jobs. The reduction in working time was a major demand.

On February 10th, the French



Unemployed people blocking France's main southern railway in Marseille - see report, page 17.

Assembly approved the working week of 35 hours.

Before the year 2000, companies with more than 20 employees must have adopted the so-called "35-hour Law" and, if this reduction in working time results in the creation of new jobs (a minimum of 6%), these companies will receive economic support.

Companies with less than 20 employees will be given until the year 2002 to adopt the law. See full report on page 17.

Belgium

After France and Italy, 35 hours in Belgium! That's the objective of an appeal launched in order to reduce working time in Belgium.

The initiators of this appeal demand a legislative initiative from the political parties and the Belgian government to come up with the unemployed expectations.

Zimbabwe

On January 21, Robert Mugabe, the ruler of Zimbabwe, ordered soldiers into Harare, the capital. The soldiers were sent to crush a spontaneous general strike and rioting by the workers, protesting against high prices and low wages.

The soldiers were sent in after the riot police failed to contain the situation and had orders to "shoot to kill" anyone disturbing "law and order".

The following day, the civil unrest spread to other cities, like Gweru and Mutare, while in Harare's southern townships, police and army units arrested 300 people in raids to retrieve looted property.

Hong Kong

Investment banker Marc Faber revealed he was behind a mystery consortium accused of training former soldiers as "industrial mercenaries" to break the trade unions' grip on the Australian docks.

But the prominent Hong Kong fund manager - known as Dr Doom for his bearish market sentiments - feared exposure of his role in the venture would make him a target of labour radicals. Mr Faber said he did not remember which party conceived the strategy to train serving and former soldiers to work on the docks, a move viewed by unions as organising a paramilitary strike-breaking force. He said: "Even if it was my idea, what do you think: I want to have the labour unions marching into my office tomorrow?" and: "The goal of any business is to make money and I suppose that, if you operate a stevedore operation without unions, it would have been more efficient, less costly."

Finland

Solidaarisuus, a Finnish syndicalist group seeking AIT and IWW membership, did a symbolic occupation in the Finnish Ministry of Labour. A small demonstration was held in Helsinki, and demonstrators handed in a 700 signature petition supporting unemployment rights and listened to "empty promises of empty-minded bureaucrats". Ten people were allowed into the building, and three decided to stay in the ministry "to ensure bureaucrats will start to realize their beautiful words". The three draped a red and black banner depicting "ABOLISH UNEMPLOYMENT, ABOLISH WAGE SLAVERY" (in Finnish) from the third floor before the police came and carried them out. "They didn't even beat us this time", one of them reported. There are now plans to start monthly Bureau of Labour squats in several cities.

Illegal strike success

Also, 2,000 bus, tram and tube drivers struck against a competitive takeover system which has been responsible for year on year sackings of drivers, wage and benefit reductions and tightening schedules. The illegal strike left Helsinki empty and the local trains crowded, with other journeys assisted by drivers who showed solidarity by picking up any hitchhikers who dared to brave the -20C conditions. 80% of the capital's inhabitants supported the strikers, which spurred on Solidaarisuus members picketing in the cold.

It all paid off, and the strikers won their battle against casualisation and benefit loss from competing takeovers. The threat of the solidarity strikes in the railway and aviation sectors was the final straw; the prospect of even more chaos across Finland was too much for the bosses to contemplate. The unions were notably luke-warm about the whole thing; after all, it was a successful illegal strike they hadn't condoned.

Exile and Struggle

Interview with the exiled Turkish writer and activist Emine Ozkaya

In December, Gun Zileli, anarchist author of political books and articles and member of the 5th of May group in London, gave a talk at the Norwich Solidarity Centre on the current situation in Turkey and antimilitarist action in London. Below are extracts from an interview with Emine, also a member of the 5th of May group.

A few things about yourself first.

My political background is Marxist. I actually got involved in active politics in the early eighties, during the years of the formation of the feminist movement in Turkey. Until the mid-eighties, campaigns like Women Against Domestic Violence, or fighting against hypocritical laws attacking prostitutes (the famous clause 438) with phrases like 'We are all prostitutes' were powerful moments in the radical women's movement. There are of course a lot of differences between being a radical feminist in Turkey at that time, and being a radical feminist in a Western European country. For years I called myself a feminist, rather than an anarchist, which I use now.

You left Turkey at some point.

I fled the regime in 1990 and came to London. Things were getting hard back home.

There is a considerable Turkish, Turkish-Cypriot and Kurdish community in London. How do people get along on a political level?

We must take into account the sociological side of this community. A lot of people are exiles or refugees and have formed their political identity in Turkey. Marxist-Leninist tendencies are prevalent, and Stalinist attitudes are quite common as well. On the whole, we are talking about a fairly separatist and competitive set of political relationships.

What about the situation in Turkey at the moment?

The coalition that is in power at

the moment is led by ANASOL, the Centre Right Party, practically set up by the army, and includes the Social-Democratic party. We are in fact talking about a Kemalist nationalist dictatorship in the name of secularism, which banned the Islamic fundamentalist party. We must qualify this: Fundamentalism in Turkey is of a milder brand than, say, the Algerian one.

And the opposition?

The only official opposition to the regime and to its Kemalist ideology is the extra-parliamentary Freedom and Democracy Party (ODP), a coalition between former left wing parties, ecologists and feminist groups. Some of the older militant parties of the left have now turned nationalist. As for the anarchists and other radicals, they are outlawed. I might also say that sometimes they are involved in intellectual discussions where action should perhaps be in order.

You have also contributed to a growing publishing activity in Turkey...

Yes, I published a pamphlet that translates as 'Anarchism- A call for revolution', and Emma Goldman's autobiography, and Gun Zileli from our group translated Abel Paz's biography of Durruti. In a pamphlet on 'Anarchism in Turkey' [Karambol Publications, London] you can find information about publications and groups as of a couple of years ago. An updated version will be out soon.

You are in the 5th May group in London?

Yes. In May 1993, Kurdish and Turkish exiles got together in London and we founded a political group.

What does the name mean?

On the 6th of May 1972, the Turkish state hung 3 revolutionaries, amongst them Denis Gezmiş. The event was a formative experience for me and is generally a hallmark for the birth of the radical movement in Turkey. We chose the 5th of May, when the three men were still alive.

Do you concentrate on Turkish-Kurdish issues?

The decision to set up a Turkish-Kurdish group should not be seen as separatist. As foreigners, we have common experiences of a certain tension (I would not go as far as to call it racism), even amongst the radical movement. We thought a group like that would be a good basis from which to work. The 5th of May Group works with many groups and individuals, anarchists in Britain, Holland, Germany, Turkey, Greece,

Association, refused to do military service, use weapons or wear a uniform. He was imprisoned by the military court and was released at the end of that year under local and international pressure. Now he has been arrested again, he is in prison under vulgar conditions and still awaiting trial. After the first release of Osman, the Campaign established contacts with many peace and antimilitarist groups and widened its focus to address more generally the issue of arms trade and militarism.



but also libertarian and radical individuals and groups in various campaigns and initiatives.

What issues have you addressed, as a group or as individuals?

Apart from local issues here in London and national campaigns, a focus of our activity has been state nationalism and militarism. We feel we have to address the role of the Turkish state in, say, the Kurdish war, or in Cyprus.

Which brings us to the issue of international solidarity?

The 5th of May has collaborated with anarchists in Thessaloniki and Athens on the issue of the relationship between the Greek and the Turkish state, as well as with the Kurdish and Turkish community in Berlin.

You are now working within the Campaign Against Compulsory Military Service in Turkey?

Yes. The Campaign was formed at the beginning of 1996 in support of Osman Murat Ülke. Osman, a member of the Izmir War Resisters'

How do you see Osman Murat Ülke's decision to become a conscientious objector?

His act is an effective response to Turkish nationalism and to the Turkish army's massacres. The war (against the Kurds) is happening because of international tolerance of the arms trade. Military service is largely also a class issue: it is the poor in Turkey who end up being sent to the Southeast to fight and get killed. So joining the army is a matter of life and death for them. At the moment, there are 250,000 deserters in the Turkish army and hundreds of young people refusing to show up for their military service. In this sense, one brave way to increase this number and see antimilitarism reveal the social power it actually has within Turkey is conscientious objection.

Any signs of growing antimilitarist awareness in Turkey so far?

Sure. A powerful voice against

(cont'd on page 16.)

(cont'd from page 15...)

both the arms trade and militarism was heard when, on the Day of the Prisoners of War, Vedat Zencir, the president of the Izmir War Resisters' Association publicly announced his continued conscientious objection to military service outside the State Security Court in Izmir. He was promptly charged with encouraging people to commit an offence and insulting the moral character of the State. 'Everyday', he said in his statement, 'this war [against the Kurds] carries away a piece of my humanity. If this war continues, it is because I and all the rest of us are not doing enough.' Vedat urges people to join neither the military, nor the guerrillas. Needless to say that if he is convicted, he faces several years in prison.

What other groups participate in the Campaign?

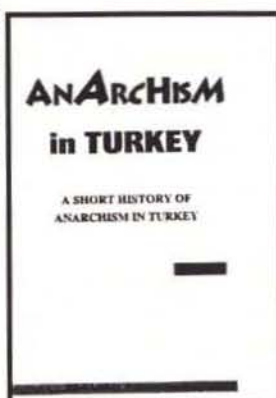
People from our group are all part of the Campaign as individuals. Apart from considerable international support, War Resisters International, Haringey Solidarity Group, Brownswood Library, Hackney Squatters Collective, Iranian Revolutionaries, Active Distribution, Contraflow, Anti-Nuclear Network, Reclaim the Streets and numerous individuals are helping. We've had some fundraising socials and a particularly successful protest in front of the Turkish consulate on the 1st of December, the Day of Prisoners of War. The interesting thing is that no Turkish or Kurdish refugee organisations have supported the campaign, although we've made sure that they're kept informed about it through our leaflets and posters.

International Solidarity is indispensable. How could people start?

To find out more about the campaign, write to our address in London or to the Izmir Association. Letters of complaint to the Turkish Consulate in London could also help. 

**THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST
COMPULSORY MILITARY
SERVICE IN TURKEY,
P.O. BOX 2474, LONDON
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**WAR RESISTERS
ASSOCIATION e-mail:
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D.A. Works!

The beginning of the year saw massive nationwide protests against unemployment across France, with direct actions of many types spreading from region to region well into the middle of January, which actually forced the Government to recognise and meet with unemployed organisations for the first time ever.

For many years, France has had a strong unemployed movement consisting of either libertarian, non-aligned or union controlled unemployed organisations. The catalyst of the latest action was a demonstration by the communist controlled CGT union in Marseilles, publicising their Campaign for a 35 hour week and the subsequent indefinite occupation of B job centres. The union has recently started to campaign around unemployment, setting up an unemployed workers' section of the union, in order to boost recruitment. The Government publicly denounced the occupiers as a minority group taking futile illegal action, but within a week, other groups from a much wider section of society, and making more radical demands, occupied nearly 50 offices of benefit, debt and charity-related organisations nationwide.

This was joined by other actions including blocking railway lines, opening toll gates on pay motorways, invading

supermarkets and giving out goods, occupying posh restaurants and demanding free food and mass free use of public transport. Many protests - aimed at highlighting the exploitation of the poorest section of society - were able to gain national media attention through subverting the usual Christmas news stories about homeless people and unemployed being passive victims of charity. At one point, the Salvation Army and the loan company Cash Converter were occupied, both British organisations.

Many occupations of benefit offices did not actively disrupt the administration of benefit distribution. In some cases, workers carried on coming in to work, and the occupiers - controlling certain parts of the offices - were able to talk to claimants as they came in. This enabled many claimants to meet together and talk for the first time.

Within a couple of weeks, Lionel Jospin and Martine Aubrey, the Minister of Work, agreed to meet with representatives of unemployed groups including A.C. (Action Against Unemployment). The main demands of the protesters were;

-£150 a week extra for all claiming benefit (including low paid workers)

-£300 Xmas bonus

-free public transport for people on benefit

This money was to come from the large amount of money accumulated by the cuts in benefit made over the past few years by UNEDIC (the benefit administration service).

The widespread scale of the protests created a national debate about unemployment. It

gave rise to the argument that cuts in working hours should not mean cuts in income. Many of the autonomous libertarian groups took the argument further, and argued that there was a need for an economy where nobody needs to work full-time. Also for the first time, many unemployed workers saw themselves as a collective force that should be listened to, lighting alongside trade unionists or as (unemployed) trade unionists in their own right - something that is rare in British or other European countries. Although the Government did not publicly concede to the national demands, there were local victories where unemployed groups forced benefit agencies to give out emergency payments.

The events showed what is possible by taking direct action even if you have no labour to withdraw. Many actions, blocking commuter-railway lines included, were aimed at disrupting the normal process of work, and thereby getting the attention of the Government through hitting profits.

Since the occupations, the State has dealt with those arrested with heavy charges specifically in Lyon and Paris, where a number of people will stand trial in February.

The next issue of Direct Action will feature a more in-depth report analysis and interview with members of the French CNT (National Workers' Confederation) about the current situation in France and its relation to British unemployed and employed people in struggle. 

Lean mean and dangerous

Quality has become the tantra of managers everywhere. Quality is the buzzword that masks relentless, increasingly rapid capitalist 'restructuring' on a global scale.

This is especially apparent in the vehicle making industry. The "Quality Revolution" began with the "Toyota" or "lean" system of production, and then spread like a cancer that unions have been unable to stop. And it is in the same sector that QS-9000 is now aggressively being implemented.

QS-9000 is based upon ISO-9000's international quality standards, which date back to

1987 and have been adopted in over a hundred countries. ISO-9000 incorporated central features of the lean system. Indeed, its proponents boldly proclaim that its standards "were established to help companies improve operating efficiency and productivity and reduce the costs of inconsistent quality". Insofar as the pursuit of continuous improvement is a fundamental feature of ISO-9000, it raises the spectre of never-ending relentless restructuring and scrutiny of job productivity.

ISO-9000 is particularly ominous because it is a vehicle for standardization. Standardization means bosses expect workers to adhere rigorously to corporate "best

practices" in carrying out their job responsibilities. This, in turn, means that workers must adhere to meticulously documented sets of procedures designed to optimize the efficiency of work processes and profits, all in the name of striving for "quality". It also means everyone is measured and monitored, and information on productivity, compliance, etc. can be maintained to allow easy decisions to be made when the next 'restructuring' comes. Boat-rockers are out first.

ISO-9000, like the lean system, implicitly assumes that workers and bosses have identical interests and goals and that these interests and goals are those of the corporation. This is apparent in the way that under ISO-9000 standards "Everyone is expected to be a quality control manager." Workers and bosses are accordingly expected to be focused in the same direction. Variance or deviation have no place in this monolithic framework.

QS-9000, like ISO-9000 before it, incorporates key features of the lean system. It harmonizes the quality systems of the U.S. Big Three automakers with additional input from other truck manufacturers, in order to firmly entrench and further develop the direction of the quality systems throughout the industry and its suppliers. QS-9000 stipulates that "a continuous improvement

philosophy shall be fully deployed throughout the supplier's organization". Consistent with this, QS-9000 emphasizes "teamwork" and "employee involvement". It envisions workers belonging to cross-functional or multi-disciplinary teams where every worker can do the job of every other worker on the team (for 'flexibility' purposes).

Workers are encouraged to take part in the development of job instructions and the formulation of company procedures and policies; QS-9000 envisions workers becoming "process improvers". This means workers are expected to help our bosses discover which parts of our jobs are "non-value added".

Needless to say, quality systems generally do not seem to improve quality of work or quality of health and safety provision – or quality of worker wages. Indeed, quality systems may actually overshadow the health and safety provisions in place, replacing them with more emphasis on new quality paperwork systems.

In short, QS-9000 means that our bosses will not only expect but will **require** us to help find ways to standardize and intensify the work process in order to get us to do much more. QS-9000, like ISO-9000, seeks to continuously increase the rate of exploitation of our labour and continuously improve corporate profits. 



chumbas

Welcome to Chumbaworld! John Prescott may not wear his Chumbawamba T-shirts any more but their 15 year overnight success means some people are. While the gutter press try to make up their minds whether they are cuddly or dangerous, DA lets Alice Nutter of the band speak for herself when we caught up with them before a recent gig.

DA: Did you anticipate accusations of selling out by writing the song "The Good Ship Lifestyle" (on the recent album *Tubthumping*). Have you got that sort of reaction now you're famous?

Alice: No, well the whole album (*Tubthumping*) was written before we signed to EMI anyway. Have you seen that pamphlet "The circled A and its parasites"? We wrote it about that, and about some people's puritanical take on the world. We wanted to say it isn't OK to be like that, that we've got to live and fight in the real world.

DA: So you aren't getting loads of hassle for going "mainstream"?

Alice: On the whole, people have been into it, because I think they know that if we weren't on Top of The Pops, then they wouldn't hear us at all. This time last year we didn't have a record deal at all.

Even before we'd signed to EMI and any of that stuff, I was going to political meetings and some people are funny because you're in a band. But if you recognise that you're part of a community - except that you have access to the media for two minutes of your life - that's how we see it. We know the people who do all the hard work get no fucking glory at all.

DA: The mainstream press seem to enjoy casting you as a "controversial" band but seem to pick up on things like references to drinking in lyrics rather than the political content of your music.

Alice: Did you hear that stuff last week about Virgin taking our records off the shelves? I did this crap TV debate in America which went out live across the country. I was the loony in the corner arguing against capitalism, and shoplifting came up. I said we wouldn't mind if people shoplifted our records from major chainstores. Their argument against it was that no-one needs to shoplift a record, it's not food, but why should just the rich have access to culture?

DA: Will Virgin put your records back on the shelves?

Alice: To be honest, I don't really care. People are throwing money at us, or are trying to. Nike offered between £1 and £3 million to do them a song for the world cup and we told them to fuck off. We don't need it. Not that we've got millions, but we'll do stuff if there's a point. We did an advert for Renault in Italy and gave the money to Italian anarchist radio stations. If there's a point to taking the money and getting into the

mainstream, then we'll do it. But we're not going to take Nike's money. Even if you give £3 million away, you're still financing the sweat shops and that's a dilemma that you can't live with. So we got in touch with the anti-Nike group and said, "do you want a song for free?"

DA: How far do you think it's possible to use the press for yourselves, and how far do they think they're using you?

Alice: You can't control it, we're not on the same side. The Sun and the Mirror have got us in all the time but I wouldn't wipe my arse on them. I read the Mirror sometimes but I don't like it. We don't even try and control it because, depending on what they write, one minute it's about this band who say they like it when cops get killed, next minute we're cuddly anarchists.

DA: So it doesn't matter what you say?

Alice: No, but I do think that even if they cast you as a cartoon figure, there's loads of people out there that go "yeah I think that". They're using us, and to some extent we're using them.

Now, whether it works or not I don't know, but we've tried not using them and that definitely doesn't work.

chill out

DA: *Is there any way of getting them to report less sensational stuff, like organising and longer term issues, any way of taking it further?*

Alice: For a start even if we're talking about Chumbawamba, we point out that the reason we've existed all these years is because we've organised as an anarchist unit. We work as a democracy, everybody gets equal money, everybody gets a say in what goes on. There isn't a leader....

And then you move it off and start talking about other forms of anarchist organising and how important community and grassroots politics are, and occasionally that goes in. And when it's live on TV, then it has to go in.

DA: *So what do you think the media think anarchism is, and how far is it possible to influence this?*

Alice: It's interesting because they always start off from the basis that anarchism is chaos. So part of our role at the moment, which has appeared in magazines like Q, is to say that anarchism is actually to be extremely organised in a responsible way. It's a social order where everybody starts off on an equal footing, without the blandness of state communism; without a leader at any point. To be an anarchist you have to be organised because you have to take on responsibility.

So I do think it is possible to use the media to change people's perceptions of anarchism.

DA: *The whole idea of doing this, and having EMI as your boss etc... is quite ironic...*

Alice: It's like the dockers thing. We did a benefit and we expected EMI to be lukewarm about it but they said "Brilliant! Publicity!" If you're suiting capitalism's ends, then they'll let you. But there'll come a point when we stop selling records and the relationship will change drastically and we're fully



aware of that. What we're actually doing with all the money is to pay ourselves a living wage now, so that when we're not selling records we can still make artistic choices and carry on in some form and have money to do that.

DA: *Are there other things you'd like to do with Chumbawamba, like tour with a big band?*

Alice: We got offered the Rolling Stones... We talked about it but decided that it would only be worth doing if we could do something that would get us dragged off stage. It wasn't really relevant, but we'd love to do U2!

DA: *People put in years of political activity against massive odds.... why do you think we do it?*

Alice: Because it enhances our lives. It's not really a conscious choice, it's something you are. The best thing about touring isn't owt to do with all the media stuff. It's getting to meet

strikers, and being in touch with the dockers and the anti-fascist people here tonight.

I think politics should be an accepted part of everyday life, not a boring thing for a meeting in a pub once a week. I think there's a move to reform a workable anarchist movement that's not elitist or based solely on youth culture. It's got to reflect the world as it is.

DA: *I'd say that's going on with the formation of the Solidarity Federation and the more recent stuff about Class War.*

Alice: It's really difficult to think "this isn't working" and it's a really big move to say "right, we've got to knock it all down, take what's good about what we've done but try to work in different ways". It's hard to do because people are resistant to change, even anarchists... 

LAPSTICK CORNER

1. Bill Gates, Mr Microsoft, was had by the infamous pieing team organised by Noël Godin, the 52-year-old Belgian author, film historian, actor ("The Sexual Life of the Belgians"), writer ("Cream and Punishment") and "entarteur" (a Godin coinage that roughly translates as "encaker" or "pie-er"). The attack took place at the entrance of Le Concert Noble on Arlon Street in Brussels. Though he has been pieing celebs since 1969, the action has become increasingly 'political', and many more actions are planned, to quote: "we have declared the pie war on all the unpleasant celebrities in every kind of domain" (slogan: "Let's pie! Let's pie! Nincompoop guys!").



2. Proctor and Gamble chief John Pepper was 'tofu-cream pied' by a supporter of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in the US.



3. Danbert had Prescott with Ice-water, an act which followed a history of scuffles at Brit Award ceremonies. He was duly soaked by reporters a few days later, desperate for a story. They seem to have hit the target but not the point.

Send your slapstick stunt to DA. It has to be accompanied with a photo, and all recipients have to be slimeballs. Free sub to all entries printed. 

An Unhealthy Profit



Half a century has now gone by since the creation of the National Health Service. Its establishment is looked back on fondly by all manner of leftists as a triumph of state-intervention. The benefits of advancing medical science have been extended to everyone. Isn't this redistribution of medical resources an example of socialism in action?

Today's NHS is a far cry from rose-tinted, cradle-to-grave nostalgia. It is now a byword for crisis management. Likewise, the declining health of the British working class is now described by *British Medical Journal* as "the most serious health problem facing the nation". While it is no doubt popular to blame years of Tory mismanagement and under-funding for the NHS's predicament, this is far from the whole story. A fuller picture requires a look at the whole emphasis of health policy, at factors like diet, pollution, poverty and inequality, not to mention the nature of work. In short, we have to confront the exploitative and murderous system that is capitalism.

'Prevention is better than cure' does not exist in the present health service management phrasebook

The outward signs of this crisis management, those that grab the headlines, are the waiting lists, staff shortages, bed shortages and, of course, the shortage of funds to even attempt to remedy the situation.

From time to time, the government will bow to "public pressure" and throw money around until the immediate problem fades into the background. But the real problem facing the NHS is that the costs of drugs and treatments has now spiralled out of control, outstripping what funds governments are prepared to allocate. Consequently it takes more and more money just to deliver the same level of service. However, there could have been a totally different story, had successive governments not totally mismanaged health policy. It is the short-sighted strategy of emphasising the symptoms of ill health, rather than addressing the real causes, that has led us to the dire straits we are now in. 'Prevention is better than cure' does not exist in the present health service management phrasebook.

By the beginning of the 1990s, the Tory government had decided that the solution for the NHS lay within their free-market ideology.

Thus the internal market was spawned. The introduction of competition through a system of buyers (GP fundholders and local health authorities, not to mention private health insurance companies) and sellers (NHS hospital trusts and clinics) was supposed to bring about a cheaper and more efficient service. What has resulted instead is a ballooning bureaucracy with decisions made on the basis of what can be afforded by accountants, rather than by medical professionals on the basis of what is required.

Cutting staff wages

Alongside this approach has been that of reducing the NHS wage bill, achieved initially through the hiving off of some services, like catering and laundry, to the private sector. It is nurses, however, who continue to face the brunt of this cost-cutting and who continue to leave the NHS in droves due to low pay and low morale. These declining staff levels have in turn led to an increased use of temporary and agency nurses leaving an increasingly de-skilled, fractured and insecure workforce. This is a far cry from the early days of the Tories' "reforms", when there seemed to be a genuine chance of a

fightback among nurses and other health workers. However, that fightback was never to materialise due to a reluctance to take action which might harm patients. The Tories exploited this reluctance to the full, aided and abetted by the nursing union leaders and the Labour Party, who were desperate to present a squeaky clean image to the media.

Rhetoric & reality

Now the Tories have gone and still the crisis persists. New Labour's election campaign was full of promises to abolish the internal market and slash bureaucracy, as well as to cut waiting lists. The reality is that they have no real plan as to how to go about it. In fact, they are doing the exact opposite. The health secretary, Frank Dobson, claims in his white paper that Labour will abolish "the wasteful and bureaucratic competitive internal market". All it amounts to, though, is mucking about at the edges of the buyer/seller system and introducing even more bureaucracy, including league tables, a Commission for Health Improvement (a sort of Ofsted for the Health Service), and a National Institute of Clinical Effectiveness - NICE - (to produce guidelines on the cost-effective use of treatments).

This is merely another reflection of Labour's unerring ability to accept old Tory policies and re-package them in a cloud of guff about caring, sharing New Labour. It's just the same story as school performance league tables, compulsory competitive tendering for local authorities, privatisation of parts of the civil service, workfare, cutting benefits to single parent families, and so on, and so on...

Meanwhile, the government has also failed to cut hospital waiting lists, which continue to grow and grow. The result? What we now have is a two-tier health service. We have an efficient service based on health insurance and private medicine for the rich and a poorly-funded, inadequate service for the rest of us. This is reflected in the latest trends and figures which show the health of the rich steadily



*What we
now have is
a two-tier
health
service*

improving, but the health of the poorest is declining for the first time since the Victorian era. Life expectancy for "unskilled" and "semi-skilled men" fell between 1987 and 1991, while for "professional men" it rose by nearly a year. Men of working age in the "lowest" social class are three times more likely to die prematurely than those in the "highest" class. A baby born into the top two social classes can expect to live over five years more than one born to parents of the

lowest classes. 30 years ago the gap was less than four years. Death rates in poor areas of Britain are rising for the first time this century.

Research points to relative poverty, not absolute poverty, as the cause of this deterioration in health. Countries with more equal income distribution have less health inequalities and healthier populations overall. In Britain, the widening gap between the highest and lowest earners is now well

(cont'd on page 22..)

(cont'd from page 21...)

documented. This gap is reflected in a widening of lifestyle differences, which also contribute to health inequalities. Medical Research Council studies have highlighted the importance of eating habits, and show that babies who are small at birth (due to poor nutrition in the womb), have an increased risk of heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

The government has responded to this trend by setting up a review to examine health inequalities and make recommendations on reducing them. They have also announced the establishment of "health action zones" to improve health care in very poor areas.

These may bring minor improvements but the most obvious solution, a fundamental redistribution of wealth, has been ruled out. This makes for a depressing future, with a large section of society increasingly condemned to poverty, along with the poor health and the poor quality of life that goes with it.

Nor does the political will exist to radically alter the targeting of medical and other resources towards tackling the causes of disease and ill health - towards prevention. This means dealing with not only huge income and lifestyle inequalities. It also means dealing with widespread pollution, the food industry, the stress levels and long hours associated with the nature of work. In short, it means threatening profits and challenging the existence of capitalism itself, and we can hardly expect this or any other government to be responsible enough to do this in any meaningful way.

Anarchosyndicalism, which advocates the establishment of a society where production is for

need not profit, has much more to offer. Gone will be the mentality of seeing the development of ever more sophisticated drugs and techniques as the only answer. Of course, drugs and surgery have to have their place but we see a greater emphasis on removing and reducing the causes of ill health.

This means food which doesn't poison us slowly; it means green industry and transport; it means stopping wringing the most work possible from the fewest workers possible for the least money possible. It means creating methods of work that won't grind us down for an early grave.

What about the more immediate future though? Self-education on health matters can be provided right now. Information and skills by and for people are a major part of Solidarity Federation's strategy of promoting and establishing local "solidarity centres". These are intended to become educational centres, dealing with a whole range of issues, including health, and to become the focus for many and varied campaigns and actions.

Locating and dealing with the causes of ill health - poverty, work, pollution, etc., is part of the all-encompassing strategy to build a new society within the shell of the old one. It is only through people getting together in this way that we can begin to confront and take control of the problems affecting our own daily lives and our health.

These stepping stones of solidarity and self-education are critical. Through them, we can begin to challenge health crisis-management and gain the experience and knowledge to go on to take over and manage our own health in the interests of all of us rather than the profits of the few. 



letters

Dear DA

Direct Action's welcome return to the world of revolutionary print has been much enhanced by the gloss paper. Good graphics and some powerful covers have been backed with excellent international news, interesting features and reviews. I look forward to seeing the progress of DA and SolFed (love the new logo!) over the next year.

Re: The BSE crisis. It is interesting to note that testing procedures on infected cattle are discovering the prion infection spread throughout increasing areas of the carcass. Whether this is because of test improvements or prion development is immaterial. The extended ban on beef products may be an example of the nanny state, but it does at least highlight the level of concern within the food industry. Over Christmas I spoke to a food industry veteran (20 years+) who feels that what we are witnessing now is just the tip of the iceberg. He predicts that tests will eventually show the infection present in the milk of infected animals and also told me that the infection has crossed over back into sheep, where it causes (what is classed as) a new strain of scrapie. The time is surely not far off for a radical re-assessment of farming methods and, with the huge increase in cases of food poisoning, the whole food chain! With avian flu raising its ugly head in the east, planet vegan might be just around the corner, but it may well witness the culling of several species.

All the best for '98, J.

Send your letters to:
DA-SF (letters)
PO Box 1095
Sheffield S2 4YR
ALL letters are welcome but
we get lots and we cannot
print them all. Make yours
concise, brief and questioning
if you want it printed.



Dear DA,

I attended the Anarchist Bookfair Oct 97 in London. I must share my dismay at the event. If that was the cutting edge of the social revolution in Britain, 'God' help us all, because from my observation the majority there were just sloppy drunks.

I sat and listened to the 'debate' chaired by the now defunct Class War titled "What now?" It seemed obvious to me, from the reaction of the crowd at the meeting, that it was another can of Special Brew! I watched as two members of World Revolution got totally slagged off and threatened from a man stretched out on the floor, too pissed to stand. Other threats came over my head aimed at the two WR members. These two people were talking bollocks, but at least it was coherent bollocks.

Bakunin, Malatesta, and Kropotkin among others would turn in their graves if they knew their ideals and hopes for the enslaved of humanity had been passed on to such a bunch of petty self indulgent piss-heads. The only thing these wankers are good for is keeping profits high for the booze barons, and boring the shit out of the rest of us. Bleeden MUGS!!!

Yours in the struggle, DOH

Dear DA

Good to see you have finally decided to bolt green issues on to your anarcho-syndicalism (even if 'environmentalrights' sounds both 1970s and PC), and to show solidarity with the Gandalf defendants, even if you couldn't find it in yourself to advise readers to buy Green Anarchist. Nice of you to give a contact number, though the campaign number is actually 0956 694 922. Similarly, no messages of solidarity will reach the prisoners if you don't give their numbers and can't get their details right: Noel Mollano (CK4321), Sax Wood (CK4322), both at HMP Guy's Marsh, Shaftsbury, Dorset, UK and Steve Booth (CK4323) at HMP Lancaster Castle, Lancaster LA1. If you want to do something useful you might consider publishing, signing up and acting on London Greenpeace's Defiance Statement and contributing to the online direct action news agency (DANA, NAALFS6@Environlink.org) established since the verdict to smash state censorship.

Although your reviewer should be praised for his honesty in not knowing what GA was about, he shouldn't for then going on to slag it off anyway, on the basis of preconceptions a decade out of date. We would suggest he reads autonomedia's excellent Camatte anthology, 'This world we must leave', Freddy Perlman's 'Against His-story', John Zerzan's 'Elements of Refusal' and 'Future Primitive', Bob Black's 'Anarchy after Leftism' and David Watson's 'Beyond Bookchin', the majority of which are stocked by GA mail order, and all of which have the virtue of being written in the last decade or so and addressing the current movement, unlike tracts from the last century. As anarcho-primitivists, we look to the origins of hierarchy and from this it is obvious it will take more than the obstruction of capitalism and the state to end it. We seek an end to separation, and if your reviewer was only slightly sussed to that, he would appreciate our analysis suffuses 'Do or Die', particularly concerning neo-communitarian movements like RTS. If he understood this, he would also understand why the movement associated with DoD isn't faintly interested in 'the Spanish Civil War, anarchosyndicalism, and massive... organisation', and why his brand of politics is dying.

As one of those nicked for trashing the Hursley last 13th December, I must agree my political activity consists entirely of 'sitting in big armchairs bragging about how brave I am', unlike all those well-known street fighters in the SolFed. I was surprised, therefore, to find DA asking how 'working class attacks on the rich could be organised or controlled'. Don't these questions about sum up the old-fashioned, moralistic, manipulative and timid leftist mentality that makes the SolFed's politics so unattractive to today's new activists?

Yours, for the destruction of civilisation, JC, editor, Green Anarchist.

Thanks for the update on the Gandalf defendants. Unfortunately, the more barbed points (now now) in your letter contain a few factual inaccuracies - plenty of people from the wider movement around DoD are interested in anarchosyndicalism, and if it is dying, year on year increases in SolFed membership seem a funny way of this death manifesting itself. 'Bolt on?' - maybe not far from the truth. Environmental destruction is a symptom of capitalism, not its central purpose. The purpose - political and economic domination - is where the fight to replace capitalism must be won. This involves a myriad of issues around the social and economic and political arenas. On the GA review, clearly, SolFed's ideas differ greatly from your primitivist ones. The reviewer, to be fair, only had the one latest issue of GA, presumably the ideas expressed therein suggested views that you say are 10 years out of date. She apparently doesn't yet meet your exacting standards of background reading either. Maybe everyone ought to do some reading up - your ideas on anarchosyndicalism would appear to need a serious dusting off too. Lastly, on the armchair reference, we both know direct action is necessary, I don't think it's productive to egotise it - apologies on behalf of the reviewer that you took it personally, I'm sure it wasn't meant. -ed.

CRIMETIME AND BEYOND

Dear DA

While I appreciate the desire of DA to stimulate their readers, I think we would have been better spared some of the thoughts of Crime Time and Beyond. The article raises many very interesting points, but loses overall from its lack of clarity or definition.

Firstly, what is crime? It's all very well being against it but without a definition of what is meant, it is meaningless. For example, not paying your TV licence or car tax are crimes as defined by law, while paying people £2 an hour isn't. Yet what is the bigger crime from 'an anarcho-syndicalist perspective'? Stealing is stealing becomes just meaningless rhetoric unless placed in context. If a worker steals 40 winks at a boring job, they are a criminal, yet the employer who expects them to perform drudgery for profit is not. What your writer missed was an opportunity to look at what constitutes anti-social crime, which is surely what we are against, not crime in general, or in terms defined by the tabloids. Of course robbing and burgling working class people is wrong and anti-social, stealing from big shops is a totally different kettle of fish.

The implication is very divisive. There are the deserving poor, who accept their lot and fight within accepted limits for their rights (while I would ask who defines those rights) and then there are the undeserving poor who shoplift or do whatever else they need to do to get by. Where have we heard that before?

Yes, some of them may be anti-social, but anti-social actions are not bound by respectability as drink driving, speeding and domestic violence testify. We have to accept people warts and all and work with them the way they are, not some idealised version. Let us judge actions in context rather than blanket talk about crime. There is too much division already between supposedly law-abiding and lawless sections of our class for it to be exaggerated by community boycotts. It is particularly offensive to turn the old Wobbly slogan of 'They're inside for us and we're outside for them' on its head and argue that crime is a form of class struggle. The slogan recognises that the law is a form of class struggle, by the ruling class, and many working class people are caught up in it, conscious or not. It's no accident that the most lawless period in popular recent history, the American Wild West, was a period immediately after the collapse of the beef cattle economy in 1887. And yes, it does make a difference whether those being robbed are rich or poor. If they're poor it is a vicious anti-social act. If they're rich, they're insured and won't be too much out of pocket. To draw such a black and white picture of crime debases our movement and gives the impression that we are incapable of distinguishing between values, and need the comfort of black and white views of a very greyscale world. In solidarity, M.

Dear SolFed

I always read DA as soon as it comes out, and it is normally excellent. However, I am not at all happy about your views on crime, which I think are very divisive. Antisocial crime does blight working class areas and causes people to live in isolation and fear. Dealing with these problems has to be one of the priorities of any class struggle movement, as many people are persecuted more by their neighbours than by the police or their boss. But to talk about crime and criminals the way your article does is meaningless.

Most working class people commit occasional property crimes such as stealing from their work or rigging the meter. More and more of our class depend on crime to survive as wages and dole are cut back. Do you think a single mother fiddling the social or doing cheque book fraud is 'attacking the social fabric of a community'? Let's not think I am using atypical examples - visit your local prison or county court and see who is filling them. Many politicians fall into believing the propaganda about the gainfully employed decent workers and the unproductive evil underclass, one of whom lives off the backs of the other. This is divisive rubbish. Most of us now move in and out of work through our lives and a lot of the best crimes are workplace fiddles as you are less likely to get caught.

When we steal from Sainsbury's or the Electricity Company or whoever, we are taking back what belongs to us. Yes, this can be individualistic but we don't live in a pure world. A lot of us work in places where we are not helping our class - security guards, dole office workers, etc. Everyone gets their hands dirty to some extent trying to survive. We need to talk about crime, but please lay off the 'honest homy handed sons of toil' propaganda. Yours, DT.

Dealing with Difficult Bosses

Do you ever wonder what your life would be like if society was organised along different lines?

As a postal worker, my job can sometimes be routine, so to relieve the boredom, I sometimes daydream about such things, particularly what the job would be like 'come the revolution'. Of course people would still want letters delivered, but does that mean the job wouldn't change?

It would - though the fine details would be up to all of us to work out when we are in a position to do so. Some things are assumed, although if management stopped running the post office, we would make sure everyone got their letters. The sole purpose would not be profit at all cost. That would mean shorter hours and no more 6 day weeks, no more overtime to make ends meet, no more macho management bullies. And that's just for starters. And don't forget you - 'the customer' - no more junk mail, no more bills, no more tax demands, eviction notices or the like.

Too good to be true? Surely, we would be lost without management to tell us what to do? The answers to these questions are no, and no.

When I first started at the Post Office 10 years ago, one of the first things I heard hurled at a manager by an old timer was 'this job will run without the bosses but not without us'. Startlingly simple, but an assertion

which is borne out with experience. We do the work. We know the job inside out. We know how to save time and money. We know how to do everything most efficiently and in the least hours. Management are constantly trying to get that information out of us so they can make cuts and increase profits.

We wouldn't tell them what we know. In fact, we do everything we can to sabotage management's efficiency drives. But it's our knowledge and experience which, one day in the future, will be used to transform our working lives for the benefit of all.

In the meantime, we have an ongoing guerrilla campaign on our hands. One thing that has kept me at the post office so long is my fellow workers disrespect for petty authority. And that includes union bureaucrats along with the bosses.

An understanding amongst us is that anything management want us to do is bad news. Time and again their proposals are kicked out following a brief debate. Sure, we are not always as solid as we would all like, but the basic uncooperative attitude is always there. The management start a get-smart campaign, and we start a get-scruffy campaign, you know the type of thing. The bosses statements are met with our resolve. Their appeals for the guilty to step forward are met with cries of 'I am Spartacus'. Team briefings are an excuse to piss around, and if you can piss-take the manager by carrying out



WORK RATE TOO FAST
(APPLY RESISTANCE)

orders literally, all to the good.

All this schvejikian messing about might seem rather empty and pointless. After all, it isn't going to kick anything off towards a 'revolution', is it? Still, I say it is something worth celebrating. This stubborn bloody-mindedness is behind the still-common unofficial walk-outs. It led to the vote for strike action last year. It is behind the ongoing battle to defend what little we have and to fight for better.

And we have another understanding - whatever the union recommends must be a crap deal. The union bureaucrats have themselves to look out for, not us. It is all part of a great tradition of workplace resistance, done with inventiveness and humour. It's something to be proud of. It's a way of showing we are not devoid of imagination, and this will sometime be turned into something more positive.

As you may have gathered, I'm not a cynic, and neither are most of my colleagues. Where there is disobedience, there is hope. It is the difference between existing and living. 

It could be 'how I became an anarchist.' or 'what I'm doing with my life' or whatever. Send in your interesting anecdotal personals to DA Personals, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.

Turning the tables

This issue's FAQs graphics, and the rather corny subtitles, come from a consultancy blurb advertising management courses to help them deal with difficult people.

As far as dealing with your difficult managers is concerned, remember the first golden rule - perseverance. Things may not go your way immediately, but hang in there, and the cracks will surely start to appear in good time.

Whatever character your boss thinks you have - always use tactics and strategies which don't fit his or her view of you. And there is invariably a way of ensuring it just couldn't have been you. If in any doubt, always *Go Incognito*.

The Endgame

Golden rule II - practice solidarity amongst fellow colleagues. Perfect your guerrilla and sabotage ideas against difficult bosses.

Management Techniques

Then, (see far right) there are a myriad of ways to make the workplace more 'efficient', 'productive', and 'accountable'. Management have had enough of taking the rap for their mistakes and now want to shift the blame (but not the profits).

The idea is that the productive side of the business takes on the responsibility for quality and deadlines, leaving management to simply ponder whether the quality (and profit-rate) is to their satisfaction.

A lot of money and resources has gone into developing these techniques in recent years, so management expect 'results'. 



THE DOMINEERING DICTATOR
Rules from a command post, stays in control by keeping everyone else down

What to do?

Build solidarity with your colleagues and ask around. Build a case file of accounts and events of domination, bullying, harassment and intimidation. Do this quietly. When you have enough info., use it. If you don't know how, or feel too intimidated, contact Solidarity Federation for assistance.



THE CRAFTY CONNIVER

What to do?

Typical Boss; typical solution. Refuse and obstruct all his/her 'new ideas'. Hidden agendas are hidden for a reason - the best way to counter them is to publicise them far and wide; on notice boards, PCs, in conversations..



THE PUT DOWN PRO
Belittles you whenever the opportunity arises

What to do?

The boss is the boss - whoever they are, however they seem. Get together with colleagues, outnumber them, encircle them and entrap them. If all else fails, send them to coventry, or get someone to draw a caricature of him/her sitting on the toilet, and paste it up on PCs, noticeboards etc.



THE CROSS EXAMINER
Cross questions everything everyone does until confidence is destroyed

What to do?

Do some homework. Raise endless petty actions and send ludicrously long sets of petty questions for clarification (sign them from another boss if you are under threat). If 'desperate', deface their notes, property, car, etc. with suitably poignant life-questions.



THE BACKSTABBING BETRAYER

What to do?

Big mistake. If you were betrayed, you must have trusted your boss. Never do this, and it won't happen. Insist on endless paperwork when it doesn't suit him. Cover your back.

Managing the FAQs

What is Human Resources Management (HRM) and how does it work in practice?

Theory: HRM is supposed to be a comprehensive approach which treats employees as "valued assets", emphasising strategy, culture and commitment rather than compliance. It sees a key role for line management, integrating the personnel management function more closely with operations. In the LRD survey, HRM was in use in 44% of workplaces.

Practice: The LRD survey shows that employers are demanding greater commitment from employees and in many cases this means wider or more flexible skills, tasks and duties, greater effort and increased individual responsibility. Commitment may even become a factor in decisions about promotion or about redundancy. The HRM approach is often coupled with the use of mission statements and new forms of employee communication.

What are Total Quality Management and customer first/customer care, and how do they work?

Theory: Ensuring that activities meet the defined needs of customers and clients by gaining commitment to quality, continuous improvement and zero defects and encouraging "appropriate" employee attitudes (e.g. the concept of fellow workers as "internal customers"). Customer satisfaction is said to be the only real measure of product or service quality, and customer first/customer care policies may be part of a total quality management (TQM) approach. In the LRD survey, TQM was in use at 53% of workplaces.

Practice: TQM overlaps heavily with HRM. The issue of quality is used as the pretext for a wide range of other changes, and may in some cases be linked to the achievement of International Standard ISO9000 which indicates that arrangements for managing quality have been assessed and certified (see p17 of this issue of DA). The employers' emphasis has widened, and quality circles are generally seen as having been superseded by TQM and teamworking, involving the workforce as a whole.

What is 'Teamworking'?

Although not a new concept, teamworking has become more popular with management as part of a TQM approach. Teams of workers can be formed around key points in the production process or in service provision, grouping workers with different skills, to whom responsibility for carrying out all or most of the tasks in that area can be delegated by management. Within the team, different tasks may be undertaken flexibly by team members. The term "cellworking" is sometimes used, although this may refer to a physical re-grouping of machinery to increase efficiency, rather than the organisation of staff into teams for broader management purposes. Teamworking has been introduced in 52% of LRD survey workplaces, including 36% over the last two years, highlighting this as a more recent trend.

Sourced from LRD Booklet: Human Resource Management; A Trade Unionists Guide, May 1995, available from: LRD, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF.

Kevin Doyle Parliament or Democracy?

*Irish Anarchist Pamphlet,
Workers' Solidarity
Movement. 2nd ed. 1997*

This dense and long pamphlet - with a little more spaced laying out it would make a small book - is about the contrasts between parliamentary democracy and direct democracy.

The first part of the pamphlet addresses the history of the development of the system of Parliamentary Democracy from the French Revolution onwards, though with a few flash backs along the way. It looks closely at the development of the current Western system of the universal suffrage and how this was both opposed and supported by the rich and powerful and how it is used to maintain power. It then asks if parliamentary democracy works and there is universal suffrage, then surely the majority would vote for an improvement in their standards of living and not against it? And if this is so, how come the gaps in incomes are widening as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer? The pamphlet lists numerous examples from around the world of socialist, left and labour parties promising to represent the working class, only to water down their position, and compromise with the powerful city institutions and financial movers and shakers once they get in. Of course, parliamentary democracy is by representative; once there they have no accountability, and no chance of being recalled. Thus parliamentary democracy offers not just limited choice, but no real choice.

The pamphlet ends on a comparison with direct democracy as envisaged by

anarchists, with a focus on the direct democracy of the anarchosyndicalists in Spain in the 1930's.

The pamphlet is very well researched and the historical and economic sections, whilst

PARLIAMENT OR DEMOCRACY?



Irish anarchist pamphlet

being a little dry for me, were informative and clearly presented. I have a feeling that economics can only get as exciting as presented here. It may have momentous effects on real people, but it's something that it is hard to deliver in anything like an attention grabbing style. I am in the Solidarity Federation-International Workers'

Association and so I have no problem with the use of the CNT in Spain as an example of direct action and direct democracy in action. But it is perhaps in this section where the pamphlet is slightly less convincing than I hoped. It clearly shows the flaws of the current system, but seems to run out of space a bit when addressing the alternative. I personally would have liked to have seen the ideas of direct democracy and direct action developed further, building from the basic position and the example of Spain, though I accept this is the hardest bit!

I can see this booklet as being useful for convincing those who are on the edge of anarchism, but still hold out hope for parliamentarianism. Those who are good militants with libertarian leanings would hopefully find this booklet another pebble tipping the scales towards anarchism. For further evidence that anarchism is not all utopian dreaming, read this with Guillian's 'Anarchist Economics' (write to DA for details or send £1 for a copy).

Small Time

UK 1996

*Dir. Shane Meadows
1hr 1min*

With all the hype about The Full Monty, 'a low budget blockbuster', it is tempting to want to redefine the term 'low budget' when it comes to Small Time. The TOTAL film budget was a stunningly low £5000. Stunning because of the quality of the result. But then experimental and innovative camera work don't cost. Forget special effects, this movie is a real life cartoon. Don't be put off by the 'fly on the wall



documentary' style - this is no fly on the wall. The director also acts in one of the pivotal parts - the 'archetypal working class buffoon'. While the film is ostensibly about petty thieving, it is clear that the team wouldn't last long in reality - their exploits

seem to predictably fall flat. The social realism is tinged with a somewhat caricatured angle on dole, but before you start thinking it is patronising, any attempt at social analysis is cut off by the sheer comic timing and playful script.

A real treat.

PROVOS, The IRA and Sinn Féin. The book of the BBC TV series.

Peter Taylor

Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997
(ISBN0-7475-3392-X.)
£16.99

Peter Taylor has reported the war in Ireland for over twenty five years, making over 50 documentaries for the BBC and ITV in the process. The latest of these was the 4 part series Provos, screened by the BBC in September and October, 1997.

Provos charts the course of the war by focussing on developments within the Republican Movement. Having read a number of books on the Irish situation, I have to say that I found Provos to be one of the more accessible. It is based on interviews with a whole range of people, both inside and outside the IRA and Sinn Féin. These are the book's strength, I feel, and Taylor uses them to lead the reader from the marginalised organisation that was the IRA of the civil rights era in the 1960's, right up to the current ceasefire.

Taylor is generally supportive of the political direction taken by the current Republican leadership. Of course, many within the Republican Movement, and outside of it, including some within the "anarchist movement", are more sceptical or opposed outright to this "Peace Process". Such people seem to foolishly believe that a military victory for the IRA is possible, that the British establishment might allow itself to be seen to be "giving in to terrorism". Anarchosyndicalists believe that progress towards the ending of partition, which has divided the Irish working class, northern from southern, and nationalist from unionist, is only possible in a peaceful atmosphere. And if this means settling for something less than a United Ireland now, then so be it.

Getting back to Provos, however, its main fault is that the closing chapters, the period between the 1994 and 1997 ceasefires, is on the light side to say the least. Taylor is fully aware of this, blaming the tight deadlines he had to work to. He hopes to have remedied this by the time the paperback version hits your local bookshop. This and the £16.99 price tag should be enough to persuade you to wait until then, but be sure not to miss out on the TV series if (when?) the BBC get round to repeating it.

The Ex - '1936' The Spanish Revolution

Dbl. 3" CD, Ex Records/AK Press/Allied Recordings 1997,
AKA 010CD, ISBN: 1 873176 01 5

"On the 19th of July 1936 revolution broke out in Spain. Workers took up weapons and went into the streets and defeated the military and Guardia Civil in many places. The military had revolted the day before in an attempt to overthrow the young republic. The people who had been oppressed for centuries finally took things into their own hands and they wanted everything to change."

Okay I'll try not to gush too much. This is from the opening paragraph of the English text of Dutch band The Ex's single, '1936 - The Spanish Revolution'. First released as a double 7" single incorporating a wonderful booklet of high quality photographs and concise text in Dutch and English way back in 1986 this is indeed a welcome re-release. The new release is glossy, and they have managed to include a fair few more photographs from the CNT's archives than the original edition. And this time the text is in Spanish and English. Way back in the mid 80's it was this single on the lamented Ron Johnson Records which got me to sit up and notice The Ex, quite possibly the best live band I have ever seen (even with Nomeansno at the moment). The Ex have been around a while as anarcho-punks, from about 1979 I believe, and from a high starting point they continue to get better and better. Their (fairly) recent collaborative albums with cellist Tom Cora are worth queuing in the rain for, well, worth taping off a friend at least. Unlike fellow anarcho-punks Chumbawamba with whom they collaborated in the '80's they haven't

gone down the line of pop and the mainstream. The Ex's progress has been to the more avant garde towards integrating folk music, industrial sounds and what have you into their music. They have more in common with bands like Dog Faced Hermans than the Chumbas.

The beauty of this CD/book needs to be seen, from the necessary red and black cover to the beautifully printed photographs inside. The book plots the story of the Spanish revolution from July 1936 through to its defeat by the forces of Franco's fascists 1939 and beyond. And as they say themselves it is partial, it is only from the anarchist side, that's the goodies' side. The text is brief, but informative and gives a fairly

reasonable picture of what happened. It also contains a brief

Dutch reading list at the back, though I am sure if you write to DA we can provide you with a more comprehensive English language one.

The music itself consists of four tracks, two in

Spanish and two in English: 'They shall not pass' with lyrics taken from several then revolutionary songs to create a new one with music by The Ex;

'People again' the words of an interview with CNT day labourer Juan Moreno put to music;

'Ay Carmela' a popular Spanish partisan song with seemingly as many different titles as words; and, 'El tren blindado' another song with a myriad of titles all adapted from a

folk song 'Los contrabandistas'. The music is bass and drum driven with slicing and chopping retuned guitars. Distorted, not clean - if it's easy listening you are after just look at the pictures. The vocals are near spoken in a clear male voice(s). If you don't like the music don't let that put you off, the book of photos itself is the best I have seen of the Spanish Revolution and is more than worthwhile in itself.

Normally I am a great advocate of home taping, as are The Ex, however in this case I am afraid the book part of the whole deal is just too special to overlook. So I guess you need to get down to your local independent record store or radical bookshop and insist that they get a load of these in. If that doesn't work AK will send you one (in return for payment).

Admittedly it's not cheap, but then the production standard is very high. The original has given me great pleasure for over ten years, and it still does. Top music, fantastic photos, informative history and quality politics, awww don't wake me. 

The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1868- 1936

Murray Bookchin

AK Press, Edinburgh/San Francisco,
1998, £13.95

'The Spanish Anarchists' was one of the first books I read as I explored the Iberian anarchist movement many years ago. The first edition, of over 25 years ago, was one of few books on the libertarian movement which went beyond a personal account or Stalinist rhetoric. As such, it still stands today as an excellent introduction and reference book to the Spanish CNT and libertarian movement.

This AK Press reedition enjoys a new introduction - apparently written in 1993 and only published in 1998 - which adds resolve to Bookchin's praise of the anarchists of Spain. It does, though, reconfirm his sentiment that anarchosyndicalism has had its day, that

the kind of organisation articulated by anarchosyndicalism is old fashioned and defunct. Bookchin's view of syndicalism is a parochial one, in which anything which goes beyond mere economism and 'factory politics' is down to anarchists rather than syndicalists. This is a convenient but false division.

Perhaps it is true that syndicalism will never again be a powerful force in Spain or any other part of the world. The current expansion of the IWA may suggest the contrary, but even if Bookchin is correct, the secret for anarchosyndicalism and any other form of anarchist politics is to know how to be a dynamic, all-embracing movement. This movement, as Bookchin declares of the CNT in the 1930s, needs to be prepared to engage in theory and inform its own spontaneity by this theory, to have structured activity and a programmatic commitment to revolutionary principles.

Here at Direct Action, we hope that

this paper is one forum for debating ideas and suggesting plans of action on various areas of social and political struggle. Anarchosyndicalist unions and local neighbourhood offices may not be the only organised libertarian presence in society. Indeed, we hope not, since the cross transfer of ideas from different sources can only benefit our ultimate aims. 

Psychology, Politics, Resistance Newsletter No. 5 Spring 1998

PPR is the newsletter of the organisation of the same name which has groups in different places in the UK as well as international links. PPR defines itself as "a network of people, both psychologists and non-psychologists (including survivors of the mental health system), who are committed to challenging the oppressive use of

psychological ideas, supporting those on the receiving end, and using psychological knowledge positively to help those engaged in struggles for social justice".

Within this remit, PPR supports a critical stance on the use of psychiatry, opposition to Electro Shock Treatment, opposition to homophobia, and the tightrope to be walked by lesbian and gay users of mental health services. As if all this is not enough to interest anti-authoritarians and anarchosyndicalists, in this quarter's newsletter there is an exclusive interview of Noam Chomsky on psychology and politics, the international situation and the transformation of society.

PPR's newsletter is well worth supporting and contributing to. It's run on a shoestring and is photocopied and stapled together, so any donations will be welcome. To add your name to the PPR mailing list, write to Ian Parker, Bolton Institute, Deane Road, Bolton, BL3 5AB. 

Bread and Roses

Publication of the Industrial Workers of the World

Issue 2, Winter 1997-98. £1.

Bread and Roses is an interesting departure for the IWW. In fact, refreshing, in that it dares to ask questions that the Left would not even dream of asking, like "Are the Trade Unions Dead?" The answer is quite rightly that they are.

However, their branches and other dead wood litter the ground for genuine militants to stub their toes and knock their shins on. The illusions that gave birth to them are also still about with 'radicals' believing that all they need is the fertilizer of our blood, sweat and tears.

BREAD & ROSES

Issue 2, Winter 1997-98, Publication of the Industrial Workers of the World



There is a different feel to Bread and Roses compared to the Industrial Worker, the main organ of the IWW.

It is more European in flavour, even if a number of the stories in the magazine are derived from the United States. The focus, in spite of these, is present day Britain rather than early twentieth century USA, which is much preferable to the 'Wobbly' nostalgia of the Industrial Worker.

Bread and Roses is a welcome counter-balance to the USA-centred viewpoints that we have come to associate with the IWW over the years. 

KSL: Bulletin of the Kate Sharpley Library

Number 13, 1997, 50 pence.

If you don't already know, KSL is an anarchist history archive whose bulletin is devoted to recovering unfamiliar anarchists from obscurity. This bulletin relates the history of anarchist expropriator Clement Duval, arrested in Paris in 1886 and deported to Guyana. Eventually, he escaped and spent the rest of his life in America. Amongst other things in the bulletin there are reviews, and other profiles of unknown anarchists. If you like this kind of approach, then the KSL bulletin is a good place to find out about anarchist history. 

Various Artists - Less Rock More Talk, An AK Press spoken word compilation

CD, Ex Records/AK Press
1997, AKA 007CD

Eleven different tracks from eleven different individuals, all based on the spoken word, with or without musical accompaniment. I am not sure if compilations of spoken words work; even with music, one or two tracks can drag the whole thing down. With spoken word, the style and variety can lead to utmost confusion. In this case, as with the majority of others I have heard, it works best as a sampler - an insight to possible channels to investigate further, rather than as a complete piece in itself.

On this CD, there is a mixture of the performance and

the merely informative. Of the latter, the track from the stalwart of careful deliberation Noam Chomsky's 'Propaganda and the control of the public mind' is perhaps the least 'performed'. (I have been reading his stuff for so long I feel like calling him Noam, would that be too familiar?) Thing is, Chomsky is very well researched, carefully presented and it's something you either pay full undivided attention to or you drift off.

I know AK have a large number of Chomsky things available, both spoken word and books. I think I'll stick to his books. For me it's easier to re-read a passage over and over again than keep playing the same bit of a CD. Also living in a flat with thin walls, I don't want all the neighbours to know I am having problems getting the point.

The contributors from the world of music who's past stuff

Terminus

News from nowhere
What do you want from me?
7" single
Campary Records 026
(1996) Dusseldorf, Germany



From Scunthorpe, via Dusseldorf, Campary Records brings you PUNK! And not bad punk at that, sorta got a bit of hardcore edge in it. It is an okay punk record and there is just not much I can say about an okay punk record, except that if you like punk, you'll like it; if you don't, you won't. 'News from Nowhere' slags off the main stream media and tabloids everywhere. 'What do you want from me' is about just that, and

you'll have to contact Terminus for greater insight; I was never any good at deciphering meanings.

Well, with the helpful and informative bit of the review over, now to ponder. It seems every town has its own small punk scene above certain pubs, where all these obscure self-contained, often anarchist, punk bands play to groups of people in the know and sell each other records and fanzines. How do they keep going, and where do all these punks go the rest of the time? I see the odd punk every now and again wondering around, but at these events there are dozens of the buggers. Anyway, if you like a shouty night out (and I know every now and then that I do), and are prepared to put up with some well dodgy bands, seek these events out. You can take DA's along to flog, and maybe pick up some Terminus records. If not drop DA a line and we'll tell you how to get them. 

Beat Poetry maaan?

Michael Gira, main moody person of SWANS/(World of) Skin - New York's avant guard industrial turned just plain odd combos - is not a cheerful chappie. Gira has one of those gorgeous deep drawls that I always vainly hoped my voice would eventually develop into. He uses it in his music to portray a world of despair, failure and pain. Early SWANS records are so near unlistenable, in a way that drags me back every five years just to see if I can handle it yet. Later stuff is far more approachable, if no more uplifting.

His contribution to this is an excerpt of 'My birth' from a collection of fairy tales called 'MTV and the cult of the body'. In common with other fairy tales, it's revolting and bizarre. "The Ruby-Lipped Media Goddess" gives birth to a seemingly rat like offspring which narrates the tale. Gira's

I have varying degrees of knowledge of include Jello Biafra, erstwhile lead singer with the Dead Kennedys. He has already released four spoken word albums (plus numerous music based records - see review of Lard LP in DA4 for details). His 'What would I do' is fairly entertaining, given his sharp-witted attack on the unified minority on the right controlling the squabbling majority, and the pointlessness of fighting for something because it's not the worst thing. "I'd rather work for something I want and not get it than work or vote for something I don't want and get it."

Penny Rimbaud's name appears on Grass records, and I don't think she has mellowed much here. Three voices talk of horror and sex. She lists death and destruction and gore, he reads extracts from corny sex novels, all to cello, saxophone and double bass abuse. Is this

Chester Himes Lonely Crusade

Payback Press 1997
(ISBN: 0 86241 745 7)

Chester Himes is the author of the harsh, but captivating Harlem Cycle books which start with 'Rage in Harlem' (available in three volumes from Payback Press, read them in order). *Lonely Crusade* is a different book altogether, it lacks the Harlem Cycle's humorous, comic side. It's still brutal, but it's brutal on the mind of the reader, not just the lives of its protagonists. The book is centred on Lee Gordon, a black man in World War II California.

Gordon's parents worked as servants for rich whites, his father being killed by a white cop who "thought he was a burglar". He goes on to college. Driven by his inability to get a job that is suitable to his education due to his colour, getting driven out of a post office job due to increasing racism, he becomes alienated from his wife and from himself. Ridden by anger and fear, the book picks up with Lee Gordon as he starts a job as the first black full-time union organiser working at an aircraft factory. Here he finds

himself manipulated by the union, the communists, and the white bosses. Beaten, abused, seduced, rejected and arrested, the book leads the less than perfect Gordon to an increasingly intense conclusion.

In Lee Gordon, Chester Himes presents an intelligent black man who understands the racist society in which he lives; he understands the coping mechanism many black people adopted, but as a man of principle, he cannot accept compromise either by himself or by others. He becomes involved with, but cool towards, the Communist Party for whom the goal is everything. The Communist Party; to whom it is 'expedient' to abandon the fight against racism in America for the fight against German fascism as soon as Russia enters the war. The Communist Party; which is willing to denounce one of its members as a company spy, because it is not 'expedient' to uncover the real culprit. The union officials, casually racist or just unable to understand what it was to be black in America, seek to use Gordon to organise the black workers at the factory. The boss, rich, powerful contemptuous of the workers, the

union and utterly racist. He is never-the-less willing to bribe and promote black workers, and to offer Gordon a highly paid job, in order to sabotage the efforts of the union organisers.

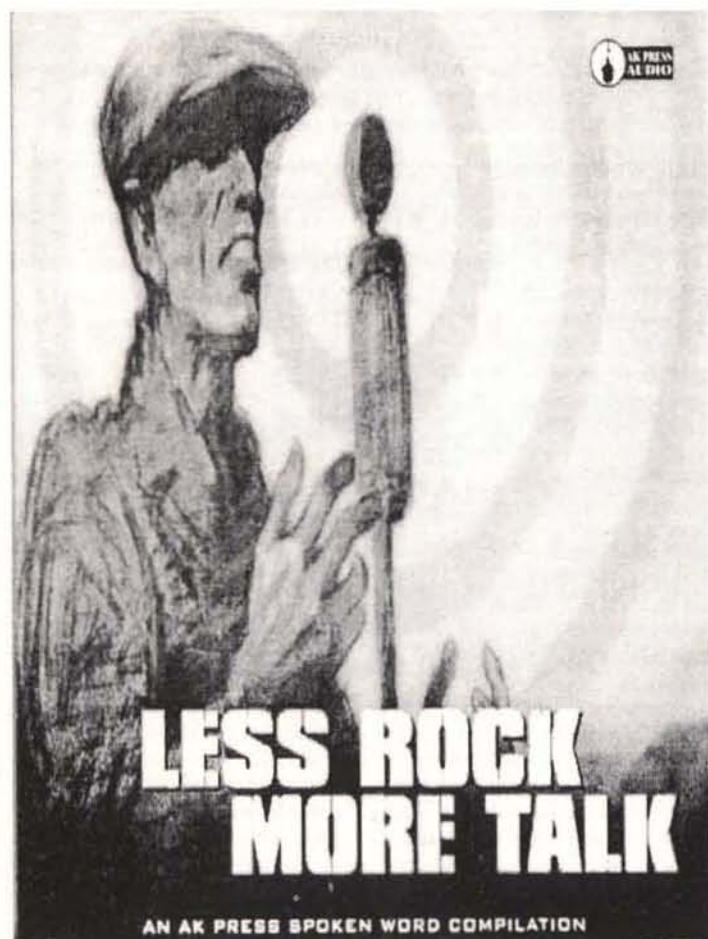
Himes develops the characters with all the warts such people have. Even the main character is less than lovable, Gordon's identity is developed and drawn with such clarity that, at times, it is all too easy to fear him, despise him, pity him and yet yearn for him to win. All in the space of one sentence.

No one is perfect, but apart from a few passing characters everyone is given a mind and a reason, however abhorrent, for their actions. I found two characters who came across as largely sympathetic. Gordon's wife Ruth, who puts up with him through love, and her sense of being his wife. She grows and develops into herself, and separate from him, both as a result of Gordon's physical and mental cruelty and of the necessity of her working to support the both of them when he cannot find work. The other is Rosie, a Jewish communist who maintains his humanity in face of the Party machine, Gordon's early anti-Semitic hostility and the barrage of hurt that

descends on sensitive people. I'll not go on, I don't want to give it all away. Unlike much stuff written that seeks to be real and honest about the brutality of life, this book doesn't glorify the hollow guts of the side of society it deals with, nor does it wallow in the despair and hatred and pain. This emotion-stripping book you will not like, you will however be thankful that you read it.

First released in 1947, the claim the publishers make, that it was "too black" for America then, seems less than the usual publicity hype. When those of us trying to encourage a sense of solidarity and radicalism in the work place and in the community face only apathy and the occasional derision, it is useful to get a sense of perspective, a sense of what others have been through - and continue to go through - to get basic rights. A book that reeks of the importance of self and the importance of others and the two's interdependence.

One word of warning, if you are of the uptight disposition, don't read this book in bed. I was unable to sleep with a knot in my stomach, so involving and powerful is Himes's style - and this is Himes at his best. 



delivery has a disturbing tendency to remind me of Jim Morrisons poetry in places, particularly in the gory bits.

Steve Pottinger's 'Thailand' is accompanied by Dean White, who is of New Model Army fame. Fortunately, his accompaniment is subtle and mood building in just the way most NMA songs are not. On the presentation of this piece, I hope to find more by Steve Pottinger. He narrates the tale of a trip to Thailand where he meets and ex-journalist hounded by forces unclear for his part in revelations that the SAS helped train the Kymer Rouge.

Tom Leonard and James Kelman are two Scottish poets (and I am not all that up on poets). Both deliver amusing and intelligent selections. Leonard's is a medley of various pieces, whereas Kelman delivers the rambling 'No longer the warehouseman'

to great effect.

Of the rest, Mykel Board's contribution was chosen, I assume because it's called 'The spoken word'. It's a heartfelt if rather roundabout pro-choice statement, that takes a stand against bumper sticker mentality, but doesn't develop much beyond it. Jerme Spew and Peter Plate finish the CD, but I am afraid made little impression on me. This may reflect more on the divergence of material and the length of the whole thing. My sole notes for the two of them is "hypocrisy of the cool", which I think refers to Spew's 'I miss you Clare'.

This now only leaves Norman Nawrocki's glorious 'The world's greatest Slavonic lover'; an instruction clip on how to be a great Slavonic lover, just remember, "never make love with chicken's under the bed". 

Crime and Punishment

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Penguin, London, 1991, [original 1865-6]

Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison

Michel Foucault

Penguin, London, 1991 [original 1975]

Of these two books, separated by over one hundred years in their publication, the easier and probably most enjoyable to read is Dostoyevsky's. Amongst other

differences, Dostoyevsky's is a novel on the social and intellectual climate of St. Petersburg in the 1860s and is shot through with characters' discussions of a newly fashionable idea of the time: Nietzschean aesthetics. While there are few explicit references to

Nietzsche in the novel, his ideas inform the activity of some of the novel's protagonists, particularly the young ex-student Raskolnikov ('divided character' in Russian) who, in order to 'prove his worth' over lesser mortals, murders an old woman and her sister. Subsequently he is consumed by mental disorder, remorse, conflictual love and, finally, religious

conversion as a means of dealing with his crime. The state's punishment for his crime is exile to Siberia for eight years.

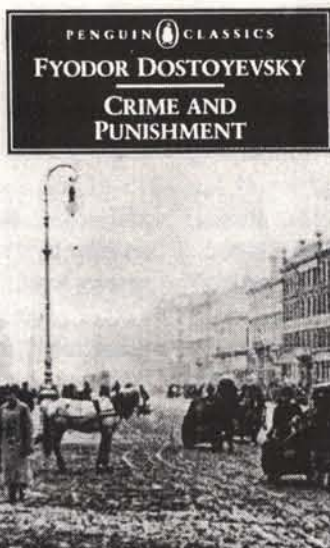
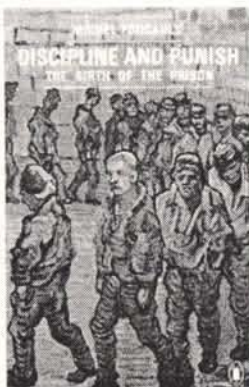
Not only is Crime and Punishment an indictment of Nietzschean ideas but, perhaps more importantly to us nowadays, is a social commentary on conditions of 1860s St. Petersburg, riddled with inequality, poverty and hardship. Like today's society, this hits some people more than others. Dostoyevsky confirms over one hundred years ago the very real effects of poor housing and

environment on people and suggests that humanitarian ethics and changes in social organisation are solutions to crime.

Foucault's analysis of the growth of the apparatus of punishment is less a 'solution' to crime than a complicated treatise on the way power has created 'docile bodies' to be disciplined in certain ways and punished for any misdemeanours. Foucault charts the

growth of a group of systematic control mechanisms which have altered the way in which power exercised control over 'criminals'. From the physical punishment of the body, Western society moved towards disciplinary control through the reform of the person, with the use of prisons, police organisations, administrative and legal hierarchies for social control and the internalisation of discipline.

Foucault's book is a fascinating one for anarcho-syndicalists and those interested in the mechanisms of social control. It leaves many stones unturned and Foucault's theory is fragmented in places, but Discipline and Punish is an extraordinarily useful explanation of the growth of discipline and the management of deviance which does not just put everything down to the 'state' or 'capitalism'. 



The Gift Relationship

Richard Titmuss

edited by Ann Oakley & John Ashton

London School of Economics

£14.99

I'm glad that Richard Titmuss' study of the blood transfusion service has been reprinted. It is a timely rebuke to the market place madness which "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing".

The Gift Relationship is an epic exposition of the practical importance of altruism, which is, I would maintain, the practical and decent foundation for a Welfare System. Titmuss supports this belief, with thorough research and argument.

Titmuss compares the blood transfusion service in Britain with that of the United States, where the service is run for profit. Blood in the USA is bought from the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of society to be sold at inflated sums to those who cannot quibble about the price if they wish to live.

The major part of this book is made up of supporting evidence for

the belief that the blood transfusion service stands for the gift relationship between people and the right of each person to give and to receive from society.

This reprint is accompanied by other commentaries by other experts on health and social policy. While these are interesting, I feel that they tend to blur Titmuss' original focus. This book, however, is a signpost pointing us further along the road to a true communitarianism and a society based on reciprocal giving - the Gift Economy. 

(Editor's note: the national telephone number for the National Blood Service is 0345 711 711. If things were as easy as the reviewer implies, no doubt we here at DA would endorse the service completely. However, we are aware that certain groups, such as men who have (had) sex with men, are not allowed to give blood. We question this and other excluded categories. DA would be very pleased to hear of your comments and experiences regarding these matters).

We Are Everywhere:

A Historical Sourcebook of Gay and Lesbian Politics

Mark Blasius & Shane Phelan (eds)

Routledge, New York/London, 1997

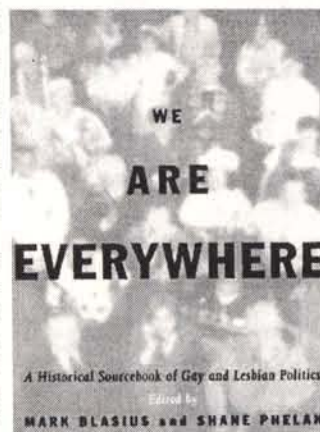
If you like hefty books of the compendium variety, We Are Everywhere is likely to please you. After reading through some of the passages excerpted in this book, it certainly does seem that lesbians and gays have been everywhere and done everything, but perhaps that's what you'd expect anyway.

Blasius and Phelan have put together a fascinatingly readable selection of texts, which vary from scientific tracts on homosexuality, to speeches by politicians, including Marxists, through to contemporary strategies against AIDS and HIV. Too much to read all in one go (there are over 800 pages), you can dip in to find all kinds of gems. These include part of the transcript of the Oscar Wilde trial, Edward Carpenter's writings on what he termed 'homogenic love', and legal attempts to

abolish the infamous paragraph 175 in German law, which prohibited same sex love between men. Some of the pleadings for tolerance of homosexuality come from legal 'experts', others from engaged lawyers and others from radical black groups.

All these selections make for interesting reading and constitute what must be probably the most extensive selection of texts on lesbian and gay experience to date.

There are absences, though. There is a notably North American/European bias to the selections, and even then, most are from the United States and northern European countries. Gay culture and life, politics and resistance still needs to be charted in many countries, both inside and outside of Europe. 





Global Fiction

The communications revolution is stripping away the cultural, economic and political barriers that defined the nation state. Or is it?

The idea that we live in a global market is now accepted as reality.

In this new global village, the concept of national government is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

In future, it will no longer be state power that shapes our lives but the power of market forces.

The history of the nation state is at an end.

Not so fast!

If the free market vision of a global market is a reality, then we live in revolutionary times. The establishment of a true global market will require a massive shift of wealth from the rich north to the undeveloped nations of the Southern Hemisphere. For, if the global capital markets operate in line with market theory, production and investment should be abandoning the high waged rich economies in search of higher rates of returns on offer in the low waged underdeveloped nations. And here lies the problem, for much of the global market hype is based on



abstract market theory, rather than economic reality.

It is certainly true that the high taxing, high spending, national governments are still with us. On average, the nation states of the rich north consume some 47% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It seems that national governments still have a few pounds to play with. So much for the power of markets to impose economic discipline.

Is this continuing massive state spending spree, causing investment to flood into the poorer nations of the world? Well, not quite. Average direct foreign investment (FDI), the amount companies invest abroad in property, machinery, etc., is only the

equivalent of 6% of total company domestic investment. Of this relatively small amount, only 9% was invested in the developing nations. Between 1970-89 the world's rich economies managed to swallow up 90% of total world FDI - the country taking the lions share being the USA. These figures reflect the fact that in the 1990s only 10% of domestic investment in the emerging economies was financed from abroad.

Even the demon of the "left" and exploiter of low wage economies, the multi-national corporations (MNCs), remains firmly rooted in home territory. On average, MNCs satisfy over two thirds of their

production and locate two thirds of their employees in their home country. Modern manufacturing requires highly sophisticated support networks, for example specialised suppliers, research and development facilities, access to highly trained labour, with much of this support supplied free by the state. Add to this the fact that, due to the increasing use of technology, labour costs now only make up around 10% of total productive cost, and it is not hard to see why MNCs remain rooted in the rich northern economies.

False-market

Despite the perception to the contrary, companies generally still operate within national boundaries. There is still a strong correlation between domestic saving and domestic investment. Companies still tend to raise funds, invest, and produce for the domestic economy. 80% of Britain's GDP is still produced for consumption on the domestic markets. The figures for Japan and the USA are even higher, around 90%. Also, GDP does not measure human activity not exchanged on the markets, most notably unpaid work like bringing up children. If this was to be included,

*international
currency
markets
have little to
gain from
free trade
and
monetary
stability;
they rely on
monetary
instability for
their quick
profits*

the picture emerges of national economies still very much geared to meeting human "needs" within national borders.

The fact that national borders are still very much with us should come as no surprise, for society does not function according to the dictates of free market theory. People, workplaces, goods and services cannot simply be transported around the globe in search of higher profit, they tend to be fixed by locality. For instance, according to market theory, the sole factor in deciding where to live, is levels of income. Human beings are slightly more complex, they are fixed to locality by a common culture, family ties and a sense of belonging. They do not continually move around the world in search of ever higher standards of living. National borders cannot be simply wished away by simplistic market theory.

To argue that national economies are still very much with us is not to say that there has not been an increase in cross border trade. But statistics can always be deceptive, and the growth in cross border trade does not demonstrate that we are moving in the direction of a global market. What is beginning to emerge is the

existence of regional trading blocks, centred around Europe, the Americas and Asia. Trade within these regional blocks is growing at the expense of trade between the regions. Exports within America, Europe and Asia rose from 31% percent of total world exports in 1980, to 43% in 1992. Well over 50% of Britain's exports now go to EEC countries.

Superstates?

It should be stressed that for reasons already outlined, these regional trading blocks have a long way to go before they become "super state" regional economies. The regions are dominated by the US, Japanese and German economies. Even in the European block, which is attempting to introduce monetary union, it is likely that economic inequalities will remain, with the German economy remaining the dominant force.

The other notable thing about the emergence of these regional trading blocks, is the way they were formed. They did not result from some natural free market process, spurred on by the introduction of new technology. They were planned by supposedly enfeebled nation states often against the will of the citizens and in opposition from sectors of the market. For example, the overwhelming majority of European citizens are against European monetary union. Did the Mexican people embrace the latest NAFTA free trade agreement? Not exactly – the Mexican State is still killing those who have tried to make a stand against it.

Even international currency markets have little to gain from free trade and monetary stability; they rely on monetary instability for their quick profits.

Nor is the theory of a global market flawed simply because it confuses market theory with economic reality. Central to the global market idea is that of invincible high-tech global finance slaying the demon of state power. The world's lurch towards free



market doctrine and the abandonment by governments of Keynesian economic management had nothing to do with technology. Change was brought about as a result of the inflation and recession that hit the world's economies in the 1970s. It was from this instability that the power of the financial markets grew.

The seeds of superprofits

The long post war boom was built on the dominance of the US economy. It was this that allowed monetary stability to be established. The world's governments agreed upon a fixed rate exchange system. Currencies were fixed to the dollar, which in turn was backed by massive gold reserves. Known as the Brettons Wood system, the fixed rate exchange system prevented the sort of currency speculation that we see today.

Unfortunately, as is always the case with capitalism; out of stability, so instability grew. To finance the war against communism, America resorted to printing money. This led not only to inflation within the domestic economy, but as the dollar acted as the world reserve currency, inflation was injected into the world's economies. Further, as the American economic dominance began to be challenged by German and Japanese based capitalism, pressure grew to deflate the value of the dollar.

Amid rising inflation and mounting economic crisis, the dollar was finally devalued in the 1970s, leading to the collapse of the fixed exchange rate system, and its replacement with the present currency markets. New technology did not create the currency markets, it only speeded up the whole chaotic process.

The key to ending deflationary economic policies is to re-establish economic stability, which would in turn lead to monetary stability and the curtailment of currency speculation, high-tech or otherwise. If this could be achieved, rising

New technology did not create the currency markets, it only speeded up the whole chaotic process



employment and increased funds would allow the nation state to spend less of GDP on unemployment benefit and more on welfare provision. How this could be achieved though, given the unstable nature of capitalism, is hard to conceive.

Beyond boom & bust

From the perspective of those seeking an alternative to the current mess, there are a number of things to be born in mind. The current economic woes cannot be blamed on faceless international financial speculators, as national governments and the left increasingly tend to do. They are caused by economic slump, which in turn stems from the nature of capitalism. Further, it should be remembered that national economies are

still very much with us. There is still much to be gained from organising within national boundaries as well as internationally.

Finally, we should ignore all the hype concerning the global market. World trade deals, aimed at bringing down economic barriers, have little to do with globalism. The aim of such deals is yet further exploitation of weaker economies by the richer economies of the north. The establishment of a truly world economy will require democratic control and democratic planning, words not to be found in the free market dictionary. 



AntiSocialSecurity

The Labour policy of attempting to drive single parents back to work by cutting benefits is based on a brutal set of ideas. Just how brutal, can be judged by the welfare reform being introduced in the USA. Like Labour, the state of Wisconsin accepted the free market argument that benefit payments deter welfare claimants from seeking work. Acting on these arguments, Wisconsin last September introduced welfare reform aimed at cutting the number of families living on welfare.

Wisconsin Works?

Entitled "Wisconsin Works", the reform took away all benefits rights. As Jason Turner, head of the Centre for Self Sufficiency, states "we are the only state to scrap all entitlement". He went on to boast, "you are not even entitled to a state subsidised job". New claimants in Wisconsin are no longer greeted with forms which must be completed before receiving food stamps. Instead, they are met with an official, who decides whether or not the new claimants are ready for work.

Those deemed "job-ready" are simply refused benefit and forced to accept the work on offer. Those not ready for work are diverted to "trial jobs." For example, claimants are sent to work at Johnson Wax for three days a week, at a rate of \$5.50 an hour. For the other two days, claimants are forced to attend "training classes" for which the company receives a \$300 dollar a month state subsidy.

Those judged not fit for the "trial work" scheme, are forced to do community-service work. Community service jobs are run as if they are part of the casual private sector; pay is docked for absence, benefits do not vary with family size, and mothers who's children are over 12 weeks old must attend. Those regarded as unable to do community work, for example, those suffering from drug addiction, must attend a "training school" for 28 hours a week before they can receive payments.

Initial fear that public sector workers would resist administering new welfare reforms was overcome by contracting the task out to the private sector in the poorest

regions of Wisconsin. A new forced incentive scheme was introduced, designed to ensure 'productivity' amongst staff involved in putting "clients" back to work.

The savings?

The introduction of these new arrangements has not in fact saved money. In the first year of the scheme, it is expected that welfare cost will be 40% higher than under the old system. However, as the number of families living on welfare is reduced, costs are projected to fall. This appears likely given that, in the first six weeks of the scheme, the number of families claiming benefit fell from 35,000 to 28,000. The overwhelming majority of the families forced off benefits are single parent families.

Obligations and Duties...

In true Blair speak, the welfare reforms have been dressed in the language of empowerment. Ms Jean Rogers, director of the state welfare programme, stated, "the message that we are sending out to families on welfare is that we no longer think so little of you, we don't think you can cope in the work force". Ms Rogers went on to argue that the scheme would not have been such a success if the jobs market "had not been so good", illustrating her point by saying that, before the reforms, the local bagel shop had been so desperate to find workers they had advertised "no polyester uniforms".

...Not Rights

As Lawrence Mead, a welfare guru at New York University argues, the success of the Wisconsin scheme was built on a new coalition between Democrats and Republicans. At the heart of this coalition was a political culture based on the ideas



of "obligations and duties, not rights". It is a culture others are keen to copy, already a "San Francisco Works" and "Arizona Works" have been introduced.

'Free market' advocates are ecstatic over falling unemployment. They are now increasingly arguing that the rest of the developed world should follow the American example. The fear must be that such inhuman measures will begin to spread across much of Europe.

Britain, with a Labour government transfixed by the market, has accepted the free market dogma that lay behind the Wisconsin welfare reform. Armed with such dogma, Labour welfare reform can only go in one direction. We will be hearing much more from Labour about "duties and obligations". It is the basic rhetoric camouflage to conceal further attacks on the most vulnerable in society, as they strive to reduce spending by cutting benefits.

In the meantime, we can only feel for the families of Wisconsin. Next recession, it will be the low paid, unskilled, part-time jobs that will be the first to go. So no jobs and no benefits. What future then for the poor in the land of the free? Certainly, the solution lies not with Wisconsin or New Labour. 

WHO'S SOLIDARITY FEDERATION?

Solidarity Federation is the new solidarity movement. Formed in March 1994, it consists of a federation of groups and individuals across England, Scotland & Wales. The basic foundation of Solidarity Federation is the Local.

Getting down the Local

People are getting together to form Locals – Solidarity Federation groups. Locals put solidarity into practice. In time, each Local will have a premises as a base for solidarity action in the local community.

Locals are organising or getting involved in local campaigns across a wide range of issues – both in the community and in workplaces. Issues are wide-ranging: defending our natural and local environment and health; opposing racism, sexism and homophobia; in fact, anything which defends or contributes to our mutual quality of life. It all forms part and parcel of the building of a solidarity movement.

Direct Action

Apart from being the name of the Solidarity Federation Quarterly, Direct Action is the tool which Locals use in all their work. At a basic level, this can be simply the spreading of information through leaflets, local bulletins and public meetings to raise awareness and involvement locally. However, Direct Action is not limited to spreading information. It means a physical presence in defending and promoting a better quality of life. Fundamental to Direct Action is the reality that we can only rely on ourselves to achieve our goals. While we reserve the right to fight for improvements to our quality of life now, the solidarity movement must always remain independent from those we are demanding from. Solidarity Federation will accept neither leadership, charity, nor guidance from government or business – instead, we must couple our principle of solidarity with the practice of self-reliance.

Networking at work

Solidarity Federation members who work in the same industry form Networks. Their purpose is to promote solidarity amongst workers. Networks also use all the tools of Direct Action at their disposal, to fight for better pay and conditions now. Networks form the basis of a completely new labour movement, nothing like the Trade Unions, which are weakened by having to abide by ridiculous laws, and by hierarchical power structures and self-interested paid officials. The fundamentally different nature of Networks fits their fundamentally different aim.

Where to?

As Locals and Networks grow, they practise community and workers' self-management. Eventually, industries will be run by producers and consumers. In other words, by workers (in Networks) and people in the wider community (Locals) who want the goods and services they provide. And this is no flight of fancy or textbook dream. As the solidarity movement grows in members and influence, so does the scope for action. Both Locals and Networks already have a growing reputation and are showing real results in both membership & effectiveness.

Global Solidarity

Capitalism is international, so we need to be organised globally to oppose it and build a viable alternative. Nationalism and patriotism lead to pointless and false divisions, used as tools to fuel economic and bloody wars. Solidarity Federation opposes these in favour of a movement built on global solidarity.

Solidarity Federation is the British section of the International Workers' Association (IWA), the anarcho-syndicalist international. This gives it essential international solidarity and experience from much larger sections such as the CNT (Spain) and USI (Italy).

Founded in 1922, the IWA has a long history of solidarity in action; by the 2nd World War over 5 million people worldwide were affiliated. A combination of war, fascism, and soviet 'communism' all but destroyed the movement, but after the Spanish CNT re-emerged in the late 70's, the IWA had a new lease of life. Today, there are sections ranging from a few dozen to thousands of members, and growth is rapid. At the last IWA Congress in Madrid, another 7 new sections were affiliated from South America, Africa, Ireland, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The growth continues.

Getting Involved

A global solidarity movement can only gather strength as many more people who share the same aims get involved. Joining Solidarity Federation offers the possibility of contributing to this growing momentum. It is not like joining a club or a political party – rather, it is an opportunity to channel your efforts for change and, at the same time, benefit yourself from the experience. Try it, send for information: Solidarity Federation, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester, M15 5HW.

The Solidarity Federation is an organisation of people who seek to destroy capitalism and the state. Capitalism because it exploits, oppresses and kills working people and wrecks the environment for profit world-wide. The state because it can only maintain hierarchy and privilege for the classes who control it and their servants; it cannot be used to fight the oppression and exploitation that are the consequences of hierarchy and the source of privilege.

In their place, we want a society based on workers' self-management, solidarity, mutual aid and libertarian communism.

That society can only be achieved by working class organisations based on similar principles – revolutionary unions. These are not Trade Unions only concerned with "bread and butter" issues like pay and conditions. Revolutionary unions are means for working people to organise and fight all the issues – both in the workplace and outside – which arise from our oppression.

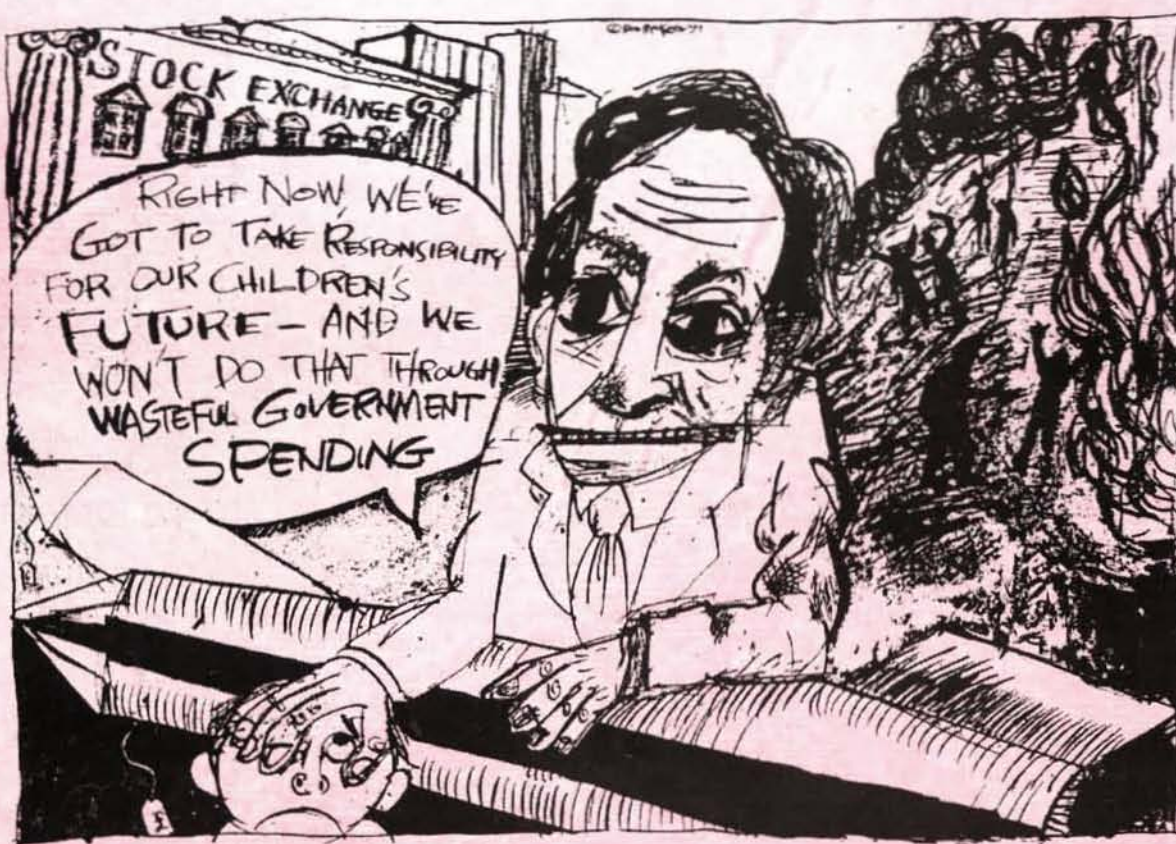
We recognise that not all oppression is economic, but can be based on gender, race, sexuality, or anything our rulers find useful. Unless we organise in this way, politicians – some claiming to be revolutionary – will be able to

exploit us for their own ends.

The Solidarity Federation consists of Industrial Networks and Locals which are the nuclei of future revolutionary unions and centres for working class struggle on a local level. Our activities are based on Direct Action – action by workers ourselves, not through intermediaries like politicians and union officials; our decisions are made through direct participation of the membership.

We welcome all who agree with our aims and principles and want to work to achieve social revolution. We recognise that the class struggle is world-wide, and are affiliated to the International Workers' Association (IWA), whose Principles we share.

Managing Consent



Sp