

Direct Action

No.15 Summer 2000 £1.50

GENDER AGENDAS

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21C FEMINISM
FAMILY VALUES
DIRECT ACTIONS
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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EVENTS/CAMPAIGNS/GATHERINGS...

SOLIDARITY
FEDERATION

Africa Solidarity Group

Supporting struggle in Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Sierra Leone and elsewhere. Red & Black Club, PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX. Tel. 0171 358 1854. Same address with a stamp for the new issue of The Heckler, SE London freesheet.



Education Workers' Network

New Summer 2000 issue of Education Worker now out - free bulletin for teachers, students, lecturers, cleaners, admin staff - everyone in education. Copies free from EWN, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. Also on the web; www.scandrac.demon.co.uk/ewn/ewnhome.htm

North & East London SolFed

Socials: Last Thursday of the month, 8pm, near Camden Tube. We also hold advice surgeries and have regular discussion meetings. For details of times and places, contact: SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE. Tel. 0181 374 5027.

South Herts SolFed

Discussion Meetings 8pm, 2nd Wednesday of the month in St Albans (near main railway station). Contact South Herts SolFed, PO Box 493, St Albans AL1 5TW.

Catalyst

Freesheet of the Solidarity Federation - IWA

New quarterly freesheet from the Solidarity Federation - with an emphasis on making a difference at work. Plus the news the media doesn't touch. If you like DA, you'll like Catalyst. Send a stamp or phone for a free copy or for a bunch to hand out at work or play. Catalyst, PO Box 29 SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. Ans. 0161 232 7889. machesterSF@scandrac.demon.co.uk. Or send your snippets to DA and we will forward them to Catalyst.

West Yorks SolFed

Members & contacts already in Hebden Bridge, Bradford, Leeds and York areas. Info: West Yorks SF, Box 5, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks HX7 8YN.

Manchester SF

Support drop-in, last Tuesday of the month, 7pm, followed by Discussion Meeting, 8.30pm. All sessions open and free at; The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road, Fallowfield, Manchester. Or call the ansaphone 0161 232 7889.

South-west Solidarity

Swindon-Bristol based but looking for contacts across SW England. Write for a free newsletter, visit the website! New snail address: SWS, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BD. www.re-creation.ndirect.co.uk/sws.html

Up Against the Odds

Story of the JJ Fast Food Workers' Strike. RPM Pamphlet No. 6 - £1.50 from Haringey Solidarity group, PO Box 2474, London N8 or SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE.



SelfEd Education Collective

Sharing and developing practical ideas and skills for revolutionary activity

'A History of Anarcho-syndicalism'. 24 pamphlet-sized Units, plus the opportunity to join course discussion meetings. Course starts Autumn 2000 - register/enquire now.

Skills for Action: everything from writing and talking to printing, DTP, solidarity and support and much more.

For more info on why/who we are, to get involved, etc. contact SolFed, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR

FRIENDS AND
NEIGHBOURS

To get listed here, write to; DA (F&N), PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR, da@directa.force9.co.uk

Prisoner Justice Day

10th August is Prisoner Justice Day, with pickets, vigils and demos at prisons around the world and in your area. Join an action at your local prison. loncage@hotmail.com

The Agitator

Out now - expanded 2nd edition. This directory gives details of autonomous, non-hierarchical, libertarian activists in Britain and Ireland. Send £1.30 to Haringey Solidarity group, PO Box 2474, London N8. Email hsg@clara.net

Kate Sharpley Library

KSL - the long running source and publisher of lesser known gems of history. Pamphlet just out: 'The Couriers are Revolting!' - the story of the Despatch Industry Workers Union, anarcho-syndicalist union in London in the late '80s-early '90s. Send £1. For details of backlists, current pamphlets and projects and newsletter, contact KSL at BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

Corporate Watch

Recently out - 2 additions to the GE Briefing Series, one on Aventis, the big would-be UK GM crop grower, and another on the finance behind GM crops. Up to date, cutting edge research and essential reading. 45p each from Corporate Watch, 16b Cherwell St, Oxford OX4 1BG. Or check the web at www.corporatewatch.org

Pride

Pride (London) Membership is open to anyone who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered. Membership is £10 (£5 concessions) for individuals, and straight people can join as Friends, but not vote. To get involved contact: Pride (London), BCM Box 6097, London WC1N 3XX. Tel. 07071 781904. info@PrideLondon.org <http://www.PrideLondon.org>

Anarchist Trade Union
Network

To subscribe and get a bimonthly newsletter, Bread and Roses, send six stamps with your name and address and any union affiliation details to: Box EMAB (ATU), 88 Abbey Street, Derby DE22 3SQ. williamgodwin7@hotmail.com <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/2522>

Action Update/DoD

Monthly round-up of environmental and other direct actions from across Britain - the Earth First! newsletter. EF! AU, PO Box 1TA, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE99 1TA. 0797 4791841 actionupdate@gn.apc.org www.eco-action.org/efau. For heavier stuff, try Do or Die - 100's of pages crammed with ecological resistance for £5 from DoD, c/o Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, E Sussex BN2 2GY.

Protest for the right to be
naked in public

At present: being human is a crime! But never fear, The Freedom to be Yourself campaign seeks to legalise non-sexual public nakedness via an Act of Parliament for the Protection of Naked People. The next protest will be at New Scotland Yard, at 2:00pm, Saturday, 15th July (size and shape of your body not important).

LDMG - Prisoner Support

Some prisoners sentenced after J18 last year who would appreciate letters of support: Onofrio Lo-verso, TC3014, HMYOI Raleigh House, Portland, Dorset DT5 1DL (would appreciate Italian letters too). Sean Brown, BP5610, HMYOI Huntercombe, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 5FB. Mark Leighton, SB4402, HMYOI Feltham, Bedford Rd, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4ND. Adam Rowley, FB4126, HMYOI Dover, Western Heights, Kent CT17 7DR. Updates from LDMG, BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX.

Riotous Assembly

Every first Tuesday of the month; open meetings to talk and exchange info on direct action and grassroots resistance. 7.30pm, Yard Theatre (opp. Junction Pub), 41 Old Birley St, Hulme, Manchester.

London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays, 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 red Lion Sq., London WC1. Upcoming discussions include 'Should Women be Honest?' (28th June), Open meeting on the future of LAF (11th August).

Solidarity Magazine

For workers dedicated to workers' control and industrial unionism. Produced by Belfast Workers' Control Group. Solidarity Magazine, PO Box 505, Belfast BT1 1AE. Same address also for 'Moonlight', periodical - issue one out now - an examination of the west's 'humanitarian intervention' in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Indonesia and Rwanda. £1 plus postage (cheques to J. Brannigan).

on the web
Just slip into your local cybercafe or
switch on your PC, and at the right moment,
type:
<http://www.directa.force9.co.uk>

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To Contribute 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 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 request and SAE is enclosed.

Send all contributions to:
 DA, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.
 email: da@directa.force9.co.uk

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**Direct
Action**

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It is just not good enough to come up with the old aGenda lines any more - 'celebrating our differences' and being politically correct and 'nice'.

Agendas are there for a reason - and it is always the same reason - to work against the present reality and push it in a particular direction. This issue's theme is mainly about Gender aGendas, though other positive agendas crop up (e.g. immigration and racism, p.6-7). Self-interest, priority, can come in all sorts of packages - some to do with discriminatory differences, and others to do with things which are simply uppermost in the mind - things you want more badly than others. Your agenda is the things at the top of your list.

Having an agenda is not a problem - it is difficult to see how you can get much focus into your life without one. The problem arises when agenda clashes with our mutual collective existence, like when me pursuing my interest means you can't pursue yours. Some agendas are more prone than others. You could say there is an agenda hierarchy. At the top are the dodgiest - those which are 'hard wired' to cause misery; near the bottom are those which you can pursue 24 hours a day and still hurt no-one. Perched at the pinnacle, must be the leader/guru motive and the profit motive. The leader/guru motive preaches that icons are people to emulate, but the reality is that they are people to look up to, so you are unable to see equality. If you have a guru, you must also have a slave: if you need a leader, you need a servant. If you need a profit, you have nothing to give.

Capitalists argue that it is the profit motive which makes people invest in making goods which we need. True, but the goods are an accident - the profit is the agenda being pursued. So, when someone says we can screw the workers and double our profit and get away with it, any profit-junkie will go for it. When someone else says we can make junk products which last half as long and double our profit and get away with it (because, for example, all the major manufacturers agree to the wheeze), any profit junkie will go for it. Capitalism is geared towards both these things, because it is profit-driven.

The only solution to such damaging agendas is

DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT. They are ruining it for the rest of us. It is time to stop them, by organising ourselves without gurus, leaders or capitalists - otherwise we will be forever *Left in the Dark* (p.30).

The agendas in this issue of DA are fundamentally good in themselves. They may have trouble with not-so-pure capitalist agendas (*Pride or profit?*, p.18), or they may be beset with opposition from the profit-might of the pharmaceuticals companies (*The Real Millennium Bug*, p.20). Women's agendas have come a long way, but the journey is fraught with cul-de-sacs and set-backs (*Shifting Ground*, p.10).

One of the worst things about agendas is that they invariably have both intended and unintended consequences. You can do bad things without

intending to. Jack Straw is not a "racist" but his policies are. The government might not be misogynist but it does nothing to tackle the economic inequalities faced by women. David Blunkett may not be homophobic but the effect of his heterosexist sex education charter to replace Section 28 is (*Keeping it in the Family*, p.4).

We pretty much all know it is not good or clever to be sexist, homophobic or racist. But people are, because they live in a world which is saturated with that hard-wired agenda which rewards

people who go around ripping others off. Since Thatcher, if you can get away with it, you should; in fact, you are considered some sort of weak fool if you don't. In such a world, bad agendas are inevitable. This doesn't mean we can blame all of them entirely on capitalism. Of course, we all have a bit of piss-taking and free-lunching in us, just as we all have empathy and collective social awareness. What we need is the sort of world where the positive agendas are promoted, not one where the shit floats to the top; not one which tends to bring out the worst in every one of us.

Every single anti-bigot and pro-equality agenda is worthwhile pursuing. But all hinge so massively on the agendas at the top of the hierarchy, that unless yours is explicitly anti-profit and anti-leadership, you might as well be rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. Enjoy your aGendas.

**IF YOU HAVE A
GURU, YOU MUST
ALSO HAVE A SLAVE:
IF YOU NEED A
LEADER, YOU NEED A
SERVANT.
IF YOU NEED A
PROFIT, YOU HAVE
NOTHING TO GIVE.**

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American roots music feature:

Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti/ Dustbowl Ballads - Woody Guthrie
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 The Hand that Holds the Bread - Cincinnati's University Singers

ABOUT SOLIDARITY FEDERATION...

Solidarity Federation is the 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.

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 is all part and parcel of building a solidarity movement.

DIRECT ACTION

Apart from being the name of this 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 take opportunities 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

Solidarity Federation members who work in the same work sector have formed Networks. Their purpose is to promote solidarity amongst workers. Networks also use Direct Action to fight for better pay and conditions. 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 NEXT?

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 text-book dream. As the solidarity movement grows in members and influence, so does the scope for action. Both the Locals and Networks have already established a reputation and are showing real results in membership and 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 association. 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 '70s, 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, Europe and the former Soviet Union.

GETTING INVOLVED

A global solidarity movement can only gather strength as many more people who share the same aims get involved. Contacting Solidarity Federation offers the possibility of contributing to this growing momentum.

It is not like joining a club, union or political party – rather, it is an opportunity to channel your efforts for change and, at the same time, benefit yourself from the experience.

For more info, write to the SolFed Contact Point below.

SF Contact Point: SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW
Tel. 0161 232 7889
Email: manchesterSF@scandrac.demon.co.uk

Networks - make contact with others in your type of work -
Education Workers' Network, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.
Public Service Workers' Network, PO Box 1681, London N8 7DN.
Communication Workers' Network, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.

Locals - get involved locally in regular meetings and action -
North & East London SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE.
Tel. 0181 374 5027

Red & Black Club, PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX. Tel. 0171 358 1854
South-west Solidarity, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BD
South Herts SF, PO Box 493, St Albans AL1 5TW.
West Midlands SF, PO Box 6705, Redditch, Worcs. B97 6SQ
Norfolk & Norwich SF, PO Box 487, Norwich MLO, NR2 3AL.
Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.
Tel. 0161 232 7889.
Sheffield SF, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR.
West Yorks Solidarity Federation, PO Box 5, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks HX7 8YN

SF includes contacts across England, Scotland and Wales. Use the SF Contact Point above to make contact with groups and individuals near you.

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**CAPITALISM CANNOT BE REFORMED;
IT MUST BE REPLACED.
WE MUST LEARN THE BIGGEST LESSON OF
20TH CENTURY HISTORY; ANY STATE, FAR FROM
ENSURING WORKERS' LIBERTY, DOES JUST
THE OPPOSITE.**



now or in the future.

BASIC RETHINK

There has to be a fundamental rethink. And the start of that rethink could do a lot worse than return to the historic and tragic split in the workers' movement between the authoritarian socialist and libertarian wing of the First International. The first was to develop into Marxism, while the latter developed into anarcho-syndicalism. During that split, the libertarians predicted the failing of state control with amazing accuracy. They unfalteringly opposed state control and the formation of political parties. They argued for self-organisation based on direct action. Direct action was seen not just as a tactic, but as a means of building a culture of solidarity that would form the social basis of the struggle to replace capitalism. They recognised that state control would only replace capitalist tyranny with state tyranny, and that the socialist movement had to proceed according to the same democratic principles as the envisaged new society.

The aim of the future society was not just getting rid of 'want' by replacing the capitalist system based on profit with a communal one based on need. This was seen as just the starting point. They did not perceive some final socialist utopia, and so the effective end of human history. Rather, they rightly envisaged a continuous movement for improvement in mutual quality of life. The aim was a free society that was always changing and developing, and within which each and every individual could develop their individual potential in the way that suited them best. Pursuing individual potential automatically means society as a whole is enriched – hence the idea of continuous development of society. The sum total of

human knowledge was seen as a crucial 'stock' which the future society would hold collectively and continuously add to for the benefit of the current and future generation.

Any socialist rethink must have at its core an alternative to capitalism. This must be the foundation of a new working class movement. To do otherwise would condemn humanity to a capitalist future. Capitalism cannot be reformed; it must be replaced. We must learn the biggest lesson of 20th Century history; any state, far from ensuring workers' liberty, does just the opposite. Any vision of post-capitalist society must have at its core the idea of human freedom, from which all else flows.

Such all-encompassing vision does not emanate from a single organisation, but from a broad movement of people infused by the anarcho-syndicalist principles of solidarity, self-help, self-organisation and direct democracy. This movement will necessarily be multi-layered and interactive, and profoundly anti-capitalist by its very nature of directly pursuing a post-capitalist society. It will be anti-state and anti-party, since no-one can act on our behalf. It will challenge capitalist oppression in every possible effective way, as it impinges on quality of life and emotional well-being. The short-term aim will be to wrest control from capitalism and build areas of our life based not on the culture of greed and narrow self-interest but on mutual aid and solidarity. The long term aim grows seamlessly from this; organising a culture of resistance to the point that capitalism can be challenged and overthrown confidently, as one of the horrors of human history.

Anti-capitalist culture – or if you like, post-capitalist culture – will not evolve in

theoretical abstractions, but directly and practically out of our experiences of fighting against what we do not like about capitalism. The embryo of this culture is already developing amongst a broad range of people in a broad range of places and situations. People are increasingly turning away from the tired, worn out empty promises of politicians and placing their faith in direct action. Seattle was perhaps a good example of this new mood. However, just as the post-capitalist culture of solidarity cannot be built in abstract theory, neither can it be built purely from action alone. Ideas, principles, and democratic methods of working must emerge within this struggle. It is here that the long history of struggle of anarcho-syndicalism has much to offer the revolutionary movement, as it seeks to overcome its present growing pains. 

For more information about issues raised in *CloserLook* articles, write to DA. Bargain sub. and contact details are on p.34



Keeping it in the family

In March, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, told a conference that "white people" should adopt the family values of the

Asian communities in Britain. This was welcomed by single-issue anti-racists, who praised Straw's acceptance that "immigrants" contribute positively to society in Britain. Superficially this seems great, but why did the scourge of "bogus" asylum-seekers suddenly come over all anti-racist?

The general plan is that we pay for health and social care through private insurance so that the failure to provide for the NHS and local Social Services will not lead to revolt.

The reality is that the idea of a society in which everyone will be treated "according to their needs" is flawless, as is the idea of social care. It is perfectly reasonable to support the NHS and other public services, and oppose all forms of privatisation, while also opposing the state as a deeply flawed institution generally and provider of services specifically. It is similarly clear that family ties are usually good, but that Family Values are nothing to do with them – it is simply an idea used to attack the welfare state and social responsibility for health and other care services.

A clear example of New Labour's real level of commitment to the family is the Welfare to Work scheme for lone parents. What benefit is it to children if their sole carer is compelled to do waged work, instead of staying at home to care for them? Nor is the idea that parents should spend more time with their children well served by the government's foot-dragging on reducing the working week.

Apart from the role of Family Values in undermining social provision, there is the effect on gender roles. New Labour has posed itself as woman-friendly and gay-friendly, and its female and out-gay MPs have been paraded to demonstrate the government's opposition to prejudice. But the real problem is not prejudice, it is discrimination.

Jack Straw is not a "racist" but his policies are. The government might not be misogynist

■ **JACK STRAW IS NOT A "RACIST" BUT HIS POLICIES ARE.**

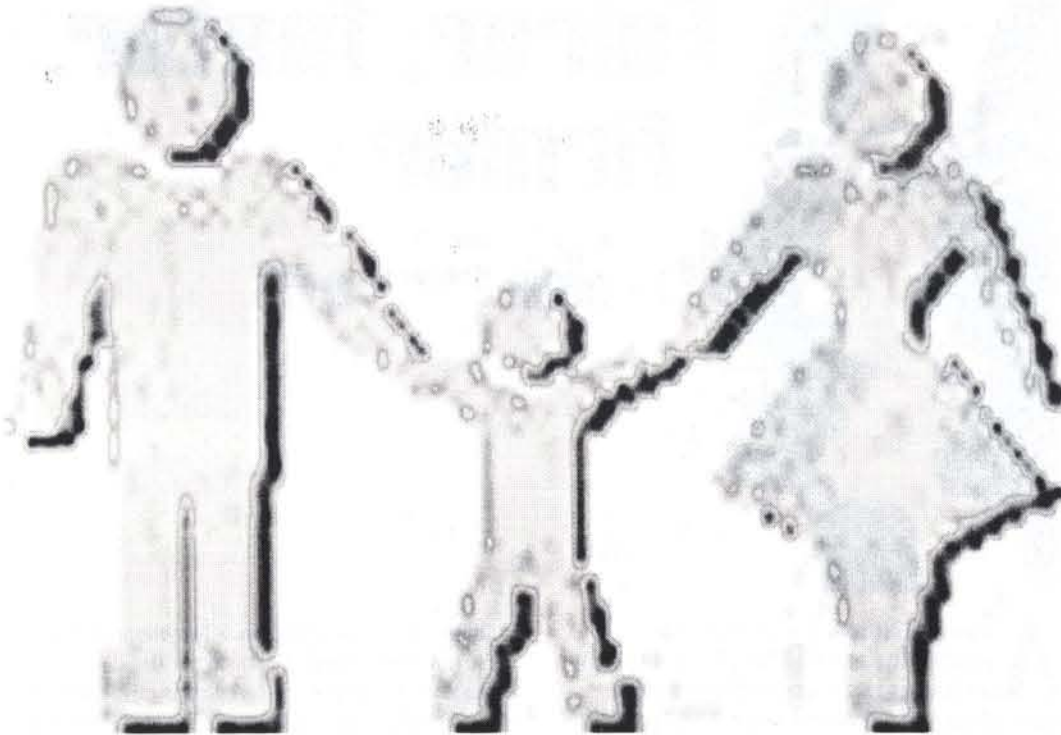
■ **THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT BE MISOGYNIST BUT IT DOES NOTHING TO TACKLE THE ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES Faced BY WOMEN.**

■ **DAVID BLUNKETT MAY NOT BE HOMOPHOBIC, BUT THE EFFECT OF HIS HETEROSEXIST SEX EDUCATION CHARTER TO REPLACE SECTION 28 IS.**

What really impressed Straw was that only "one in eight older white people live with an adult child, while two-thirds of Asian elders do." The message is that responsibility for the care of elderly relatives should lie not with the state, but with their children. The Tories called this "Care in the Community", if you remember. New Labour's commitment to "Family Values" is part of their wider objective of dismantling what the Tories left of the welfare state.

Most people are still committed to the idea of social responsibility for care work, articulated through support for the welfare state. Unsurprisingly, this is strongest amongst working class people, euphemistically referred to as "core Labour supporters" in the media. Not only can we ill afford to care for our elderly relatives and think we pay taxes to provide for them, but we don't want the welfare state dismantled to pay for tax cuts from which we don't benefit.

The idea of the Family, which is superficially attractive because of our emotional ties – or simply "because my mum bungs me a few quid occasionally" – is supposed to help wean us out of our habit of being "a burden on the state".



**CAPITALISM, RATHER THAN "LIBERATING" WOMEN THROUGH
WAGED WORK, NEEDS THEIR UNPAID, UNACKNOWLEDGED
DOMESTIC LABOUR MORE THAN EVER.**

but it does nothing to tackle the economic inequalities faced by women. David Blunkett may not be homophobic but the effect of his heterosexist sex education charter to replace Section 28 is. Labour aims to make British capitalism more "efficient" by further deregulation and tax cuts. This objective reinforces existing inequalities.

New Labour's Family Values also assume the role of women as primary carers. Alongside this comes the renewed vigour with which they recite the mantra that it is immoral for anyone not to do waged work. The net result is that, since everyone must now do some kind of waged labour, women included, anyone who has children must have two jobs if they are to meet New Labour standards of good citizenship. What help can this possibly be for children or the family? The pressure is already intense, especially for most working class mothers, for whom waged work is already an economic necessity. It is set to rise further, and all in the name of Family Values. Capitalism, rather than "liberating" women through waged work, needs their unpaid, unacknowledged domestic labour more than ever.

PRIMARILY PROFIT

In terms of economic security, even if pensions and other occupational benefits were restricted to those who do waged work, equal access would mean more payouts, more time off,

and greater costs for companies. This contradicts the government's primary objective: providing them with profit.

The government's commitment to family values also undermines its apparent commitment to gay and lesbian rights - which, in turn, also contradict the overriding profit objective. Anti-discrimination legislation would mean reviewing policies and procedures, more grievance and disciplinary cases, and more Industrial Tribunal cases - all "burdens" on business. The legal logic of "equalising" sexual offences to cut court costs and legal bills has generated only caution from the government. Even the police seem more progressive than New Labour, since at least they are beginning to take homophobic violence seriously, as doing so makes tackling all violent crime more efficient.

Why is the government proceeding so slowly on all fronts? Can it just be about profit for friends in business? The government's explanation is that it is because of "the importance this Government places on the family and the need to consider how all policies impact on the family", as Baroness Blackstone said in explaining why New Labour opposed the Sexual Orientation Discrimination Bill in June 1998.

Capitalism needs Family Values, Family Values underpin discrimination. I think we have a link.



sidelines

**THE FUTURE'S NOT
ORANGE**

Mobile phones will now have to carry health warnings about dangers with prolonged use. Government 'experts' received reports that radiation from mobile's can trigger Alzheimer's, cancer and memory loss. National guidelines have been requested to control the construction of 'phone masts, and to avoid citing them around schools and residential areas. Radiological rules on safety may be tightened. All this comes hot on the heels of the Government's £22 Billion windfall from auctioning off 3rd generation mobile phone licences.

When workmen turned up in the middle of the night, the residents of the Brayside road area in Burnage, Manchester, were ready and waiting. They hung on to the mast so it was too heavy and dangerous to be lifted. The intention was to erect it on land owned by Railtrack at the side of a railway line, but residents, worried about radiation from it, decided to prevent the erection going ahead. A 24-hour community-based surveillance operation is still underway as DA goes to press. A telephone tree (non-mobile?) is in place and rapid response ready for instant action. Orange are 'reviewing the situation'. Manchester SF are distributing material about the dangers posed by microwave radiation. Send SAE for info. to Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.

KEGS OFF!!

At present: being human is a crime! But never fear, The Freedom to be Yourself campaign seeks to legalise non-sexual public nakedness via An Act of Parliament for the Protection of Naked People. The first protest to legalise nakedness in the UK was in 1998; the next will be at New Scotland Yard, at 2:00pm, Saturday, 15th July. The size and shape of your body is not important - get your clothes off for human rights. .

TRAPPED IN THEIR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC VIEW OF THE WORLD, THE UNIONS AND THE CENTRE-LEFT WERE UNABLE TO ORGANISE ANY REAL RESISTANCE TO THATCHERISM. THE MORE MANAGEMENT ADVANCED, THE MORE THEY RETREATED, HOPING THEIR WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT JOB LOSSES AND WAGE CUTS WOULD CONVINCE CAPITALISM TO RESTORE CONSENSUS.

US, where state interventionist policies had always been treated with suspicion and outright hostility by the financial sector based in London and New York, the opportunity was taken to play government and workers off against each other. Management went onto the offensive.

Thus, both social democratic government and the trade union movement were exposed, for different reasons. In the case of the former, it was due to inherent weakness in their economic policies and reliance on the state. For the former, without any wider political perspective, the unions had no real alternative to a capitalist system intent on policies of class war. The trade union had retreated into the workplace. Outside it, the years of intensive propaganda aimed at undermining the culture of working class solidarity in favour of greed, and the pursuit of manufactured goods had begun to have a long-term effect. A whole generation of people had experienced narrow workplace union organisation with no wider values or aims, while they had been bombarded with a well-orchestrated capitalist culture campaign, with the mass media at its disposal. The result was workers in the immediate workplace willing to demonstrate solidarity, while away from the workplace, and often in relation to other workers, dominant capitalist values prevailed. A dual vision emerged where workers identified strongly within each other in their own workplace and industry, but were all too ready to accept the media's interpretation of other workers' struggles. No real national, regional or local organisations existed that could organise local solidarity and cross-industry support.

NO FIT STATE

Capitalism, spearheaded by Thatcher, was able to expose the divisions and picked off industries one at a time. Trapped in their social democratic view of the world, the unions and the centre-left were unable to organise any real resistance to Thatcherism. The more management advanced, the more they retreated into social democracy, hoping their willingness to accept job losses and wage cuts would convince capitalism of their worth and restore the post-war consensus.

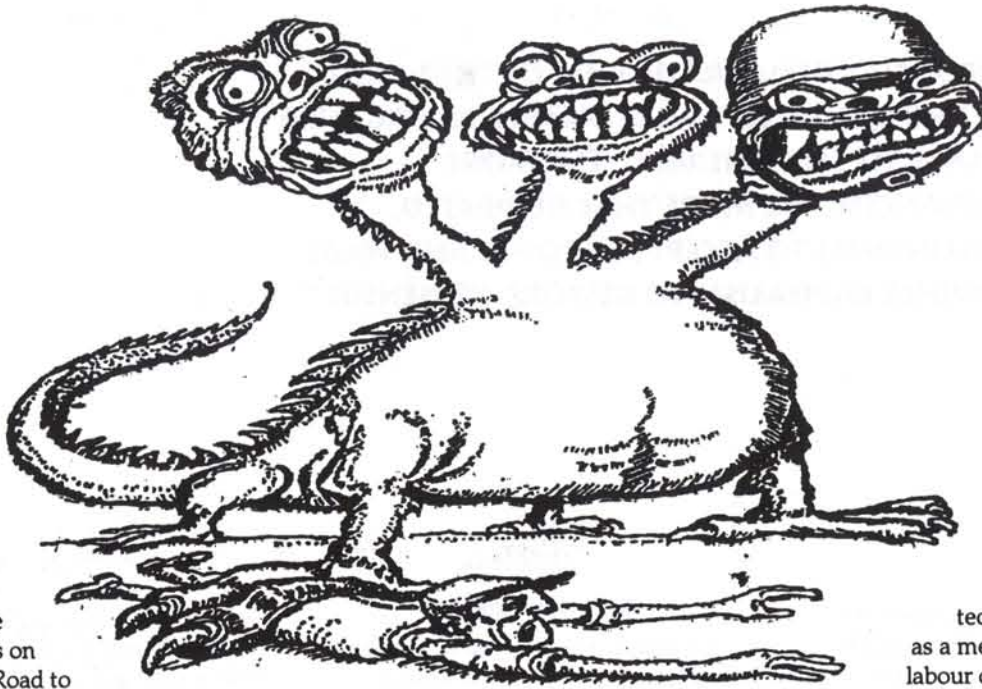
Along with the joint state/capitalist assault on union organisation, the formidable capitalist propaganda machine was again brought to bear. The unions were portrayed as powerful, narrow-minded, self-interested groups of workers, alongside the idea that the only alternative to these people ruining it for the rest of us was fundamental free market change to restore the profitability of British capitalism, under threat from the availability of foreign cheap labour. Those who resisted change in the form of new technology and changing work practices were branded dinosaurs. The future was to be a 'flexible' workforce able to constantly adapt to technological change and conditions. This would bring its rewards to workers and their families in the new age of the service sector.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early '90s only intensified the free market assault. Anything or anybody standing in the way of the free market was branded reactionary and backward. A classic example occurred with the global stock market crash and subsequent slump in the SE Asian economies. These new emerging tiger economies, which had hitherto been portrayed in much of the media as shining

examples of the free market, were suddenly branded as bastions of state control and regulation. The only alternative was the free market style US economy. Cue New Labour and the darling Tony Blair.

Faced with the events of the past few decades, the sheer depth of the left crisis is revealed. The problems are deep, and they cross social, economic and political spheres. There is no simple fix. Clinging to old post-war institutions of Labour Party or unions is clearly no solution, since they are now empty shells devoid of any militant working class content or alternative vision. They are part of the problem rather than the solution. There is simply no point in fighting or voting for the Labour Party. Within the trade union movement, the left can shout until it is blue in the face about undemocratic leaders selling out the rank and file. Still, reality beckons; the failure of the unions lies in their social democratic charter, which explains their undemocratic nature, not vice versa.

As for the big idea of state control that underpinned both the revolutionary left and social democratic left, this too has been proved a failure. Yes, it can and should be argued that certain sectors are better in state hands in the short term, while we have to live with a state. At least the National Health Service doesn't prioritise shareholders above patient care – because it doesn't have any. But such an argument is not about changing or overthrowing or replacing capitalism. The big idea of state control transcending capitalism is bankrupt – it died in the ashes of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratised nationalised industries. In short, the state can no longer provide an alternative to free market capitalism, either



capitalism. By the 1950s, the CP was on the long "British Road to Socialism", in which it argued unequivocally that socialism would come about through the Ballot Box. As did Euro-Communism. Meanwhile, the myriad of Trotskyite groups either attempted to infiltrate the Labour Party or argued for voting for Labour come election day. Several stood for elections in their own right.

The increasingly apparent economic weakness of the Soviet Union and the failing of nationalist industries in Europe proved easy targets for the exponents of free market capitalism. When European-style social democracy failed to prevent the return of mass unemployment and rising inflation in the 1970s, as it had promised it would, the post-war cosy parliamentary left bubble began to burst. Capitalism, faced with crisis, did what it always does in such situations, and went on the offensive. Both socialism and social democracy were fingered as the culprits who had presided over the failure of state control. Snatching the initiative, Thatcher and the like championed the free market, both as a movement of freedom and as the best means of ensuring rising standards of living and quality of life. That the free market re-emerged was not a miracle – neither was the collapse of the bankrupted state-dominated social democratic movement. Both were inevitable and sadly predictable. At the heart of the problem was the notion that the state could deliver.

NOT-WORKING

Like its political party counterparts, the post-war trade union movement became increasingly dominated by social

democratic ideas. Undoubtedly, there persisted throughout a strong workplace presence of people prepared to go beyond the dominant social democratic principles of conflict avoidance and partnership with management and take strike action. However, as disillusionment with socialism grew, this militant faction increasingly allowed itself to be undermined by those trying to secure a bigger slice of the capitalist cake. Pay and conditions became an end in themselves. Belief in socialism as a long term aim was effectively replaced in most workplaces by a militancy which sought to challenge capitalism without overthrowing it. The deliberate and false split between economic struggle in unions and political struggle, largely now in statist parties, brought the complete detachment of the unions from any semblance of wider political struggle or longer term revolutionary goals.

A key aim of post-war social democratic capitalism was to ensure full employment through welfare spending and some redistribution of wealth through taxation. Both were designed to ensure adequate levels of demand for capitalism's goods and services, and avoid a repeat of the 1930s depression, where a crisis of under-consumption nearly brought the end to capitalism, as Bolshevism waited in the wings. Through the 1950s and '60s, the cost of welfare capitalism coupled with the strength of a trade union movement empowered by full employment and, demanding an ever-greater share of the capitalist cake, began to eat into capitalist profits. The remedy was a shift into

technological innovation as a means of cutting rising labour costs. However, even

this was not easygoing for the capitalist elite, as working class industrial strength often either resisted the introduction of new technology or was still able to take some of the resultant profit gains in new pay deals. Thus, the UK newspaper industry doggedly resisted retooling and fought an inch-by-inch battle to demand a share of productivity gains from new technology as it seeped in.

By the early 1960s, capitalism across the developed world was experiencing falling profits. Growth in both Europe and the US dipped below 3%, from 6% in the early 1950s. As profits fell, US economic dominance began to falter, and it lost its ability to stabilise international capitalism. Investment levels began to fall, which led quickly to rising unemployment and fiscal and monetary crisis.

With inflation rising, the traditional social democratic solution to slump of stimulating demand through higher public spending could only make matters worse. In 1969, the Labour Party discovered that 'tax and spend' not longer offered the solution it once had. The state moved to support capitalism due to a crisis caused by falling profits. In order that profitability could be restored, capitalism and the state launched a joint attack on organised labour with the aim of sharply reducing wages and conditions.

Despite the resultant rising unemployment and cuts in welfare spending, the state/capitalist forces still faced a well-organised labour movement. Thus, the state was forced to work ever harder to reduce the standard of living of the very workers it had promised to work for at the last election. In the UK and the

sidelines

**TAKING ON
TABLOID RACISM**

Early in the evening of Thursday 13th April, Northcliffe House, headquarters of Associated Newspapers, was surrounded by black men. Sadly, this was not a lynch party for the editors of the Daily Mail, Evening Standard, Metro and other titles published by the group. No, they were security guards.

Their presence was required because an anti-racist demonstration had been called in protest at the Mail's and Standard's hate campaigns against refugees and asylum seekers. A large and lively picket ensued for a couple of hours, successfully highlighting opposition to the tide of racist crap which pours from the columns of these hate sheets (and the mouths of politicians).

The large security presence was prompted by a protest on 15th March against the Mail's homophobic outpourings, which had managed to invade the newsroom and disrupt work for 15 minutes. The Mail is an equal opportunity hate sheet. The fact that the security guards were almost all black is unlikely to be an attempt to "prove" the newspaper group is not racist; this kind of work has lousy pay and worse hours, so it's the kind of job a lot of black people are restricted to by discrimination.

Having boosted morale, groups now have to combat hatred of and provide support for asylum seekers in their local areas. Dispersal and vouchers have made these tasks more urgent than ever before. The picket was called by Hackney Refugee and Migrant Support Group, and supported by the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns.

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC), Cambridge House, 131 Camberwell Road, LONDON SE5 0HF. Tel. 020 7701 5197.



Fairer, faster, firmer

(- now f*** off)

As usual, New Labour and Tory politicians are fighting to be tougher on immigrants and refugees than each other. At the same time, they protest loudly that they're not racist. Well, of course not. They just don't want any more foreigners to come here - what's racist about that?

Racism is the bottom line of the asylum and immigration 'debate'. Immigration laws are all about keeping out 'undesirable' foreigners. But those who make and support such laws try to cloud the debate by wheeling out the same old myths and lies. Here's just a couple of my (least) favourite.

The first is our old friend, 'the interests of good race relations'. The 'good race relations' argument sends a clear message to racists and fascists. "Hey, we're with you boys. All these foreigners aren't welcome - there's too many of 'em here already. It's not your fault you have to beat the sh** out of them - they provoked you by being here".

Just what we expect from the parties of law and order - tough on crime, tough on the victims of crime. Just as women who don't want to get raped shouldn't be out at night without a man and gay people who don't want to get queer bashed shouldn't kiss in the street, Black, Asian and refugee peoples who don't want to get beaten up by racist scum shouldn't come here in the first place.

A second much peddled myth is that Britain has always been a safe haven for genuine refugees, but

sadly we can't cope with them all anymore and/or we're now being flooded with bogus illegal immigrant scroungers. Just when this idyllic state of affairs actually existed is never made clear. Probably because it never did.

Since their invention in the 1900s, successive immigration and asylum laws have been specifically designed to stop particular 'undesirable' groups from ever finding a 'safe haven' here, and to make life as difficult as possible for them if they ever did make it. In the first half of the 20th century, this mainly meant Jewish refugees from central and eastern Europe (including those attempting to flee Hitler). In the second half, it was Black and Asian people from the defunct British Empire. Now the focus is on stopping refugees from just about everywhere (with the possible exception of white Zimbabweans).

It's blindingly obvious that immigration laws are fundamentally, inevitably and intentionally racist, and that anyone who calls themselves an anti-racist must be opposed to all immigration controls. Obvious to everyone except the likes of Straw and Widdecombe. As far as they're concerned, immigrants and refugees can fuck off.

Wonder how much comfort it is to those deemed 'bogus' and 'illegal' waiting for deportation in a privatised detention centre that New Labour wants them to fuck off in a fairer, faster, firmer way?

For information on action against immigration controls and local anti-deportation campaigns, contact the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns: www.ncadc.demon.co.uk

Saturday 24th June - national demo against anti-immigration policies and in solidarity with asylum seekers. Meet, 1pm, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2. Organised by National Civil Rights Movement Europe, Roma Organisation, National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns.

Missed it? - write to DA for more info. on getting involved in direct action/asylum seeker support.

The next issue of DA will have more on immigration and related issues, including info, contacts and articles on "New Labour, new racism" and "More Equal than Others", plus features on work, etc. To be sure of a copy, subscribe for £5 for a whole year's worth (details p.34).

GETTING THINGS IN PROPORTION:

UK Government's total public spending budget for 1999-2000 = £336 billion
 Total amount to be spent on caring for asylum seekers = £0.5 billion
 Millennium Dome budget = over £0.8 billion
 3 Trident submarines = £50 billion
 NATO bombing campaign against Serbia (1999 prices) = £61 billion
 Renovating Prince Edward's country mansion = £2 million
 Royal garden parties and entertainment during state visits = £7.9 million.

Estimated number of refugees in the world = 16 million
 Refugees granted asylum in the UK in the whole of 1999 = 7075
 Refugees granted asylum in the UK in January 1999 = 15 (2% of those that applied)
 Applications for asylum to the UK fell between late 1999 and early 2000.

NATO's mass bombing of Serbia last year led immediately and directly to the killing and maiming of several thousand civilians, both Serbs and Kosovars, and the devastation of the environment and economic life of the region. The UN High Commission for Refugees revealed that most damage to Albanian houses, hospitals, and schools during the 78-day war was caused by NATO bombs. Around 240,000 Serbs and other minorities from Kosovo have become refugees after NATO took charge. The cost of rebuilding the infrastructure of Kosovo has been put at £184 million a year. The UN administrator, Bernard Kouchner, commented in March 2000 that Kosovo's entire budget for the year 2000 is equivalent to the cost of half a day's bombing.

Many 'developing countries' are crippled by enormous debt repayments to Britain and other rich countries. In February, the British Government announced \$1.2 million in emergency aid to Mozambique - yet Mozambique already pays \$1.4 million a week in repayments to Western creditors.

Refugees and their children are fleeing war and oppression that the British Government has caused and benefitted from. And the same Government cuts off any support, and starves them on the streets of Britain. The reality is that people across the world have nothing to fear and everything to gain from co-operating and organising together. In fact, only by organising internationally together can we be strong enough to call a halt to the massive multinational companies, supported by governments and institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, from their relentless misuse of resources and people, in pursuit of profits for the few.

Imagine this... you're doing your weekly shopping. You've got just £25 to spend, you can only spend it on designated items and, if there should happen to be change left over, the store will keep it themselves! An estimated 4,000 retailers have signed up to the asylum seekers' voucher scheme, launched, ironically, on April Fools' Day as the Immigration and Asylum Act came into force. Asylum seekers are unable to work whilst awaiting application decisions, forced to exist on an income 30% below the Government minimum necessary for survival. Begging - often the only option - is not tolerated. The truth is, they have no choice. What would you do if your homeland had been destroyed, if you had witnessed the deaths of your family, if you lived in constant fear for your life?

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work to support themselves in the U.K. They are also excluded from the main benefits system and only get 70% of what others get (£36.40). Most of this is in the form of vouchers for "essential goods from supermarkets, who are legally allowed to keep the change. Cash is £10 maximum. In contrast, Belgium pays £99 a week, Ireland £63.50, Finland £53.47, Norway £51.70 and Denmark £45.77. Under UK regulations, toys for refugee children are not seen as "an essential living need" and therefore are not provided for.

An Amnesty International UK report recently exposed the growing extent of incarceration of asylum seekers by the UK Government. Some have been detained for more than 12 months. None have committed any crime. Detained asylum-seekers have fewer rights than other people in prison. Since New Labour came to power, over 93,000 people have been deported.

Refugees are now being sent to "reception zones, often away from any family or community support networks they may have developed to look after each other. People are being dumped in sink estates far away from London, and if, out of desperation or fear, they leave these zones to find family or friends in another area, they will lose their right to benefit completely. 

AGAINST POLICE RACISM AND BRUTALITY

In April, Haringey Solidarity Group organised a public meeting in Tottenham, London, to highlight police violence and harassment against local black people. There were speakers from Winston Silcott's and Roger Sylvester's families, the Lindo campaign, and U.S. community activist and ex-Black Panther Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin.



After a video on Winston Silcott's case, previously shown on Channel Four, the meeting was reminded that the police killed Cynthia Jarrett, a black woman, and started the Tottenham riot on Broadwater Farm Estate in 1985. The media ignored this in favour of the death of P.C. Blakelock in the riot, for which Winston was framed, and later cleared. The vendetta against Winston continues, as part of the cover-up of the police's crimes.

Roger Sylvester's cousin gave an update on the progress of the investigation into Roger's killing by Tottenham police a year ago. The killing is being investigated by Essex police, who have built up a massive file on Roger and his family, with the aim of exonerating the police. The eight police officers who killed Roger are expected to remain unaccountable.

Focusing investigations of deaths at the hands of the police on the victim is a favourite police tactic. Surrey police, who are investigating the shooting dead of Harry Stanley, an unarmed man, in Hackney, have floated the idea that he might have committed suicide by deliberately getting himself shot by the police! This happens in America, apparently. So why would anyone think the Met has a shoot-to-kill policy?

Delroy Lindo and his wife, Sonia, spoke about the 15-year-campaign of police harassment suffered by themselves and their children. Delroy has known Winston Silcott since childhood, and formed the Winston Silcott Defence Campaign in 1985. As well as fighting the frame-up for the killing of P.C. Blakelock, Delroy investigated the death of Anthony Smith, for which Winston is still in prison, finding witnesses to testify that he acted in self-defence.

Delroy's reward has been harassment for himself and his family. There have been 11 incidents involving local police since they were transferred to Hornsey by Haringey Council in 1996, as a result of police harassment in Tottenham. They have been acquitted of all 15 charges against them which have come to court. Another four charges were due to go to court as DA went to press.

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin spoke about his experiences in exposing and fighting police terror against the black population of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and elsewhere. He argued for community organising against criminalisation, harassment and violence by the state. He cited his own experience as proof that the state can only get away with what we let them, and that justice will come from direct action, not demands on politicians and judges.

Instead of individual family campaigns, there needs to be a unified political campaign against state racism and brutality. In discussion, the United Families and Friends Campaign was identified as the basis of such a movement. Speakers also made the link between attacks on asylum seekers by politicians and newspapers, and increased violence against black people.

Roger Sylvester Justice Campaign, PO Box 25908, London N18 1WU. Tel. 0793 197 0442; SJC@hotmail.com; www.blink.org.uk/campaign/rsylvester.htm
Police Crimes Against Civilians (The Lindo Campaign), c/o Shady Grove Club, 7 Bruce Grove, London, N17 6RA
United Families and Friends Campaign, c/o Inquest, Ground Floor, Alexandra National House, 330 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2PJ Tel. 0370 432439. 



Left in a dark corner

The crisis in the political left, and what might be done.

For anyone seeking revolutionary alternatives to current capitalist society, these are demanding times. The last twenty years have seen particularly rapid change. The capitalist system is in a state of flux with mass production giving way to a mass service industry. Technological change increasingly affects all aspects of the economy. The certainties of the post-war period, with full employment, ever rising standards of living and workplace organisations capable of inflicting defeats on capitalism, are now distant history.

Many people on the revolutionary left have been simply unable to cope with the changes and carry on as if we are still in the 1950s. Unable to let go of the social democracy that dominated the post war period, they continue to pedal parliamentary politics to the extent of telling us to "vote for Labour without illusions". They see the failing of trade unions as due to lack of democracy - unions are led by corrupt leaders selling out the militant rank & file. If only things were so simple.

CAPITAL TECHNOLOGY

Alongside this, the current political and capitalist elite, through their media mouthpieces, constantly portray the changes taking place within society as stemming from new technology. All such change is portrayed as both inevitable and progressive. Those who seek to challenge technological change are castigated as backward-looking reactionaries unable to come to terms with the modern world. The idea seems to be that technology is some sort of independent, all-powerful

force, driving itself forward for the benefit of society as a whole. The reality, of course, is that new technology is sponsored and owned by capitalists and is thus in the interests of capitalism. Technology is only developed commercially if it will lead to greater profits. There are two basic options; new products that can be sold, or technology that cuts costs of current production. Either way, profit is the force that drives technological change.

The ideological campaign centred on the idea that new technology is automatically a liberating force for choice and freedom is critical to the successful adoption of new technology by capitalism. At the core of the campaign lies the pre-eminence of the free market. It is apparently only the free market that can produce the technological change that delivers more things and greater individual choice. Of course, here we do not mention the vast majority of the world which the market has completely failed. In Africa alone, 20,000 children die daily from starvation, lack of clean drinking water and various diseases. Malaria not only affects the health of millions, it holds back development. Capitalism chooses to invest more money developing anti-wrinkle cream than on a cure for malaria. This speaks volumes about the true role of technology within capitalism. Fundamentally, let's face it, it is not about real choices or real quality of life.

Should malaria affect the developed world, there would be a vaccine developed - the attempts to date have largely appeared around various western military interventions in malarial zones. When our boys start going down with malaria instead of killing the enemies to our dominance, it's time a cure was found.

Even if/when it is, it is doubtful that Africa would/will benefit. Billions have been spent on a cure for Aids. Africa does not benefit from the gains from that research in the form of better treatment simply because Africa cannot afford the price demanded by drug companies.

LEFT WANTING

In the face of technological change and the accompanying ideological onslaught, the socialised movement and wider labour movement have proved powerless. At the core of this failing lies the notion of the state. The post-war socialist movement - both Marxist and otherwise, represented by the Communist Party (CP) and the left of the Labour Party in Britain - held that the state could be utilised by the working class to bring about change. Much of the ideas surrounding state control stemmed from Marxism, which argued that the state under the control of a communist political party could be used as a means to eradicate capitalism and bring about a communist society.

Post-war Europe was dominated by the rise of social democracy, which accepted the need for partial state control as the means of preventing future free market capitalist crises. Social democracy meant that the state should take over the running of certain sectors of the economy, such as education, health, basic services and transport. This led to a blurring of the division between social democracy and parliamentary socialism. Both supported state control, and both shared a belief in the need for political parties in the process of achieving socialism. Hence, both saw the need to gain political power and both supported parliamentary democracy. Even the revolutionary wing of socialism sought full state control as the way to replace

Music: Blast from the past: Songs of Struggle from the USA

Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti and Dustbowl Ballads

Woody Guthrie
Ballads of Sacco and Vanzetti by Woody Guthrie Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40060
Dustbowl Ballads by Woody Guthrie BMG Entertainment
(Available through Amazon)

One of the benefits of CD technology driving down music reproduction costs is smaller production runs are possible. Hence, many deleted recordings can be reissued after many years of mouldering on the dead letter files of various record companies.

Guthrie is probably best known to many as the original inspiration for that icon of the sixties, Bob Dylan. The truth is that Guthrie deserves far more recognition than the "Dylan" tag implies. He is possibly one of the better known of a whole range of American folk artists who were part of a major movement in the thirties and forties, strongly tied to a radical political and working class movement that grew up in a period of intense political and social upheaval. Guthrie was certainly one of the most prolific and talented around. He wrote, sang and played (guitar, harmonica and even mandolin) and generally set the stereotypical image of the folk singer. These two albums represent Guthrie at his best.

Sacco and Vanzetti were two Italian immigrants who were arrested, tried and finally executed for robbery and murder in Boston in the 1920's. Their innocence was obvious and blatant, however, as they were admitted Anarchists and Trade Union activists, innocence was irrelevant, especially to the trial judge who publicly called them "ANARCHIST BASTARDS". The case has been well documented. A film of the story was one of the factors that helped convert a young Labour Party member into an Anarchist (me, obviously). The case of Sacco and Vanzetti has had such a far reaching impact that when they were finally pardoned in 1977, city celebrations were cancelled due to concerns over public safety.

In 1945, Moses Asch, the founder of Folkways Records, commissioned Woody Guthrie to produce an album based on the case of Sacco and Vanzetti (still a vibrant issue nearly 20 years after they were executed). The result was one of the best but also most difficult to write albums that Guthrie ever produced. Singing alone with just his guitar for accompaniment, Woody Guthrie lays down 11 excellent songs that not only tell the story but also stick well to the conventions of American folk music (a wide and vibrant form). The best known of the songs is "Two Good Men", later covered by Irish balladeer Christy Moore, but other highlights include "Sussos Lane", encapsulating the image of working class life in Boston.

In addition to Guthrie's 11 tracks, there is the addition of "Sacco's letter to his Son", by Pete Seeger. Based on a true letter written by Sacco to his son Dante on the eve of his death, it proves a moving reflection on honest ordinary man. Seeger's pure and sweet singing voice also is an interesting antidote to Guthrie's dry but direct singing style.

Smithsonian Folkways is well worth investigating; a massive store room of American folk and "World Music" including much with strong political links. Order Sacco and Vanzetti direct from the website and save yourself some money.

Dustbowl Ballads is another themed album first recorded straight to disc. The impression of the life of farmers who were living a third world existence in the richest country in the world is telling. That Guthrie had first-hand experience is not in doubt. With his drawing and often comic voice, Guthrie paints a picture that is sometimes sad but often humorous. The album includes two of his best known tracks; "Do Re Mi", illustrating the xenophobia and hostility with which the "Okies" were greeted with when they got to California, and "So long it's been good to know you", here under its original title "Dusty Old Dust".

Two other high points are the ballad of "Tom Joad", basically a song version of John Steinbeck's novel, recorded in 2 parts because of the limitations of the old 78 format, and "Pretty Boy Floyd", the ballad of a dustbowl Robin Hood, also later covered by Christy Moore. 

Songs of the Civil War

Various Artists (Columbia Records)
The Hand that Holds the Bread
Cincinnati's University Singers (New World Records)
(Both titles available through Amazon)

An arrogant little shit of a Trotskyist, who fancied himself as a bit of a theoretical guru, once told me that the United States of America had never had any revolutionary movements. After I mentioned a dozen (the IWW, the Haymarket Anarchists, Sacco and Vanzetti, EPIC, the Jewish Anarchists, etc.), he shut up. Thankfully, I never saw him again.

America could make a claim to be the most revolutionary, the most anti-authoritarian and the most anti-statist country in the world. Anyone who disagrees might take a look at American history. If you do wish to take up my challenge, I would suggest that you don't limit yourself to dull books but spend a bit of your time discovering about American popular culture. Therein lies a real view of the soul of the people and fundamental philosophy that drives them.

These two albums make a good start-point for such a quest, particularly regarding the formative periods of American history; the Civil War and its immediate post period. It was during this time that America was turned from rural individualism to the grinding machine of corporate urbanisation; a time, you could say, when the American soul was tortured and when the sleeping giant of unrestrained capitalism tethered the heart of freedom.

Drawn from the excellent television series (now available on video and well worth a watch), *Songs of the Civil War* is an eclectic mix of contemporary songs, performed by modern artists. Famous names such as that "Rebel" of country music, Waylon Jennings and Sweet Honey in the Rock are featured. Styles vary from folk standards, through marching tunes and Negro (sic) spirituals, to Victorian parlour songs and music hall numbers. The war against slavery and the North's ambivalent attitude towards it is well demonstrated. "Give us a Flag" is a plea from ex-slaves to be allowed to fight, while the folk standard "Follow the Drinking Gourd" is a riddle song that tells the partially legendary story of the underground railway (a system to liberate slaves). Surprisingly, only two spirituals appear, but Sweet Honey in the Rock's outstanding performance on "Run, Mourner, Run" is, well, outstanding.

Many of the Victorian parlour songs show the immense sentimentality of the period. But despite the fact that these songs may appear almost comic to modern ears, they are sung with such emotion (particularly by Kate and Anne McGarrigle), that only the most cynical could mock. "Was my Brother in the Battle" still brings a lump to my throat. The period following the Civil War was one racked by class struggle as those who had made their money during the war sought to consolidate it into total control, at the expense of the rising urban working class and the masses of immigrants. Time and again radical movements sprung up, all ultimately to be dashed under the hand of divide and rule tactics.

"The Hand that Holds the Bread", subtitled "Songs of Progress and Protest in the Gilded Age 1865-1893", is 24 songs that chart this period. All are sung by the Cincinnati's University Singers in pretty much an original style. The result is not to modern ears, particularly those brought up on a diet of rock and pop. But if you can work through Gilbert and Sullivan meets a barber shop quartet, you find a fascinating anthology of popular revolt and political change. Revolt against capitalism's excess comes through in songs such as "The Hand that Holds the Bread" or "The Anti-monopoly War Song". The campaign for the 40 hour week and the radical temperance movement are shown in "Eight Hours" and the comically pathetic "Father's a Drunkard, and Mother is Dead". Racism against the immigrant communities on which America's growth depended are chronicled in "No Irish Need Apply" or "The Chinese, the Chines, You Know". I could go on, but if you are still reading, you need to get a copy anyway... 

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TERRORISM BILL

The April Fool's Day anti-Terrorism Bill demo in Manchester saw 300-500 people turn out for the fun, despite no permission from the police. The original plan was to march through the city centre to the Freemasons' Hall, and then on to the Town Hall. 5,000 leaflets were given out on the day, as marchers mingled with shoppers, until the police showed up with mounted lines and launched a violent, unprovoked attack against demonstrators and passers-by. Eventually, the protesters were able to get through and continue. Three people were arrested, and various other attempts were made at detention, but passers-by waded in to their defence to stop the police brutality.

MUGABE MEDIA HYPOCRISY

Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe for 20 years, during which time he has done nothing to resolve the situation of white-dominated land ownership. Now, seeing the potential for political advantage, he is stirring up this old sore. He lost the recent referendum on changing the Constitution. It was nothing to do with land reform, but an attempt to further increase his powers.

His hypocrisy is only surpassed by that of the capitalist media. They made no mention last time he tried to shore up his popularity by attacking the gay community, nor when he attacked protesting workers and students. It is only when the land-owning white minority are fingered, the inheritors of racist white Rhodesia, that the British press starts getting uppity. Facts: they own 75% of the best agricultural land and they are 1% of the population.

The media points out that only the ZANU-PF Party leaders will benefit from land seizures, not the people. But the point is, the farms and agricultural land of Zimbabwe should be run by those who work there, not by Mugabe's or any others' cronies.



The debate around repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1988 has focused on schools. It has addressed homophobic bullying, discrimination against children without conventionally married parents and sex education policies. This is all very well, but *Section 28 does not actually apply to schools* because they are no longer controlled by Local Authorities, which is what the Act refers to.

The legal aspects of S28 are a red herring, since the ideological impacts are the real problem. So the starting point in the S28 debate has to be that simply campaigning to repeal it is nowhere near enough – we need to oppose the implications of what it means too.

S28 was actually an amendment to Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. Section 2A, paragraph (1) of that Act states that:

A local authority shall not –

(a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality;

(b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.

Other legislation, such as The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, however, places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities “to provide a comprehensive and efficient service for all who wish to use it”. Moreover, Department of the Environment Circular 12/88, issued on 20th May 1988, states that: “Local authorities will not be prevented by this section from offering the full range of services to homosexuals on the same basis as to all their inhabitants.”

Section 28 doesn't legally restrict the provision of public services, it just bans the mythical “promotion of homosexuality”. It has still done serious damage, however. It has created an atmosphere in which discrimination can flourish, and where there is little or no discussion of the provision and

development of services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. It has reduced these services from being the responsibility of all workers to the second class status of “personal interest”.

Chiefly, this means lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers have taken responsibility for providing these services to their peers by default. For example, if you work in a library and you are lesbian, you will be the one who ends up maintaining the lesbian books. It also means anyone who takes these services seriously is assumed to be “gay”, leaving them open to sniggering speculation if they are straight, or not open about their sexuality. It has isolated these people, and deemed them to be working in their own interests, not simply doing their job. Repealing S28 will not change this. The standard trades union approach would be to demand that management tackle the problem. Management are only likely to throw the ball back to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers, this being

S28 HAS CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH DISCRIMINATION CAN FLOURISH, AND WHERE THERE IS LITTLE OR NO DISCUSSION OF SERVICES TO LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDERED PEOPLE.

our “personal interest”.

The issues are best tackled directly, by firstly bringing them up at workplace meetings. Given this wider audience, concrete examples will strike a chord with other workers, and generate support for restoring these services to their proper status. Collective discussion and action will also break down the vicious circle of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered workers being seen as the only people responsible for these services. The culmination of this approach would be establishing the responsibility of the workforce as a whole for these services and, in so doing, tackling discrimination and isolating the bigots S28 has supported. This has the added advantage of the workers retaining the initiative and the means to combat heterosexism. At worst, you'll be able to put pressure on the management to take responsibility and do something. “Homosexuals” of all services unite, you have nothing to lose but your isolation! 



ICI: We say no

At 07.15 on the morning of Wednesday, March 8th 2000, the warning sirens sounded once again across the Cheshire town of Runcorn. The sirens are sounded at regular intervals at the huge ICI plant to ensure they are in working order in case of emergency. The residents of Runcorn and the nearby village of Frodsham soon realised that this was no drill. The prevailing wind, which comes up the Mersey from the Irish Sea, brought the pale blue haze inland across Weston Village and into the main residential area of post-war housing around the town hall.

The emergency services soon had the area around Weston and Weston Point sealed off to the public and fire engines were standing by five miles away at Preston Brook on the border with Warrington. First reports were of an explosion at ICI and a gas leak of unusually large proportions. It was later confirmed that a set of bellows had ruptured and allowed half a tonne of hydrogen chloride gas to escape into the atmosphere. The culprit was not ICI, but a company based on the ICI site called European Vinyls Corporation Ltd. (EVC). To residents, it made no difference who was responsible. Anyway, ICI and EVC are closely involved with each other, so much so that both Russ Whelan, site manager of ICI Halo-Chemicals and EVC site manager Andrew Littlewood have issued a joint safety statement.

The leak is only the latest in a series of public relations disasters for the chemical industry in and around Runcorn. Chemical manufacture is to Runcorn what the railways are to Crewe or the army is to Aldershot. Whole streets were built early in the last century to house thousands of workers at the Brunner-Mond and Castner-Kellner works, which took up almost 3 miles of the southern shore of the River Mersey between Runcorn and Weston.

Generations of families were employed at ICI and the general perception has traditionally been that pay and conditions were better than with other local employers. Such attitudes have changed abruptly over recent months with the discovery that the toxic gas HCBd (hexachlorobutadiene) has seeped into houses in Weston. HCBd causes a build-up of poison in the kidneys, and one in five houses contain dangerous levels of the substance. Local people have had to be evacuated to hotels.

The HCBd is seeping into homes from a large field on a hill overlooking the ICI site. Between 1920 and 1970, this was nothing more than a huge hollow in the ground into which waste products from the manufacture of chemicals were dumped. It was decided to fill in the dump and grass the area over. From the top edge of the field, the view across the river of north Cheshire and south Merseyside is spectacular. It has even been cited by people as a

reason to move to Weston. But lurking beneath the field has been a veritable timebomb, the consequences of which are now being felt.

In January, Derek Twigg, local Labour MP, appeared on television to assure local people that there was a distinction between the 'new' ICI and the 'old' ICI which had allowed the dumping of huge amounts of chemical waste close to a residential area. Just weeks later, hard on the heels of the news that contamination had spread to Frodsham Marshes, the latest 'Operation Cloudburst' occurred involving a major hydrogen chloride leak. The only difference between 'new' and 'old' ICI is that it is slightly harder for 'new' ICI to get away with pollution.

ICI has offered to buy those houses affected by HCBd from worried residents in Weston Village. Many are taking up the offer and who can blame them? A village with a history stretching back to the Domesday Book is looking like leaving the map. One question keeps arising at local public meetings: How long will it be before contamination is discovered elsewhere? It seems to be an unwritten policy by the powers that be to present these problems as being unique to Weston and not to other areas of Runcorn. This causes annoyance to residents of Weston Point, many of whom live much closer to the plant than those in Weston Village. In the days following the latest gas leak, EVC spokesmen repeatedly referred to Weston as if it was the only area affected. Quite how a cloud could remain stationary in a strong March westerly has yet to be explained. The people of Weston and Weston Point are also waiting for an explanation from both Labour controlled Halton Borough Council and the Labour Government about why a giant multinational concern has been allowed to slowly poison an area of Runcorn which houses people, many of who devoted their entire working lives to it. It is indicative of their lack of faith in the state at either local or national level that residents have formed their own action groups, called their own public meetings and engaged their own legal team. ICI have now offered a 'no strings' offer of £5,000 to the residents of each affected home, over and above the offer of purchase, as a result of pressure brought to bear by the action groups. No Marxist-Leninist 'vanguard parties' here; just ordinary people deciding to take action on their own initiative without reliance on politicians. No one can foresee what the outcome will be, but there is a lesson for everyone in the tenacity of people taking on one of the big guns of unfettered capitalism. 



sidelines

BUS TURNS PINK

Bus passengers in Piccadilly Circus saw pink when direct action group the Lesbian Avengers stormed the number 15 and daubed it in fuchsia paint in protest over Section 28. The action came on the eve of the House of Lords debate on the contentious piece of legislation and was directed at Brian Souter, chairman of Stagecoach Buses, who has reportedly bankrolled the Scottish campaign to retain the controversial legislation to the tune of £500,000. While three activists slowed the bus down by riding ahead on bicycles, another 17 boarded it and apologised to passengers before going to work with the paint brushes. Five people were later charged with causing criminal damage. A statement issued later by the Lesbian Avengers read: 'It is vital that we all challenge homophobia wherever it appears, whether it's in the playground or rich businessmen throwing their weight around.' A spokesperson for Stagecoach, which runs the number 15 service, would not comment on the personal views of Souter.

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'Toxic' Incinerator Ash Put On Allotments



The image shows a large pile of dark, granular material, likely incinerator ash, being dumped onto a grassy area. The pile is situated next to a fence or boundary. The surrounding area appears to be a residential or community space, possibly an allotment, as mentioned in the headline. The photograph is in black and white, emphasizing the texture and volume of the waste.

For more on toxic issues, TOXCAT is an indispensable bi-monthly grassroots magazine publishing accessible technical, scientific and medical information, available for £2 from: Communities against Toxics, PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port CH66 3TX.

Essays on gay history, politics, and the university

John D'Emilio
Routledge 1992 0 415 90509 5

Making Trouble

Making Trouble cannot be bettered, for anyone seeking a theoretical understanding of the emergence and development of post-war, and post-Stonewall, lesbian and gay communities. D'Emilio's career as a historian and his gay activism developed simultaneously, and his writing unusually combines academic rigour with accessibility as a result.

The collection falls into three sections, on gay history, gay university life, and gay politics. The first section collects essays on the history of the gay community. The pre-Stonewall gay liberation movement is described by a study of the origins and early history of the Mattachine Society. Founded by gay communists in Los Angeles in 1951, this began as a consciousness raising group. It became militant in response to police repression, campaigning for civil rights among the gay community. Its success brought in anti-communist elements who espoused an assimilationist stance familiar today, and who eventually drove the radical

founders, and their perspective, out of the organisation.

The second section examines American university life from the perspective of lesbian and gay students and academics. It also charts the development of lesbian and gay studies, and academic research, and puts it into context. While not necessarily the most interesting material, this does counter the perception that "professional gays" have a vested interest in "inventing" a gay community and gay history to make a living. It also makes the case for such activity, which critiques of the political economy of academia need to accept.

The third section is disappointing, chiefly collecting essays reviewing political landmarks. The best part of it is "Saturday Night", chronicling the author's attempts to provide an alternative social centre to the commercial scene for gay men. Little of this material covers new ground or offers new insight to anyone familiar with the events described. Nor, in spite of D'Emilio's socialism, does it link gay issues to wider

struggles in the '70's and '80's.

The collection also republishes D'Emilio's seminal "Capitalism and gay identity", which originally appeared in "Powers of desire: the politics of sexuality", in 1983. Here, the author gives a marxian basis to the "social constructionist" theory of gay identity. He argues that the changing expression of same-sex desire has its origins in the decline of the family as a unit of labour. By replacing family labour with waged labour, capitalism freed us from the social and economic imperatives to reproduce the family, and created the possibility of living a gay life.

Excellent as far as it goes, but, given the period covered, it would have been nice to see some attempt to analyse the persistence of "family values", the chief ideological weapon used against us perverts since the late '70's. D'Emilio seems to fall into the trap of seeing the defeat of heterosexism purely in terms of political progress, not social change.

I don't pretend to academic rigour, but I can identify the forces we have to overcome. Both "Thatcherism" and

"Reaganomics" involved cutting public spending and attacking social responsibility for welfare. The latter idea is widely accepted in Britain as the Welfare State. Anyone trying to remove the responsibility for welfare from society has to have some institution to displace it onto: the "traditional" family.

Since the nuclear family is clearly under threat from what one government minister called "social reality", its ideological importance remains paramount. Supporting it means maintaining privileges for marriage, and denying the legitimacy of alternatives. Hence the resistance to and attacks on the social acceptability of same-sex relationships, even by New Labour, which has no explicit ideological commitment to heterosexism.

Sexual liberation can not be achieved by single issue politics; it is dependent on social welfare. We have to defend the latter, and oppose privatisation and "family values", while at the same time advancing a critique of the existing welfare state.



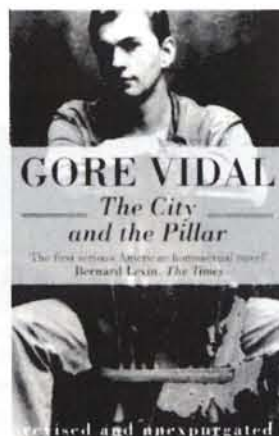
The City and the Pillar

Gore Vidal
Abacus, London, 1997 [1949], ISBN, 0-349-10657-6, £6.99

Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar* is fiction with a lot to say about the subject and the period in which it was written. While it is a classic, it remains locked in relevance, so if you didn't read it when it first came out in 1949, and you haven't read it yet, it's probably time you did.

This is a beautiful, but ultimately tragic novel about closeted gay life in the late 1940s in the US. Jim Willard, an archetypal 'boy-next-door' adolescent, has a brief fling with best mate Bob Ford when both are school kids. This encounter, much more significant for Jim than for Bob, haunts him as he grows up - an unrequited love that will never quite fade away.

The emerging US gay world is portrayed in



social satire-type fashion, and Jim neither finds love nor contentment in it. The novel reveals its tour de force as Jim meets up again with his teenage 'lover' much later. The ending is tragic and brutal, but I'll say no more...

In many ways, *The City and the Pillar* set a trend for a number of subsequent novels; from Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story* through to William Corlett's *Now and Then*, there is a traceable line and common theme of romantic, nostalgic catharsis, chances untaken, and lost loves.

Vidal successfully captures the isolation and the angst, the rejection and the vain hope of gay life in the period. But it is not depressing, or a 'plea for tolerance' in any straightforward or patronising manner. Instead, it is a rare "unputdownable" amongst novels of the period.



Do they hear you when you cry?

Fauziya Kassindja & Layli Miller Bashir.
1998. Bantam Press ISBN 0-593-04161-5.

The story of a young woman from Togo, Fauziya Kassindja is the daughter of progressive, fairly wealthy parents. When her father dies, she is forced by her father's family to marry a man she barely knows, who already has three wives. She is also told that she will have to undergo genital mutilation.

With the help of her immediate family she escapes to Germany. With more help, from a couple of remarkable people, she then moves on to the United States.

As the book unfolds, it becomes clear that on arrival in the States, her problems are far from over. Immigration officers greet her with hostility and disbelief; expected to know the system, which she obviously doesn't, her answers are wrong and she is detained subject to a hearing. The bulk of the book then deals with her descent into hell at the hands of a system which criminalises and brutalises those who come to it looking for help. Fauziya Kassindja for all the horrors that befall her, for all her trails does have one piece of luck – her case is taken up by a team of students, lawyers and campaigners who pour their own time and resources into her case.

It's a long book, but one that has a lot to say. The style is sometimes a bit too pleading and Fauziya Kassindja is unnecessarily insistent on her complete innocence. The nature of what was happening to her and what was planned for her in Togo, and the ugly, unreasoning and uncaring way the US

system dealt with her is frank and shocking. Her case established (in the US at least) that fear of oppression because of sex was relevant in claiming asylum. Until this time, it was not officially possible for a woman to be a refugee because of issues relating to her sex. Given that most societies are at least rigorously patriarchal, this is sadly not that surprising.

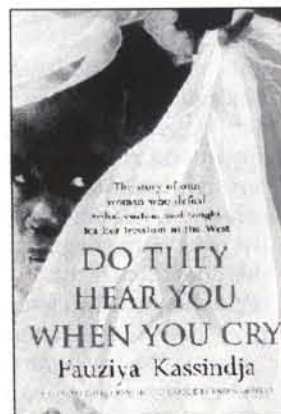
This is not a great book, it is however one that deals well with issues close to home. The details of female genital mutilation are horrific and alarming. The episodes dealing with the US immigration service give humanity to the figures riled in the media and by politicians. At a time when the press are seeking to outdo each other in lurid race hate-filled tales of scrounging asylum seekers in the

UK, this book has clear and pressing relevance. At a time when the Tory party has resorted to blatant racism in a desperate attempt to upstage New

Labour's implicit anti-immigration, this is a book that reminds us that people don't just get up and travel hundreds and thousands of miles for no reason (and it reminds us that they are people).

It is people that get locked up in detention centres and prisons for failing to understand a system in a place they come to seeking help. It is people that are used as pawns in political games by lazy and racist

journalists and politicians. It is people, not demons, not scroungers, not parasites, not foreigners, not them, not others, but us in the worst of times. This book makes people angry – for that, it is important. 



Jesus and Billy are off to Barcelona

Deirdre Purcell, New Island Books, Dublin, 1999.

Published by Open Door books in conjunction with New Island Books, Purcell's short novel is the story of some Barcelona kids who come on an exchange with some Irish kids. Outlooks, languages, social class and loves all clash in the ensuing 77 pages. Packed with self-conscious teenager action (the youth club disco scene is a good one!), it finally emerges that handsome 16-year-old Jesus, instead of fancying Doreen or Betty, actually fancies exchange partner Billy. Uproar when Billy's Dad finds his son wrestling with Jesus on the sofa, Billy feeling "excited, caught, embarrassed, curious, afraid, ashamed, excited again. Most of all excited".

This is a brave book which achieves a lot in a few pages and is funny in the process. It definitely should be part of every school curriculum. 

Boys Don't Cry

Directed by Kimberly Pierce.
USA, 1999. 1hr 52mins.



were't enough. Successfully posing as a man, Brandon dates and falls for a local girl (Chloe Sevigny). As the deception unfolds, a spiral of horrific violence is triggered. What starts as a gentle scene full of detail and modern America images soon gets gripping. Guaranteed to leave you shellshocked, unsure of the time and on the lookout for more of Swank and/or Pierce's work. 

FORCED MARRIAGES

Recently, 19-year-old Rukhsana Naz was murdered by her mother and brother because she refused to marry the man they had chosen for her. This is an extreme case. However, there are many cases of families, and to a lesser degree, communities, pressuring young women into compliances and customs they do not wish to follow. Every year, 1,000 young British women of an Asian ethnic background are taken abroad and forced to marry strangers selected for them by their families, who are primarily motivated by family honour or financial advantage. Sometimes men are forced to marry women, but women are more often the victims. Many are very young, extremely frightened, and condemned to years of misery in a situation that is almost impossible to get out of.

Hannana Siddiqui, joint co-ordinator of the Southall Black Sisters put it thus: "There is a whole spectrum of pressure placed on young girls ranging from subtle emotional pressure to harassment, threats of violence, abduction, rape and even murder." Teachers, social workers, etc. often come across such abuse but are loath to speak out for fear of being labelled racist or dictating to ethnic minorities. People who do not share the cultural practice of arranged marriage tend to think it is synonymous with forced marriage – this is not so. Only a small minority of arranged marriages are forced. It doesn't really matter who arranged it, if both parties agree freely to a marriage.

British law opposes forced marriage, but it is largely ineffective, as are other laws which try to operate within cultural practice of a minority ethnic community. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office leaflet "Forced Marriages: Your Rights Abroad" (8/6187, January 1997) takes a liberal line but gives little advice on what to do in Britain. The leaflet assumes the victim is already abroad.

Forced marriage has to be ended – but it can only be dealt with effectively within the context of the community and culture involved. The problem is not 'simple' conflict between young adults and their parents or family. Victims need support to assist them in resisting the extreme pressure of such situations. Women's refuges and hostels offer support, but they cannot do enough. Asian women's organisations and some Social Service Departments are also helpful, particularly in cases of very young women. Some legal help is available from sympathetic solicitors and Law Centres. However, the plain fact that forced marriages are so under-reported illustrates how insufficient the current support system is.

Shifting Ground :

Feminism & Postmodernism in the 21st Century

Postmodernism, it seems, is nobody's friend. It is relativist, and/or nihilistic, and/or elitist, and/or incomprehensible. It bears no relation whatsoever to political struggle in the real world. From their ivory towers in academia, postmodernists deny truth, reality, self-identity and the very possibility of independent moral judgement.

In a remarkable display of bad faith, however, or postmodern irony, perhaps, such insulated intellectuals still manage to draw their pay cheques at the end of every month, since their non-belief does not apparently extend to the relation between their own material well-being and a certain economic 'truth'. Such is postmodernism in the eyes of many. What I want to consider here is whether postmodernism deserves its bad press, or whether it may in fact have something to offer the libertarian left in general, and leftist feminism in particular.¹

Do postmodernists have a firm political agenda? Or do they (in spite of the leftist rhetorical stance of many of them) simply seek to shift the ground from under everyone else's feet? Are we obliged to condone both Noam Chomsky and David Irvine in the name of cultural relativism, or to look the other way in the face of atrocities in case we impose our own contingent and oppressive world-view on others? In true postmodern style, this article will probably raise more questions than answers, but one thing I am prepared to argue with some conviction is this: postmodernism, however much it may have been appropriated by the white, male, middle-class, intellectual establishment, is not the pristine product of the white, male, middle-class mind. Postmodernism was not invented by Jean-Francois Lyotard (obscure and near-incomprehensible philosopher who stuck his neck out and wrote 'What is Postmodernism?' No one was any the wiser). What passes for postmodern thought in the twenty first century arose, at least in part, as a consequence of marginalised groups, during the course of the last one hundred years or so, finding a voice with which to articulate their own concerns and to describe the extent of their oppression at the hands of the white, male, middle-class establishment. And here, the relation between postmodernism and feminism comes into its own. In the 1940s, Simone de Beauvoir wrote that woman is man's 'other'. Man is the measure of all

things; he is the norm from which woman deviates. Man defines 'truth' according to his own experience of the world, and woman is 'other' to man and to the/his 'truth'. But what happens when women find a voice, when it becomes slowly apparent that man's truth is just that: *man's* truth?

What happens is that the ground beneath 'truth' begins to shift. Feminism in the twentieth century exposed the lie behind certain established 'truths'. In the field of political and economic theory, for example, feminism pointed to the male bias inherent within political and

THINKING BEFORE ACTING DOES NOT MEAN FIDDLING (OR WRITING OBSCURE PHILOSOPHICAL TRACTS ON POSTMODERNISM) WHILE ROME BURNS: IT DOES REQUIRE US TO MAKE SURE THE FIRE EXTINGUISHER ISN'T FULL OF CHIP FAT.

economic liberalism. Could the isolated, acquisitive individual seeking single-handedly to maximise his gains and minimise his losses in the skewed world of Adam Smith et al ever be a mother of four dependent children under five? Get real. In the field of science, a few trouble-making feminists began to point to a certain anomaly, whereby medical students only ever studied physiological representations of male bodies, except in the specific context of female reproductivity. A minor issue, perhaps, but it was indicative of something far more pernicious than an aesthetic preference for male muscles and fibres. It was common medical practice at the same time only to test clinical drugs on male subjects, as it was thought that the hormonal 'differences' in women would taint the results. Clearly, the male body represented a certain 'truth' in medical terms: the female body, with its various chemical deviations from the norm, could hardly be relied upon to yield 'objective' data. Those who condemn the post-modern/feminist



attack on science would do well to bear this in mind – it is not about denying that the earth is round (and anyone who says it is *is* just mad!)

Feminism anticipated and influenced the intellectual and political development of postmodernism, and the two continue to feed into one another, and to critique one another, to an extent that is either productive or alarming, depending on your perspective. Feminism, for example, has not been above constructing its own 'truths' that have turned out to be as contingent as those they sought to replace. In a fairly typical attempt at the complete mystification of the issue, one philosopher (Lyotard again, as it happens) described postmodernism as 'an incredulity towards meta-narratives'. Here on planet earth, that might translate as 'scepticism towards grand ideas that try to explain the world', or simply as 'be warned: intellectuals have been known to talk bollocks'. And this includes feminist intellectuals, as anyone who has read anything by Judith Butler will testify. Feminism has constructed no end of grand theories to explain the oppression of women by men, as if women were a homogenous mass trudging through life like the match-stick figures in a Lowry painting. It ain't necessarily so, and in sturdy recognition of this fact Angela Davies, in 1982, published *Women, Race and Class*. Feminist political theories in the '60s and '70s – even radical and ground-breaking theories – tended to assume that a certain 'truth' governed the experience of women under patriarchy. Women were denied access to paid work and required to fulfil, in the home, the role of wife and mother. Shalunith Firestone went so far as to locate women's oppression in female reproductivity – no childbearing, no domesticity and, ergo, no oppression. But who were these women whose experience of domesticity defined the shape of feminist theory and practice for *all* women? White, middle-class women, that's who, said Davies: 'More Black women have always worked outside the home than have their white sisters [.] As slaves, compulsory labour overshadowed every aspect of women's existence. It would seem, therefore, that the starting point for any exploration of Black women's lives would be an

appraisal of their role as workers'.

Davies' appreciation of the different experiences of women, experiences that are defined as much by race and class as by gender, had a huge influence on feminism in the '80s and '90s, and it reinforced (albeit that Davies is no postmodernist) feminism's association with postmodernism and its localising, non-totalising concerns. Postmodernism, in its most sane manifestations, has it that, in the social world, one should always be wary of any claim by anyone to possess 'truth'. 'Truth', in a social context (we're not talking about disproving Pythagoras' theorem here), is never wholly 'neutral', never wholly 'objective'. To state this is not, I believe, to eschew political responsibility: it is simply to recognise that, before we act, and in particular before we act on behalf of others whose experiences we do not share, we should consider where *we* are coming from. Even our most seemingly enlightened and humanitarian impulses are, to some extent, the consequence of historical and material influences we can not always account for. The least we can do is examine our motives. Thinking before acting does not mean fiddling (or writing obscure philosophical tracts on postmodernism) while Rome burns: it does require us to make sure the fire extinguisher isn't full of chip fat.

So where does this leave feminism and the left? On shifting ground? Yes, but this is no bad thing. Intriguingly, the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy relates post-modernism to 'the sceptic's old problem of how to think and act'. Scepticism, meanwhile, in its original form, was 'centred on the value of enquiry and questioning'. If we believe that the means of effecting social change are as important as (because definitive of) the change itself, then surely a certain scepticism – a certain process of questioning and enquiry – is a prerequisite of sound, ethical political action. The price of freedom – and therefore the price of striving for freedom – is eternal vigilance.

¹ For the sake of brevity, and with a fair few reservations, I use the term 'leftist feminism' to refer to feminism that embraces the goal of radical social change as part of a wider political agenda: socialist feminism and anarcha-feminism are included in it; liberal feminism is not. I apologise for the over-simplification and reductionism the use of such an umbrella term inevitably entails.

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER

It is no surprise that women are treated more harshly when they kill an abusive or violent partner than men. Sexism runs so deep in our judicial system that a woman is adjudged more guilty simply because she is a woman. According to Victorian morality, women are not supposed to do the killing, so it is a greater crime when they do. It is accepted that men can "snap" and lash out and, as a result, they can literally get away with murder. It matters not that the so-called provocation can consist of such heinous crimes as "not having my dinner ready on time". But women, even if they have suffered years of physical and mental abuse, are incapable of such behaviour, so if they kill, they are automatically guilty of premeditated murder, rather than an attempt at survival, etc.

Parallels exist in the law's treatment of young people. The two boys convicted of murdering Jamie Bulger had the full force of the patriarchal system thrown at them. First, it was decided that at 10-years-old they were as capable of telling right from wrong as an adult, and the trial went ahead. Not adult enough to vote, drink in pubs, have sex, get married, buy cigarettes or join the army, but adult enough to murder. The Judge described the boys as "evil" and their crime as "unparalleled". Hardly unparalleled – the strong kill the vulnerable every day. This was only unparalleled because it's not supposed to happen, just like women aren't supposed to kill men (or defend themselves). They are supposed to conform to a patriarchal view of the world and their place in it.

Male violence and institutionalised sexism combined recently with tragic consequences. A woman shot by her male partner at home phoned for police help. The man had turned the gun on himself and was dead, but despite the woman telling the police over 30 times that the man was no longer a threat, the cops refused to enter the house on safety grounds. The woman bled to death. It seems not only was she the victim of male violence but also police scepticism. After all, women are notoriously fickle, hysterical and untrustworthy – who can trust anything they say? Two women per week are murdered by current or ex-partners in the UK and it hardly merits a column-inch. Contrast this with the odd death from impure Ecstasy, and the sentences handed to those who supply the E. This scenario is typically clear-cut – bright, young, preferably good-looking woman, preyed upon by evil drug pusher. Woman as victim or woman as evil? – the contradictions continue.

The New Century

Eric Hobsbawm in conversation with Antonio Polito, Little, Brown & Co, London, 2000, 16.99.

Eric Hobsbawm usually guarantees an eventful and lively read, as witnessed by his excellent *Age of Extremes* on the history of the twentieth century. Anarcho-syndicalists might bear him a bit of a grudge, however, which stems from his dismissal of anarchist ideas, most notably found in his 1959 *Primitive Rebels*. While his criticism of anarchism has softened slightly over the years, in this present book, anarchist ideas do not get a mention.

This is curious in many ways since his conversations with Antonio Polito recorded in this book range over a wide variety of areas, including the decline of state power, resistance, the state of the left, globalisation, etc.

But Hobsbawm, just as in his 150 anniversary edition of *Marx & Engels' Communist Manifesto*, remains resolutely Marxist and even pro-statist in his outlook. The breadth of analysis is disappointing, and much of his comment on the possible routes for a new reinvigorated left leave us with little to celebrate and less to hope for. There is a kind of sourness that the old left has gone and that the new left is, according to Hobsbawm, little more than a disparate collection of single-issue campaigns. It is this combined with the sheer conventionality of many of his responses to Polito's questions that convinces us, once more, of the truth of Marx's own dictum, which (to alter it a little), declares that historians may interpret the world, but it is up to us to change it. 

Three Japanese Anarchists: Kotoku, Osugi & Yamaguchi

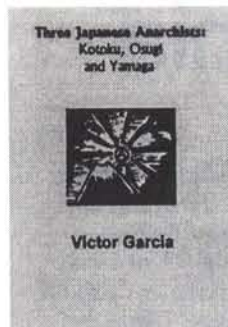
Victor Garcia, translated by Paul Sharkey
Kate Sharpley Library, BM
Hurricane, London, WC1N
3XJ.
ISBN: 1-873605-62-5; 28
pages; £1.50

If you're familiar with previous KSL titles, you will find that this interesting pamphlet uncovers, as usual, what has been until now a relatively obscure part of anarchist history. It charts the lives and times of three prominent figures in the Japanese anarchist movement of the first half of the 20th century.

Denjiru Kotoku was executed with 12 other anarchists in 1911 on trumped up charges of plotting a non-existent 'Great Revolt'. Sakai Osugi was murdered by the Japanese army in 1923. Taiji Yamaga, the only one of the three to survive into old age, died of natural causes in 1970.

The foregoing makes it clear that to have been an anarchist in this period of Japanese history meant a probable early death, either at the hands of the state, or by suicide as an alternative to long years in the Mikado's dungeons. This is amply highlighted in this pamphlet, which catalogues many other anarchist activists and their activities.

The author, Victor Garcia, described on the back cover as 'the anarchist Marco Polo', originally published this piece in Caracas, Venezuela. The Spanish original then is probably the source of the somewhat old-fashioned tinge to the text. Nevertheless, this is a small price to pay for seeing material such as this appearing in English. 



The New Feminism

Natasha Walter: Little Brown & Co £17.50. ISBN 0316 882348

Walter's basic thesis is that feminism is alive and kicking in the UK, but different from how it was in the 1960s and '70s, or a century ago. Now, young women may not describe themselves as feminists apparently, but their expectations and lifestyles are 'new' feminist nevertheless. In making her case, Walter looks back at past waves of feminism. Inevitably, given the extensive territory, individual readers will disagree with some of her analyses and conclusions. For example, for the present, she portrays a positive and upbeat picture of the general situation for women.

Walter's programme for change is based around five key goals: moving towards a flexible lifestyle that honours women's traditional cyclical way of working rather than the linear progression followed by men; a new strategy for child care; a shift in attitudes and incentives to allow women to be more active in the home: opening the poverty trap in which so many women are imprisoned; and supporting women who experience violence.

The argument is made that new feminism is less personal and more political than previous versions, and that today's young women can wear fashionable clothes and make up (when they want), have relationships with men without feeling guilty, etc. The problem is that the case is not cast iron. One imagines most readers parting company with her at some point, only to come back and share the feel-good factor about the future at others. Engaging commentary and controversial style aside, this is really the best thing about *The New Feminism* – its overwhelming optimism about the feminist egalitarian new world toward which she feels we could be progressing. 

Asian Dub Foundation – Community Music

I keep reading that politics is back in pop. The truth is it never went away, and the history of Asian Dub Foundation is testament to that. Starting life in a London community music project, ADF have since started their own organisation to help new musicians in the East End. Their commitment to collective action and self-education is part of a long tradition amongst marginalised, non-commercial or politically committed artists and musicians. Long may they continue. ADF's new album is a welcome step forward from their last, *Rafi's Revenge*. There's more variety this time, but no softening of their razor sharp edge. A mind-boggling mixture of elements are crammed into the mix. Rap, dub, breakbeats, odd time signatures, blistering guitar distortion and snatches of Indian movie music all jostle for elbow room – sometimes in the space of one song! While the music is almost always top notch, it's in the lyrics where ADF really hit the spot. The subject matter is wide – plundering of the Third World, Police canteen culture, New Britain, collective action, but their comments on contemporary Britain are the most pointed. For instance, *Real Great Britain* demolishes both new Labour and the apathy of the country's youth, while *The Judgement* extols the virtues of self-education and action. A brilliant welding of music and lyrics – highly recommended for any weary activist or uncommitted cynic. 



Cruel Britannia

Reports on the sinister and preposterous

Nick Cohen
Verso 1999 1 85984 720 X

This is essential reading. Many times over the last few years, I have found myself casually accepting attacks on democracy and civil rights because I don't really think they can deliver and I expect nothing better from the Labour Party. This is dangerous because, inadequate as they are, civil rights actually remove weapons from the hands of our rulers, weapons they are eager to use. We need people like Nick Cohen who actually believe in them to remind us of the dangers we face from their erosion.

This is already a polite police state; getting videoed in an intimidating fashion by police just for drinking outside a pub at the end of July illustrates this. The aim of the police (as well as to intimidate) was to trawl for suspects and potential informers in relation to J18. Coppers have been visiting anyone they know was there and asking them to identify "rioters" from photos, as well as posting "wanted" photos on the web. Anyone drinking outside a pub on Hackney's Town Hall Square after a lobby of the Council is obviously of the milieu the police have identified as responsible for "disorder".

All of which gives you a different take on the news that Blair and Jiang discussed "human rights" during the latter's arms buying trip. Presumably Blair advocated the superiority of a Christian Socialist police state over the post-Maoist one. Why go to the trouble of using tanks to suppress dissent when you can just park a few police vans in front of the demonstrators?

Cohen's main themes are to do with Jack Straw's law and order, anti-immigration policies and the emergence of a U.S. style political class of politicians, policy and media advisers, lobbyists and journalists, all of whom move around between government and

business. I couldn't possibly do justice to all of this in a review, but the analysis of the Penal-Industrial Complex New Labour is trying to import from California is a salient feature. Like all the best journalism, this book entertains as it informs. I had two particular favourite bits.

The first was the revelation that the Ethical Foreign Policy brochure contained a photo of Robin Cook schmoozing Suharto. Yes, that Suharto. According to Cohen, Clare Short and Cook's own office allegedly alerted the Foreign Office to the potential embarrassment, but they published it anyway. Two fingers to Cook, but more importantly reassurance to all the tyrants to which the British government sells arms and torture equipment that no matter how transparently false their assurances, it's business as usual as long as they play along.

The second gem concerned the outpourings of the cream of Anglo-American journalism over the death of Di Spencer. The American political class is Anglophile, and still believes the crap in that advert where P. J. O'Rourke tries to persuade you that British Airways maintains its market share due to the charming incompetence of the England Cricket Team, rather than through dirty tricks and bribing travel agents. So, the Queen of the U.S. scene is Tina Brown, editor of the New Yorker and wife of ex-Sunday Times editor Harold Evans. Faced with the reality that the rich know they are above the law, and are too stupid to appreciate the risks, so they don't care about drunken driving at ridiculous speeds, Tina digresses. She muses about the strangeness of Diana dying in Paris in August, the month when Society, and Parisians generally, leave the city. "So there you have it," Cohen remarks, "the French police can drop their investigation. Diana Spencer was killed by a social error." Preposterous indeed. 



The World Turned Upside Down

Christopher Hill
£10.99, Penguin. ISBN 014013 7323. 431pp.

Last year marked the 350th anniversary of the execution of King Charles I and, more significantly, of the Diggers and Levellers, which brought a major revolutionary surge to mid-17th Century England. Predictably, a plethora of new books have thus emerged on the English Civil War, the Levellers, Gerard Winstanly and the Diggers. But instead of ploughing through this lot, I have chosen an old classic that I first read many years ago, and decided to re-read it. And yes, I still find it a brilliant account of the radical ideas and political sects who pushed the English revolution to its limit.

Arguably 200 years before their time, the seeds of 'modern' libertarian communism and socialism were sown in this period - while Gerard Winstanly wrote impressively with a modern resonance, there were also many other writers, preachers and activists with important ideas which remain equally relevant today.

Christopher Hill details the beliefs and actions of the Levellers, Ranters and Diggers in turn, and assembles a vivid and meticulously detailed portrait of a movement which grew alongside the world's first bourgeois revolution, at the watershed between feudalism and capitalism. Despite the

restoration of the monarchy, the revolution succeeded amidst an overwhelming feeling that things should and would change radically - that the old world could continue no longer.

The sects of the radical reformation were in revolt against the entire system, in stark contrast to the Independents and Presbyterians, who merely opposed the monarchy and wished to usher in a new system for the benefit of themselves - 'The Elect'. The Levellers, Ranters and Diggers strongly opposed all Puritanism, which preached that the poor were damned, 'both in this world and the next'. While it is erroneous to pretend our modern radical ideas are a secular version of the Diggers, and foolish to view the events as if they happened yesterday and could happen again tomorrow, there is no doubt that, from ideas of liberation to tactics of direct action, they were trailblazers for our modern movement. The result was a subversive tradition, which has persisted and developed through various forms. The common thread is a desire to put an end to capitalist domination and replace it with a logical and equitable form of social, libertarian communism.

Christopher Hill's book is a valuable insight into where our ideas come from, and you just get the feeling that this is really how it happened. Forget the New Deal, this is what empowerment is all about. 

sidelines



BRICKS

A group of sacked brick workers in the West Midlands took sweet revenge on their employers recently. Thirty staff at Ibstock Brick, Himley, displayed their legendary Black Country wit and left a permanent record of their disgust at management actions. On their last shift, 30,000 bricks were produced with the word "Bollocks" imprinted on the surface. Luckily, most of the bricks were dispatched to customers before the bosses discovered the "error". Who said irony was dead?

LORENZO

During his recent UK tour, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, the well-known US black activist, spoke at Equalz, 174 Great Western St, Moss Side, Manchester (former Conservative Club – nice to see it being put to some use at last). Targeted by US intelligence, he escaped to Cuba in 1969 by hijacking a plane, following an FBI 'shoot to kill' order against him. He later served 15 years for the hijacking.

He has stayed active throughout, doing prison unionism and legal work, and remains a highly active advocate for black consciousness and anarchism. He is currently facing another prison sentence for trying to speak at a council meeting about police brutality. The meeting was well-attended and Lorenzo was inspiring and informative. Maybe a step towards an anarchist presence in the Moss Side area of Manchester?

It's a man thing



New man is dead, new lad is dirty old man on a lower shelf, men are in their cave, getting in touch with their man-ness. If all this was just a roundabout way of saying masturbation is OK, all would be well and good; unfortunately it's not. What it appears to all be about is new excuses for old behaviour.

Feminists, or at least the more radical elements within the broader movement, as part of what they were doing to address the issues of patriarchy and inequality between the sexes, challenged the accepted/acceptable ideas of what is to be a woman. Feminists fought to find and open opportunities for women to be more than one of an accepted selection of stereotypes. In many cases, they did this using radical, non-hierarchical structures – recognising that it was not just sexual inequality that was oppressive, but all forms of normative inequalities that allowed groups (notably white heterosexual European males) access to power over others. Whilst this is still going on, at least the issues have been addressed, seriously and from a radical perspective. Men have barely tinkered with the edge of what it is to be a man, because they haven't needed to – to be a man is to be a human, a *homo sapien* – all philosophical discourse (we are talking sweeping generalisation here) up to the onset of feminism was about man. Unfortunately, much of this self-reflection was about man's (white European man's at that) relation with the gods, God, existence, the Universe and, well, nothingness. Not much about man's relationship with women or each other in there, really. Men need to address their existence as men, not as man=human.

Feminists and their predecessors were about taking back some public space as women in their own terms, about releasing the grip of male domination on the identity of woman, about gaining power. For men the problem is different, for men have to relinquish power, make way for others in the public space and reclaim some of the responsibility for the private space they occupy.

Recently, we have had the *Man is from Mars and Woman is from Venus* phenomenon (and as the cartoon put it, pop-psychology is from Uranus). Without undergoing too much extensive research (it was tried but deemed unpalatable, so secondhand sources have been relied upon), it would appear that men are macho and women are feminine... what a

shocker! It is so much codswallop heaped on more codswallop. Since it would waste space to bang on about what rubbish it all is in detail, let's get straight to the fundamental objection – it's all too easy. The whole thing was easy to think up and easy to digest and easy to assimilate without actually addressing anything about what it is to be a man. Just taking an established list of stereotypes, thinking up a few half-baked metaphors and a snappy title really isn't helping. To just explain away the differences and say "learn to live with them" isn't acceptable. Men and women are heterogeneous groupings – not all men are alike and not all women are alike. This should not really be news, but some people seem to have difficulty with this. That a lot of 'male' behaviour maybe able to be explained (with or without the use of caves and Roman gods) is one thing, but explanation is not justification. Too much of this cod nonsense is simply self-justification.

The argument that insists that male (and to the same extent, female) behaviour is somehow identifiable and innate because men do tend to display some similar types of behaviour often seems to lead to the argument that because there is this 'male' type (and 'female' type), the world will just have to learn to cope with it. This archly conservative opinion basically states "I am what I am, and therefore I cannot change." What this means in practice is these archly conservative men like the status quo and don't want to change, therefore they have decided that their nature is the natural way and, if women don't like it, tough.

ENTER LADISM

The ladism media phenomenon is slightly different. The position here seems more an extension of the free love ideas from the late '60s and early '70s. Everything revolves around the old hedonist essentials – football, beer and sex. But what is different? What is specifically wrong with the new lad? Well, it's new lad and new *ladette* for a start. Women seem only to be allowed to partake of this free hedonistic lifestyle

sidelines

CITY COPS PANIC

Industrial sabotage is all the rage and it's official according to the City of London Police. Never ones to be caught hopping, the boys in blue issued a warning in April to companies in the City saying that they could be vulnerable to attack from the inside. While last year's J18 protests caused around £2m of damage, this year the cops are worried that anti-capitalists may (as usual) be one step ahead of the game. Posing as temporary workers, fiendish anarchists with destruction on their minds could infiltrate large firms and cause untold mayhem. The fears are real as one US study shows that the biggest security worry for 90% of North American bosses is vengeful employees. The police themselves admit that the potential for damage by even one worker is immense, and the ease in avoiding detection (at least until you've left the building) is great. What the cops seem to have overlooked and the US study alludes to, is that there is little need for anyone to infiltrate companies as the saboteurs are already there in the shape of exploited workers! Sabotage in the workplace is as old as the Industrial Revolution and it continues today in all industries.

BE RECOGNISED

From 6th June, trade unions will have legal rights to recognition. The new regime contains numerous concessions to the bosses, but at least recognition is built-in. Any workplace with over 21 staff gets the right to go for recognition, through one of two ways. Firstly, automatic recognition will be granted where a trade union can show it has over 50% membership. Secondly, the union can have only 10% membership, but then get recognition through a further 40% voting for it in a workplace ballot. A government-appointed Central Arbitration Committee will make decisions where there is some dispute over recognition.

...A BETTER NEW MASCULINITY IS ONE WHERE MEN CAN COMMUNICATE WITH NOT JUST WOMEN, BUT WITH OTHER MEN...WHERE MEN RECOGNISE THEY CAN CHANGE MALE-DOMINANCE, NOT GIVE IN TO IT. THEN PEOPLE CAN MORE EASILY GET ON WITH CHANGING SOCIETY FOR THE BETTER.

on two accounts; the object or the cheerleader. Ladism, for all its alleged knowing, its winks and its self-mocking, is just business as usual, but this time driven by a media in which advertisers are prepared to ply their wares. Just as concepts behind free love seemed to be hijacked into the idea of bearded and beaded pot smoking men getting their oats without responsibility, new ladism is about replica shirt wearing lager-drinking men getting their oats without responsibility.

The term responsibility maybe what all this is driving at. The problem of masculinity is too many people making accusations or excuses and not enough men taking responsibility for themselves, their own behaviour. This is not a call for men to run around being guilt ridden and always apologising for their role in the oppression of women. Not all men are bastards and to depict all men as oppressors, rather than looking at the system of patriarchal power and seeing how it can be overcome, does not really help. Firstly because whilst these men are lamenting their and their brethren's role in the oppression of womankind, they are often not actually addressing the core issues, and secondly, because the depiction of men as aggressors, as transgressors against women, can only mean that women are depicted as victims. No matter how strong these victims maybe portrayed, they are still being seen as victims. These is not to deny that women are victimised by men, but that it is not the place of men to see

themselves lifting the burden of oppression from women. We won't make much progress if all that happens is that men perpetuate the image of themselves as transgressors and women as victims. What's needed is for people to both recognise it and act to end it.

There is a need to get away from the current dominant idea that there are all these little egos running around in isolation – people are social. Humans are social and our behaviour and attitudes are conditioned by our society. Men must start to acknowledge that, at the moment, we live in an unequal society and, in general, male sex gives an advantage, one which boys are trained to accept, and to not even notice, from birth. Surely a better new masculinity is one where men can communicate with not just women, but with other men as well. Where men recognise they can change male-dominance, not give in to it. Then people can more easily get on with changing society for the better. Put simply, it is time to re-emphasise that people, including men, can change their behaviour and influence the behaviour of others.

Some 'perfection' is not what is being sought, but how about trying to be better? Men should not be the same as women; men needn't be the same as men. Not everyone can get their way all the time, not everyone should. Be a man, be yourself, but for fucks sake, give a toss. The toys can stay out of the box boys, but maybe the ego can be put away and the toys shared around? 



letters

Send letters to:
DA-SF (letters), PO Box 1095,
Sheffield S2 4YR.
All letters are welcome,
but space is always very short. Make yours incisive,
brief and questioning to get it printed.

OBITUARY

PHIL REID (1945-2000)

With regret, Haringey Solidarity Group has to inform those who knew him of the death of Phil Reid, from cancer, on Sunday 30th January.

We first met Phil whilst campaigning against the Job Seekers Allowance in 1996. He came along to a public meeting at the start of the campaign against the JSA and was the only new face at the meeting. He knew about the government's plans to harass the unemployed and was surprised that other claimants (especially the under 25's who were being targeted by the government) weren't up in arms. He also knew that an attack on one group of claimants would soon lead to an attack on all claimants.

A fifty-ish ex-small businessman in the motor trade, Phil was an unusual person to meet at a left-wing meeting. Having never been involved before, he brought a freshness and his shrewd intelligence to bear on the actions of the government. On budget day, he would buy the Financial Times to find out what the bosses were saying and what was behind their plans. He was never under any illusion that government was there to keep working people in their place.

Phil got enthusiastically involved in the campaign against the JSA, and later against Labour's so-called "New Deal". He put a lot of work into calling together a meeting of London's claimants groups in 1996 and the national conference of the claimants network Groundswell that we hosted in 1997. But Phil didn't stop at claimants' issues - he got stuck into all of our campaigns. One memory we will cherish is of him being stopped whilst flyposting for Mumia Abu Jamal (a black political prisoner on death row in the USA) and trying to persuade the police that they should support a good cause. Another memory is of him sitting on the bonnet of the Chancellor Gordon Brown's car when he came to speak at a Labour Party rally in Wood Green. Recently Phil was involved in setting up a housing co-operative with other members of the group. Phil, with a thick folder of photocopies and a list of questions, was the terror of his local job centre. Describing how some unfortunate Employment Service officer had finally bowed to the inevitable, Phil would invariably conclude "...and after that he was as good as gold". That was Phil, as good as gold. He was proud to be a member of the "awkward squad" - people who don't take things lying down. Yet he was kind and considerate to those who knew him, with a great self-deprecating sense of humour. We are going to miss his direct honesty, his innate sense of solidarity and his ingenuity at beating the system.

He leaves a much-loved daughter Holly, to whom we send our condolences and respect.

HSG.

FAT CATS

By the way, I saw a Solidarity Federation leaflet recently which had some useful statistics about welfare handouts to big businesses and the rich in it. In my opinion, there isn't enough exposing of such fat cats in the pages of Direct Action. What about a themed issue on the ex-boss of Yorkshire Water and his likes and, for that matter, tomorrow's fat cats - the dot.com millionaires?

AS.

Only time and space reduces the amount of exposing of New Labour's friends in big business that DA can do. Next issue has stuff on ripping off workers - we'd be more than happy to publish accounts of fat cats (and, for that matter, their names and addresses...) - ed.

BMW SCUM

Dear DA,

I marched along with over 80,000 other people in Birmingham on April 1 to protest at the imminent collapse of the West Midlands car industry. People at the rally could be forgiven for thinking that they had participated in a sick April Fools' joke when they listened to the speeches. Local radio celebrities, commonly remembered for their anti-union views, fell over themselves to line up on the Rover workers' side. Multi-millionaires UB40 told us "we are just like you". But the biggest kick in the teeth came from Tony Woodley, chair of the unions' joint negotiating committee, who laid blame solely with BMW. No criticism of Blair and co., just racist sabre rattling.

Woodley's punchline was the real sick joke of the day. After his fine words about solidarity and fighting back, his answer was the same old one we've heard from reformist Trade Unions before. The message was simply - "leave it to us to negotiate the best deal possible". In other words, the joint unions had already accepted defeat and their only concern was to minimise job losses and try to preserve conditions for the few remaining in work.

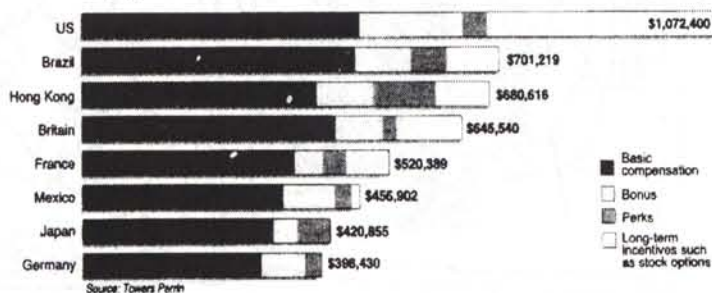
The message of the SWP didn't seem any less surreal. Their banners read "Occupy Now". Just when you thought they might have learnt something they go and spoil it all by adding "Renationalise!" So you exhort workers to take control of the means of production only to ask the government to come and take over as the new management. A little confused to say the least, and all the more insulting as it is Party 'wisdom' handed down from on high by people who have never been near a factory, unless its to sell their rag at the gates. More bandwagon jumping was evident on another of their placards - "Turn Birmingham into Seattle". Aware that the anti-capitalist demos of the last few years are potential recruiting grounds, they seek to gain some credibility from association. Well, sorry old Trots, you're way out of touch.

Rover workers, like those in mining, shipbuilding and in countless other industries, are paying the price for years of mismanagement, underinvestment and political machinations. When businesses need to maximise profits, it's us who bear the burden, not the company. While governments are content to take their lead from business (whether to smash unions to make the bosses' job easier or refuse to "interfere"), workers can't rely on help from that quarter. Government, the bosses and union mandarins are all working to their own agenda. Rover workers have slowly given up the hard won gains made over the decades up to the 1980s. They've agreed to speedups, flexible working, wage cuts, layoffs and their reward is yet more grief. Hand in hand with the bosses, the union bureaucrats have frittered away the jobs of thousands they were elected to represent. Government, boss and bureaucrat - the unholy industrial trinity.

T.



Annual average pay-packets for chief executives of industrial companies with annual revenues of \$250m-\$500m



that life is worth more than money'. The first article talked about the 'pagan beginnings' of MayDay or 'Beltane' and talked of the Maypole as the 'key symbol of this erotic day'. On the final page we are asked 'Who can gauge the striking power of an impassioned daydream, of pleasure taken in love, of a nascent desire, of a rush of sympathy?' Well, in some contexts, this kind of thing might be very charming, just like one of the slogans on the stickers for the demonstration, 'You can't buy happiness'. Fair enough, but what about all the other points that could have been made? *Maybe* people should have been breaking windows and risking prison sentences to promote the great revolutionary principle 'Smile and the whole world smiles with you', or 'Be nice to others and they'll be nice to you'. The sentiments expressed by Reclaim the Streets in '*Maybe*' were met with a mixture of bewilderment and irritation by many working class people, particularly in the light of the serious nature of the events of May 1st.

The conference that occurred in the weekend before the demonstration was far more hopeful in terms of developing the political ideas of our movement. It was organised by a broad coalition of committed anti-capitalists, and took place in Holloway Road, billed as a 'Festival of Anti-Capitalist Ideas and Action'. About 1500 attended on the first day and 1000 on the second day. Many workshops focused on the need to form ideological links between environmentalism and the working class movement. Others addressed the state repression of political activists and the working class in general. Workshops on the state-promoted tide of race hate against ethnic minorities, labelled as 'refugees', were particularly well-attended. The most popular workshop was one presented by former

Black Panther Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin about the systematic murder, torture and imprisonment of black people by the US state.

The Solidarity Federation presented three workshops, two on workplace organisation and one on organisation in the community. The overall theme of these was the need to inject revolutionary politics into workplace and community struggles. In the first, the point was

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS LEARNED FROM THE AMERICAN EXAMPLE THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLICE STATE AND THE MASS IMPRISONMENT OF BLACK PEOPLE AND THE POOR ARE MEASURES THAT CAN BE IMPOSED UNDER THE BANNER OF 'LAW AND ORDER' AND 'ZERO TOLERANCE'... THESE WERE THE SORTS OF ISSUES THE ANNUAL ACTIONS OF MAY 1ST MUST ADDRESS.

established that attempts to restore the power of the reformist trade unions would be doomed to eventual failure without a revolutionary perspective. Reformist trade unions can achieve a certain amount of influence under capitalism for brief periods of time. However, they must go on to challenge and overthrow capitalism. Otherwise, the state and the bosses will gradually whittle away their power and restore the complete dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class in the workplace - which, on the whole, is the situation that exists at the moment.

The second workshop exposed the futility of the current approach of the trade unions, which is to turn all workplace issues into individual issues and address them through employment tribunals. We discussed the real alternative strategy of addressing workplace issues through workers' assemblies and collective direct action. Some questioned the possibility of such an approach, arguing for efforts to be made to turn existing trade unions into

more militant organisations, effectively arguing for a fight on two fronts - against the bosses on one side and against the trade union bureaucracy on the other. The third workshop developed some of the issues around the need for revolutionary politics that had come out in the first workshop. Many speakers felt it was necessary to promote a revolutionary political line in organisations such as tenants groups. Without this line, such

groups tend to be taken over by the local council, the Liberal Democrats, or even the police.

The conference addressed a great many issues of vital importance. In Britain, working class struggle for pay, decent working conditions and dignity in the workplace is blocked by the state and the trade unions. British working class people are facing a serious clampdown on their civil liberties. The British government has learned from the American example that the establishment of a police state and the mass imprisonment of black people and the poor are measures that can be imposed under the banner of 'law and order' and 'zero tolerance'. Britain is in the middle of a racist onslaught with the press and politicians in all three major parties falling over themselves to whip up racial hatred and propose the enactment of yet more racist legislation targeted against immigrants. These were the sorts of issues the annual actions of May 1st must address. 



MAYDAY AROUND THE WORLD



Finland:

Over 500 people marched through Helsinki city centre, stopping at a marketplace, where the social democrats, politicians from left-wing parties and big trade union bosses brainwashed their listeners in their traditional May 1st "party". After, loud and colourful frolics continued with lots of flags and banners. Main themes for the day were: work and income, freedom of movement and international solidarity, and resisting biocapitalism and genetic engineering.

After two hours, the march stopped outside the poshest hotel and restaurant in Helsinki, next to an EU-commission representative's office, and two blocks from the President's castle. The street was blocked and a street party ensued. The hotel management weren't happy about 2000 anarchists, environmentalists, antifascists, punks, ravers etc. enjoying themselves, and asked the police to intervene, but they decided against it. Lots of passers-by joined in and got literature about anti-capitalism and related issues. Two EU-flags were removed from outside the

EU-Commission's office and the party went on until 8pm.

<http://go.to/mayday2000>



England:

You've probably heard about what happened in London (see also p.24-25), so what about somewhere else in England for a change. MayDay in Manchester was an exciting and thoroughly enjoyable day of grassroots activism, protest, carnival and party. Many hundreds of demonstrators distributed leaflets on issues ranging from GM foods, anti-McDonalds, anti-consumerism and the Terrorism Bill to boycotting Stagecoach buses, the Asylum Bill, etc. Main roads such as Princess Street and Oxford Road were blockaded for up to an hour at a time despite police attempts to disperse the crowds. During these periods, public transport was allowed through by the protesters, but cars were prevented from reaching the city centre. Mancunian Way (the main inner ring) was also stopped for a few minutes! After a long day of tramping around town bringing capitalism to its knees, it was time to party. At 11pm, despite police attempts to foil the plan (they were properly foxed!), hundreds of people went to a party in the former Hacienda nightclub. There was music, dancing, food and drink, and much fun was had. This large warehouse-style building was once the best venue in Manchester and it was only fitting that it should re-open on MayDay. With no charge on the door and informal dress code, a great time was to be had. At about 12:30am the police arrived, having figured out that they had actually failed miserably in preventing the party from happening, and surrounded the building. They arrested a few individuals who left on their own but, when a large group of around 100 people decided to leave together at 5am, they could do little more than watch.

www.mayday2000.fsnet.co.uk



Netherlands:

Apr 27, Utrecht: Some 250 people demonstrated against repression and criminalisation of activism, throwing sponges at the police bureau and soaking a military command centre in a pool of fake blood.

Apr 28, Leiden/Utrecht: A socialist party senator was pied in Leiden. Coincidentally, a railway-spokesperson was also pied because of the Betuwe freight railway line project.

Apr 29, Leiden: 350 people held a colourful demonstration called the "March on the Oranges" (the Dutch royal family). A People's Tribunal convicted Queen Beatrix, resembling Queen Beatrix, of inciting nationalist conflicts and being a symbol of capitalist oppression, amongst other things. Her punishment was, yes, a pie (see across for full trial notes!)

May 1-2, near Dordrecht: A building site of the Betuweline-freight rail project, connecting Rotterdam and the Ruhr for cargo, was occupied for almost two days, delaying the railway company from launching a huge tunnel drill.

May 1, Utrecht: Anti-capitalists targeted several temp-agencies, making a claim for the hours "flexworkers" work while agencies keep the cash.

May 1, Amersfoort: In a nightly escapade, the locks of the doors of shops in a brand new shopping centre in Amersfoort were glued tight.



USA:

MayDay 2000 in San Francisco, California, included direct actions, a celebration and a march, all in downtown. There were at least two roving dance parties. One group of 30 people were arrested as they entered a Levi's store. Another group danced at a Gap store. This party also spread to Kaplan, McLoughlin, and Diaz, a firm that designs prisons. Four gallons of red paint symbolising the spilled blood of prisoners were dumped inside, and one person was beaten and arrested. A truck was spotted with alternating signs reading: "Caution: Income Gap Ahead", "The Spectre of Capitalism is Haunting America", and "Capitalism Stops at Nothing".

In Portland, Oregon, MayDay started at 11am, with 200 anarchists gathered in a park with a huge papiermache pirate ship and various red/black/green/jolly roger flags. Pirate-costume, they took to the streets, defying the parade permit law and refusing to move onto the sidewalk. Eventually the entire march was boxed into a riverside park by riot police. The coalition demo continued at a nearby bookstore, where workers were on strike at the time. Meanwhile, at least 9 Eugene businesses were U-locked.

In Boston, Mass., over 200 people marched on the Financial District against capitalism. With downtown traffic at a standstill, protesters made their way through the city, making stops at financial institutions, including the Boston Stock Exchange, the headquarters of Fidelity Investments and Fleet Bank. 

Pakistan:

The MayDay march from Bukhtiar Labour Hall to Punjab Assembly has been a regular feature for the last six years but this year, the workers were celebrating MayDay under the shadows of yet another military dictatorship. The MayDay holiday has not been restored since the previous Nawaz government abolished it. On April 30, the police stopped a MayDay rally and, on the day itself, over 150 people dared to start a demonstration despite the ban. After only a few metres, police dispersed them with baton charges.

Subsequent attempts by the Pakistan Workers' Confederation to undertake its routine MayDay procession from Bukhtiar Labour Hall Lahore in the evening, and various other moves to march by various groups of workers were stopped by similar brute force. The present military government is clearly determined to carry out its IMF orders based around privatisation and downsizing through repression. 

Netherlands

On MayDay weekend, Leiden saw the March on the Oranges, a parade of anticapitalism and antinationalism. Highlights included a tank, a guillotine, a sound system and a tribunal, and all on the same day Queen Beatrix had chosen to celebrate her birthday there.

Queen Beamix (showing a remarkable similarity with said Queen Beatrix) also put in a surprise appearance and was quickly captured by daring Amsterdam anarchists. They dragged her to the mobile people's tribunal in Leiden, dressed her in a smart black and white striped suit and attached something resembling a black bowling ball to her feet. Some 350 people showed up to judge her.

The 'public prosecutor' accused her, and the House of Orange in general, of nationalism, causing conflict and seclusion, and furthering social injustice and ecological destruction, promoting pepperspray, centuries of tax evasion and hunting and mistreatment of animals. The tribunal was adjourned three times, and each session took place in a different part of the city (the main police station and the tax office being two of the chosen stages).

The verdict was spoken and, although a guillotine was on standby, the tribunal decided on ideological punishment instead. Beamix was comprehensively pied. The verdict also included redistribution of her wealth, abolition of the monarchy and the state, and the declaration that the holiday formally called "Queen's Day" is renamed a day to celebrate antinationalism. 

Canada

Health Canada is planning to distribute nearly one million marijuana cigarettes over a 5-year period to study the medicinal value of pot, according to a confidential government draft document.

Health Canada will supply the seeds and a "Qualified Person In Charge of Narcotic, Controlled and/or Restricted Drug Transaction (QPIC)" will have to be hired. The QPIC will have to be a university graduate in an area such as pharmacology and "be of good character".

"The purpose of this project is to provide for Health Canada a reliable source of affordable, quality, standardised marijuana products to meet the needs of exemption recipients and of researchers in this country and abroad," according to the introductory overview of the document. 

Israel

The Interior Ministry announced at the beginning of May that it would not allow the distribution of workers' rights pamphlets in its branch in Ben-Gurion Airport, continuing its 3-year violation of the international labour convention.

The international agreement, which Israel has signed, calls for its member states to make information about workers' rights available to foreign workers in their native language. The ministry has explained its failure to comply by protesting that the requisite pamphlets are currently being written and will hopefully be ready by the time the new foreign workers laws come into effect this July.

When volunteers from the Kav La'oved workers' rights group tried distributing pamphlets in seven languages to foreign workers entering the country at Ben-Gurion Airport, they were quickly forced to stop. This, despite two years of rising complaints, after which the ministry agreed to the practice.

The Interior Ministry tried at first to lay the blame on the airport administration, which made it clear two months ago that the ministry was free to distribute whatever materials it liked in its own branch.

The ministry confirmed at the end of May that it would not allow private organisations to distribute materials in its offices. The only pamphlets it will allow will be its own, when they are ready. 

France

Partly as a result of the creation two years ago of a union from the anarcho-syndicalist organisation CNT-AIT, municipal workers of Blagnac are on general strike for the first time, as DA goes to press. A delegation mandated by the general assembly, comprising three rank and file workers from the maintenance, catering and waste removal services, two delegates from CNT-AIT, and one from the Local Autonomous Union, have been sent to discuss union demands with the mayor, executives and elected body. They have a direct mandate from the workers and will make no concessions. The workers' demands include a new salary system which includes wage transparency in bonuses.

For more info, visit <http://www.cnt-ait.org> 

MayDay 2000

— an introspective

The anarchist movement in Britain received greater coverage in the press in the weeks following MayDay 2000 than it has done for many a year. The press believes that this time they can finally isolate us from the working class. The Observer newspaper alleged that the anti-capitalist movement is split and that Reclaim the Streets are accusing 'anarchists' of wrecking a peaceful demonstration with window breaking and the defacement of The Cenotaph. However, all serious anti-capitalists realise that the response to the press onslaught lies not in abandoning the principle of solidarity and blaming 'anarchists' for the events of May 1st. It lies in the development of political programmes and a social movement that can promote genuine struggle by ordinary working class people against the capitalist system that keeps them in servitude.

It is true that the defacement of The Cenotaph is something which the state and the media can easily use to turn the public against the anti-capitalist movement and anarchists. However those that carried out this action must receive our full legal, financial and moral support. The prime objective of our movement must be to promote anti-militarism and to end the imperialist wars that have led to the slaughter of millions over the past century. What is the defacement of a statue compared to the carnage of imperialist war - from the bloody massacre of workers in the trenches of the First World War to British collusion with the Loyalist murder gangs in Northern Ireland? And will all working class people

outside the anarchist movement share the outrage of the tabloids over this act? Many, probably a majority, will, but many others will not. They will remember that the official slogan on the monument is 'The Glorious Dead'. They will know full well that it is the working class who are always called on to go to war and have their names added to the long, long list of 'The Glorious Dead'. They will know that before 'The Glorious Dead' die, they lie bleeding to death in the dirt urinating and defecating themselves in terror. The concept of 'The Glorious Dead' is the invention of glory-seeking politicians and lying journalists.

This does not mean that all the actions that took place on May 1st were necessarily appropriate. Many demonstrators were caught on camera smashing windows. 1000-2000 demonstrators were corralled in Trafalgar Square by the police and only allowed out after their masks had been removed and they had been photographed. The police have dealt with disorder in Whitehall and Trafalgar Square on many occasions. They know exactly how to deal with it and make sure that as many people as possible are filmed and arrested. This is particularly easy when they are faced with a largely static group of demonstrators that are outnumbered by between three and six to one by the police. Violence is not a game. Those who try to fight the police at every opportunity, without any reflection on what they are doing, will be injured and imprisoned. A movement that tries to do this will be destroyed.

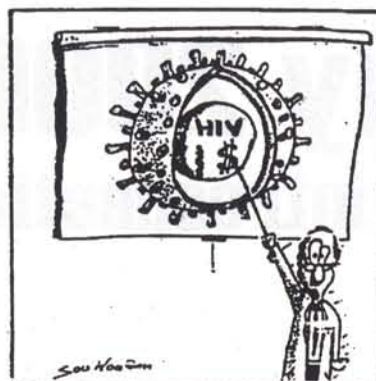
The only way to stop the state crushing a revolutionary movement is to ensure it has support among the working class or at least large sections of it. We cannot prevent state repression of our movement



by resorting to conspiratorial methods, by going 'underground', etc. State surveillance is too far advanced and our movement is almost certainly riddled with informers. What we must ensure is that the movement is large and resilient enough to survive repression. For instance, if large numbers of the current activists are imprisoned, there must be people left to organise protest actions for them, plus co-ordinate prisoner support and take over the work they had been doing.

The anti-capitalist movement must have a political programme that working class people can identify with, that relates to their lives and experiences. It is no good simply aiming our propaganda at other activists or appealing to the liberal conscience of Guardian readers. We have to think about what our propaganda has to do with the life of most working class people who do 40-50 hours a week to pay off the mortgage and keep the children decently clothed and fed, and who spend the weekend arguing with their partner over the never-ending financial problems that their family has to contend with.

Unfortunately, those who produced the publicity for the May 1st action failed to produce propaganda that would explain their actions to most people in a convincing way. The explanation Reclaim the Streets offered for the guerrilla gardening action was contained in a spoof newspaper 'Maybe' that was given out to commuters at tube stations. On the inside front page, the writers declared 'Maybe everyone will wake up one day and realise



not mean that unsafe sex between someone with AIDS and someone not affected would result in the latter being infected. However, again, the link is too strong to deny that there is a risk. Some liberal charities, like Terrence Higgins Trust, emphasise the importance of being tested and having safe sex to extents which have made some sectors of the gay population label these organisations as preachy and moralistic. The other extreme is the attitude of some left wing organisations, who discourage people from using condoms, arguing that AIDS is a myth invented by puritan western capitalist societies who want to prevent people from having sex!

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

With AIDS drugs firmly in the grip of big business, and global and local economic inequality gaps widening, the future does not look good. The free market has reached the status of sacred god, and greediness of a minority is apparently accepted as more important than the health of many thousands of people. The drug companies' defence is that treatments used in combination therapy are still in development and there is no simple and regular model of production and administration. In other words, these treatments are not easily "marketed". This contrasts with, say, TB treatments, which are cheaper and simpler than before (until, that is, drug-resistant TB strikes back). This is not due to rich world companies suffering an unexpected attack of generosity, but because the patents on these drugs expired a long time ago and the TB treatment regime has changed little since the 1960s. The profit has run to a steady trickle. But for now, with the backing of our leaders and stockmarket profiteers, the pharmaceutical industry has itself a now well-established goldmine in HIV-AIDS. The gold rush continues.

Even if HIV treatments miraculously became cheaper overnight, in many countries, there is no infrastructure of services for their application. Unless the IMF and the World Bank decide to help the poorer countries instead of dealing out punishment beatings for defaulting on extortionate loan interest charges for loans, the

situation is not likely to change. And they won't, unless they are forced to. No change there. For many years, people in Africa have died from malaria and TB, not having the economic resources to pay for medicines, and the fat cats of the World Bank hardly flinched.

Rather than adhering oneself to this or that theory of the causes of AIDS, better stick to the facts. For ages, big multinationals and corporations have been exploiting the poor, killing them and allowing them to die. HIV-AIDS is simply a symptom of the wider cause of this phenomenon - capitalism. In Rwanda, Zaire, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola and Somalia even basic quality health and education is rare. Sexual taboos and stigmatisation of HIV-positive people make things worse. In Zimbabwe, until 1989, AIDS couldn't be recorded on death certificates, probably with the aim of protecting the tourist industry. Even in Uganda, where prevention campaigns have been carried out by many NGOs and charities, the situation remains dire, with HIV-positive people unlikely to work if they are not specifically backed by a human rights campaign. In Uganda, a woman who refuses to have sexual intercourse with her husband and ends being beaten up by him would not generally get any legal support. The charities and NGOs are effective only at the margin, if at all. They are not revolutionary; their aim is not to change the system - a serious limitation. The breakthrough can only come when the control of the drugs barons is broken and new drugs are made available for all who need them. This is the real battleground, where effective gains are most urgently needed.

Back in the rich world, new forms of HIV-positive self-help support groups in San Francisco have provided more than mere support, including welfare advice, information on treatments and on needs and rights of people with AIDS. Some have even started buyers clubs and treatments newsletters, to assist those who want access to experimental treatments, some of them not licensed in the US (*AIDS Treatment News* in San Francisco, for example, provides information on "underground" and experimental treatments). 

HIV-POSITIVE RIGHTS

In the UK, there are no laws which give specific protection to people who are HIV positive and asymptomatic, but there are laws which give limited protection to HIV positive people who have or have had HIV related illnesses.

In this case, people are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act, which came to force in 1996. Under the Act, it is unlawful for an employer to treat a disabled person less favourably than someone else because of their disability. And even if you are dismissed because you are unable to do your job, your boss must have sufficient evidence upon which to base the decision.

Other guidelines are:

- Under the DDA, employers have the duty to make adjustments in order to prevent a disabled person being disadvantaged at work
- Dismissal purely on the basis that an employee is infected with HIV could be unfair under the current legislation
- There is no law to stop employers asking for an HIV test as part of a company medical for new recruits, but employers must obtain your consent to be tested. An employer can only insist on existing employees being tested if this requirement is in the initial terms and conditions of your contract. Otherwise the boss is liable to claims of constructive dismissal, a claim for damages, breach of contract or wrongful dismissal.

More information about employment issues can be found in:

- Employment. National Aids Manual. Aids Reference Manual. 1999-2000
- LAGER, Lesbian and Gay Employment Rights. Tel: 020 7 704 6066.
- E-mail: lager@dircon.co.uk
- Employment Booklet. The Terrence Higgins Trust. 1996.

Preview:

South Africa

Trade unionists plan to create "another Seattle" by demonstrating in the South African east coast city of Durban on July 9 at a world conference on AIDS.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions, the Federation of Unions of South Africa and the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) will all take part in the demonstrations against pharmaceutical firms and governments doing little to counter the AIDS pandemic. Nine percent of South Africa's population – 3.6 million people – are HIV-positive, and official figures show that 22.8 percent of pregnant women tested positive for HIV in 1998. More info or post messages: www.hivnet.ch:8000/africa/af-aids/

USA₁

Nearly 3,000 people marched on May 1st in New York City to demand a general amnesty for undocumented immigrants and better conditions for workers. The majority of participants were immigrants, many from Latin America and especially from Mexico. Chinese, South Asian and African groups were also present. The immigrants included garment workers, day labourers, domestic workers and entire families. Activists handed out more than 5,000 leaflets explaining march demands to passers-by, who were generally sympathetic.

For more information:
Coalition for the Human Rights of Immigrants, 339 Lafayette Street, New York NY 10012. Tel 212-254-2591.
Fax 212-674-9139. chri@itapnet.org
<http://www.itapnet.org/> 

USA₂

With the growing season heating up, the direct action anti-GE movement is intensifying its activities in North America. On the evenings of May 23 and May 24, anti-biotechnology direct action activists from Woodland, California, "harvested" GE crops in greenhouses at the Seminis Vegetable Seeds Research Center. Crops destroyed included tomatoes, broccoli, peas, onions, and peppers. This action took place just days after a Reclaim the Seeds action in Albany, California, and two weeks after activists in Hawaii uprooted crops in a Novartis research facility.

For more info, contact Genetix Alert at:
787 Ellsworth, Memphis TN 38111 USA.
email: genetixalert@tao.ca
<http://tao.ca/~ban/gapo.htm> 

Intnews sources:

Labournet UK;
<http://www.labournet.net>
A-Infos; <http://www.ainfos.ca>
DAMNI; <http://damn.tao.ca>
ZeroZero Magazine; <http://www.pcworks.demon.co.uk>

USA₃

As DA goes to press, a year-long strike continues at the Brooklyn refinery of Tate & Lyle, the huge British transnational sugar and sweetener corporation (aka Domino Sugar). They have a reputation of buying up their competition and destroying the factories and jobs. The strike started on June 15, 1999 and, in December, one worker, a survivor of the holocaust, committed suicide because he could not face being poor all over again.

Support the workers by boycotting these products:

Domino Sugar, Red Path, Tate & Lyle, Bundaberg Sugars, Amylum Group, and WhiteSpoon.

Contact Tate & Lyle, voice your opinion:
investorrelations@tateandlyle.com
hiew@tateandlyle.co.uk 

Russia

On 17 May, approximately 300,000 workers across Russia participated in protests against the government's proposal to introduce a draconian new (slave-)Labour Code. The new draconian anti-trade union legislation introduces, among other things, a 56-hour working week. Strikes, demonstrations and pickets broke out, as people voiced their anger against the conditions which are already in place, to which the new Code gives official approval - payment in kind, arbitrary sacking at the whim of the boss, casual work with no written contracts, long hours without leave, etc. With the collapse of nearly 50% of Russian industry since privatisation was introduced, unemployment and non-payment of workers for up to 18 months or more is widespread. Meanwhile, top businessmen like the head of Alfa Bank call on Putin to introduce a "Pinochet-style" regime.

The IMF enthusiastically approved the new Code, which also forces pregnant women to work night shifts and cuts maternity leave in half. 

Brazil

Brazil faces increasingly violent clashes involving the rural landless after a week of protests in which one person died and hundreds were injured during nationwide protests for land reform.

At the end of May, the invasion of property in 22 of Brazil's 26 states by members of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) was one of the largest mobilisations in the group's history and showed that it was broadening its range of targets. Over 30,000 MST protesters invaded land and federal buildings, including offices belonging to the country's central bank, finance ministry and agrarian reform ministry. In some areas, heavily armed police used smoke grenades and rubber bullets to quell the demonstrations. One 30-year-old man died near the southern city of Curitiba after being shot in the stomach.

The scale of the protests stunned President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who issued a flurry of measures, including the creation of a special police force charged with dispersing illegal settlers from land and public buildings. He also said that if peasants squat on land, their efforts to gain land titles will be delayed by at least two years. 

Afghanistan

A woman was publicly stoned to death in Northern Afghanistan by the Taliban militia for allegedly committing adultery - the second reported public execution of a woman in the past six months. The stoning took place in a sports stadium in Mazar-e-Sharif before several thousand people. Official Taliban decrees, punishable by beating, stoning, and death, ban women's work, education, and mobility. Afghan women and girls risk their lives daily to realise the very basic human needs. Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to live under virtual house arrest. 

USA4

With the support of university students nationwide, eight garment workers in Los Angeles, California, have won their struggle against their former sweatshop employer.

Four months ago, the workers filed a federal lawsuit against J. H. Design Group, where they worked sewing jackets for Nike, Reebok and Disney, among others, alleging sweatshop conditions, including: working seven days a week; 10-12 hours a day; being forced to sew in their homes until midnight and at weekends to meet quotas; receiving sub-minimum wages, often without overtime pay; illegal firings for speaking out about sweatshop conditions; and inhumane treatment, including verbal abuse and racial slurs.

In May, the bosses agreed to settle the case for \$172,000, which includes payment of back wages and compensation for the workers who were fired. Students across the country have been campaigning to ensure that the t-shirts, hats, and sweatshirts that bear their schools' names and logos are not manufactured under sweatshop conditions. Many universities have adopted Codes of Conduct for Trademark Licensees to prevent such abuses. More info:

www.swaetwatch@igc.org 

Bolivia

In a concession to four days of massive public uprisings, the Bolivian government announced in April that it will break the contract it signed last year to sell off the water system to a consortium of British-led investors.

Four months of protests against the sell-off culminated in a four day intensive general strike and road blockades, beginning on 11th April in Cochabamba. The city of half a million was left with streets virtually empty of cars; schools and businesses were closed, along with the city's 25-square-block marketplace, one of Latin America's largest.

The government's surprise backdown came just as it appeared that President Hugo Banzer Suarez was preparing to declare martial law, possibly triggering fighting in the streets between riot police and the thousands of angry protesters who seized control of the city's central plaza.

Privatisation has been a heated economic debate in Bolivia for a decade, as one major business after another – the airline, the train system, electric utilities – has been sold into private (almost always foreign) hands. Last year's one-bidder sale of Cochabamba's public water system, a move pushed on government officials by the World Bank, was the final straw. 

Turkey

On April 27, in Istanbul, anarchists of AGF (Anarchist Youth Federation) interrupted a presentation by Shell. As Shell-Turkey's General Manager and a German spokesman, also a high ranking manager of Shell, stood to speak, one protester stood up and started saying "Shell is the murderer of the Ogoni Tribe" repeatedly, in a loud voice, until all eyes turned on him. This caused the speaker to halt, and some students, members of the Bosphorous University Machinery and Technology Club who had invited Shell, attempted to silence the anarchist. However, 15 other AGF anarchists rose from their seats to protect the new speaker.

As some scrambled to call in the University Security and some tried to attack the protesters, the well-prepared anarchists drew their firearms (eggs) and pasted the two Shell representatives and their presentation screen, causing them to leave hurriedly, humbled and humiliated.

All of the protesters managed to get out of the place in time before the security and police arrived, and the presentation was cancelled. 

A17

On Monday, April 17th, 1,500 protesters gathered in downtown San Francisco in solidarity with the activists from around the world who crowded the streets in Washington, DC during the last week to shut down the meetings of the IMF and World Bank.

The protesters carried a giant piggybank filled with 'dirty' World Bank money. Event organisers, a coalition known as A17SF, are concerned with the local effects of World Bank/IMF policies and made the following demands:

1. That the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organisation be abolished, in view of the fact that they are beyond reform. This includes the cancellation of all World Bank-imposed debt and the termination of all IMF economic austerity programs, known as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's), which it has imposed on many countries.
2. That the United States grant immediate, unconditional amnesty to all undocumented immigrants residing within its borders, in order to alleviate the economic and cultural damage caused by the IMF, World Bank, and WTO's impoverishment of their homelands, forcing them to seek employment abroad.

The spectre of April's meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington, DC inspired tens of thousands of concerned people to pressure those institutions to immediately suspend policies that have damaged the global environment, institutionalised poverty, and perpetuated misery among the world's poorest people. While there have been reports of illegal arrests and indiscriminate police brutality, the protests have been viewed as a success by organisers and participants. The convergence in Washington, DC proved to be an amazing show of co-operation, courage, and organising skills.

The San Francisco demonstration also proved to be a success. The opening rally included speakers from labour, environmental, and immigrant communities. After the rally, marchers headed down Market Street, educating themselves and others about the IMF and World Bank. When they arrived at UN Plaza, they smashed the World Bank piggybank to expose the blood money inside. No arrests were made related to the demo. 





The Real Millennium Bug?

Some comments and updates on AIDS

Back in November 1998, a conference entitled "Repensar el SIDA" ("Rethinking AIDS") was organised in Cádiz, Spain, by the local section of the CNT (sister organisation to the Solidarity Federation in Britain). In attendance were the two high-profile "AIDS dissidents", doctors Peter Duisberg and Kary Mullis (Chemistry Nobel Prize winner in 1993). Dissidents? Because they have questioned the official theory that HIV is the cause of AIDS.

Duisberg thinks that drug taking, and not a retrovirus, is what causes AIDS. In fact, Duisberg argues, it is the AZT drug agent used to treat HIV that is killing people. Based on correlation studies carried out in San Francisco and Vancouver, Duisberg showed that drug taking among the male gay population causes suppression of the immunological system, and indicated that AIDS was not infectious, nor could it be sexually transmitted.

Duisberg and Mullis have not only criticised AZT treatments as dangerous, they have also pointed out vociferously the fact that, behind these drugs, lie the economic interests of the pharmaceutical industry. These drugs, indeed, make a lot of profit, and bankrupt many who apparently need them. Duisberg also has questioned whether an AIDS epidemic really is what is happening in Africa. According to him, many old illnesses caused by malnutrition and parasitical infections have been labelled under the acronym AIDS. And the dissidents are not so isolated. Other doctors, including Harvey Bialy and Gordon Stewart, have shown that more than 80% of African HIV positive cases are actually false positives. AIDS has become big business in the last two decades, with the commercialisation of tests and treatments, and money previously spent on medication against malaria, TB, etc. is now being spent on the distribution of AZT treatments which people can't afford. Monopolistic drug pricing is certainly a real millennium bugbare.

GETTING REAL

Many of the political and economic arguments exposing the disgusting profiteering from illness that pharmaceutical companies indulge in when they can are cast iron.

However, there are serious question marks around some of the alternative theories of AIDS. First, there is undoubtedly strong correlation evidence linking AIDS to HIV. In fact, in the same tests carried out in San Francisco and Vancouver, which Duisberg used as data for his drug taking-AIDS research, all AIDS cases were also HIV antibody-positive. Another study amongst haemophiliacs in Great Britain showed that, in the period 1978-1992, the chance of death was ten times higher among HIV positive patients compared to their HIV negative counterparts. Now, correlation does not necessarily imply causation, but the links are there. Furthermore, whilst AIDS drugs may well be damaging the human immunological system, it does not follow that drug taking causes AIDS - although it may well be a co-factor. In fact, even amongst alternative aids researchers, Duisberg is sometimes criticised for denying categorically the possibility that HIV plays a role in AIDS infection. This is not a question of sitting on the fence - it is about the fact that very little is known about the origins of AIDS, and that the official HIV explanation is questionable, particularly given the real motivations of the drug companies and many of the scientists who work for them.

It does not follow that Dr Duisberg is right. Certainly, AZT treatments combined with other drugs (combination therapy) are pretty toxic and, frankly, potentially dodgy, and different people respond to the drug cocktails in different ways. This is clearly not an ideal situation. My dilemma, though, is that having known HIV positive people who have undergone the treatment and have stayed healthy, I will not discourage them from sticking with it. Would they have ended up not developing AIDS anyway, without these treatments, even if they are HIV positive? It is about making judgements of different risks - if possible, with 'good' information, it is the person getting the treatment who needs to choose.

As for transmission, it also seems pretty likely that AIDS can be transmitted sexually. There are not only correlation tests, but also virologic and cellular biology studies which seem to point in this direction. Which, of course, does

RATHER THAN ADHERING ONESELF TO THIS OR THAT THEORY OF THE CAUSES OF AIDS, BETTER STICK TO THE FACTS.

FOR AGES, BIG MULTINATIONALS AND CORPORATIONS HAVE BEEN EXPLOITING THE POOR, KILLING THEM AND ALLOWING THEM TO DIE.

HIV-AIDS IS SIMPLY A SYMPTOM OF THE WIDER CAUSE OF THIS PHENOMENON - CAPITALISM.



LMG HAVE HIJACKED THE PRIDE MARCH AS A LONDON MARDI GRAS PARADE TO GET PUNTERS AND SPONSORS TO COUGH UP. IN SPITE OF THE MUCH-HYPED "EFFICIENCY" OF BUSINESS, THE 1999 FESTIVAL LOST NEARLY HALF-A-MILLION POUNDS.

company people want the Pride march to stand for. These events will give us a platform for reclaiming the Pride march from LMG in 2001 (we hope).

While we appreciate that people don't like or want to dwell on conflicts or the politics behind them, it is impossible to explain Pride without saying what's wrong with LMG. The reason LMG have hijacked the Pride march as a London Mardi Gras Parade, part of an overall vision of Parade, Festival and Arts Festival, is to get punters and sponsors to cough up. In spite of the much-hyped "efficiency" of business, the 1999 festival lost nearly half-a-million pounds. LMG's investors are keen to recoup their losses and to start turning a profit. Their need to court sponsors has had two inevitable side effects.

First, the march must be depoliticised to avoid frightening off sponsors who want to reach a market, not to back militancy. Secondly, they have to clearly define that market - the one with the cash to spend. This means affluent white gay men, and their lesbian equivalents. This means not bisexual (unreliable) or transgendered (too threatening) people, who do not present the right image to potential sponsors. Only the affluent and conservative are welcome, which excludes most of us.

The result - if it is not effectively opposed - is victory for the "pink pound" commercialism to which LMG subscribe. It is also unworkable. The old Pride Festival was hyped as "Europe's biggest free music festival" to the point where it was unsustainable. By 1997, the rush to involve sponsors had "de-gay" much of Pride's publicity, separating march (political) and festival

(fun). Festival producer Teddy Witherington used the hype to get the equivalent job in San Francisco, and left owing the Pride Trust more than £21,000. Losses totalling £45,000, were put down to "ditzy" management, which could be corrected by sound business input. Enter Pride Events UK Ltd, who failed to organise a commercial festival on Clapham Common in 1998, partly because commercialisation reduced community support, and prompted Lambeth Council and the Police to charge commercial rates, making it unprofitable. Pride march 1998, however, was organised by an *ad hoc* coalition of community groups which were not hamstrung by the need to make a profit. In short, LMG arose from the thinking that the 1997 festival had raised £340,000 in sponsorship, according to *Labour Research*, and this is where the money is to be made. The paradox is that, to maximise sponsorship and profits, it has to alienate much of its core audience, who are strangely unconvinced by business ideology.

The idea that there are pots of lesbian and gay money out there for businesses to cash in on is false. A gay couple is like any other couple. Even if they are both working, for example, the combined income of a care worker and a nurse is about enough for one person to have a decent standard of living in London. LMG will eventually have to cut its losses, what those of us involved in Pride (London) want to avoid is it taking our march with it when it folds. Above all, it is about keeping up the campaign for diversity and human rights, not LMG's profits (or losses). 

WHAT THE SPONSORS GOT OUT OF PRIDE '98

■ **Carlsberg** sponsored Birmingham Gay Pride in 1998 because it was "a vibrant, exciting and fun event which attracts people in Carlsberg Ice's target market of 18-35-year-olds from a wide variety of backgrounds, both straight and gay". They sold 7,000 bottles and 12,000 pints of lager on the day.

■ **UNISON**, a longstanding Pride festival sponsor, was approached too late in 1998. This was partly due to uncertainties about the organisation, but an official said that "our impression is that Pride Events are more interested in large corporate sponsorship and see organisations like UNISON as small fry". LMG is not much interested in union sponsorship either, which is totally unconnected to the anti-union policies of Chronos, honest!

■ **Gallaher**, the makers of Benson & Hedges cigarettes, called Pride "a good marketing opportunity for us - it brings together hundreds of thousands of people". The company had an "across the board" equal opportunities policy, but their pension scheme denied benefits to survivors of same-sex relationships.

■ **Holsten UK Ltd**, owned by Scottish & Newcastle, described Pride as "one of the largest festivals of people in Europe - it's about music, entertainment and having a good time, and is therefore good for brand association". Scottish & Newcastle had an equal opportunities policy, which said specifically that it didn't discriminate against employees on ground of sexual orientation, but same-sex partners were excluded from the benefits of its pension scheme. S&N had also given £548,500 to the Conservative Party since 1979, including £50,000 in 1997.

■ **Unilever**, owner of van Bergh foods, who make PG Tips - another Pride sponsor - does include same-sex partners in its pension scheme, as did Diageo, owners of Pride Scotland sponsor Smirnoff.

Pride or profit?

London Mardi Gras (LMG) 2000 — let's have a look inside the glossy packaging...



PICNIC WITH PRIDE

The Picnic on July 1st will be in the area of Hyde Park north from the statue known as "Little Nell", which is adjacent to the Lakeside Cafe.

The 30th anniversary re-enactment of the first GLF demo will be a torchlit procession around Highbury Fields (London N5). The original 150 marchers will be represented by 150 community organisations carrying torches to represent how far the community has come, and what it has achieved since 1970. The event is scheduled for the evening of Sunday, 26th November 2000.

For details of both events, and of how you or your organisation can help, contact: Pride (London), BCM Box 6097, LONDON WC1N 3XX. Tel. 07071 781904. E-mail info@PrideLondon.org Website www.PrideLondon.org



This article was written by a member of Pride (London). Information is correct as DA went to press in early June 2000. For updates, contact the address above. Membership of Pride (London) is open to anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered for £10 (£5 concessions); others may become supporters at the same rates. Organisation rates are £10 (under 200 members), £25 (200-1,000), £50 (over 1,000).

The annual lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Pride events in London have undergone a number of changes in recent years. This year, the London Mardi Gras (LMG) 2000 "Gay and Lesbian" package includes an arts festival, a parade starting in Hyde Park, and a music festival in Finsbury Park.

In 1999, the march, or parade, was organised by Pride (London), a non-profit-making company set up in response to a survey in which the community expressed a desire to see the march organised by such a body. The festival in Finsbury Park was run by LMG, a profit-making company set up by wealthy gay and lesbian business people, responding to the same survey's desire for a gay business-run event which was perceived to be more efficient.

Pride (London) began holding outreach meetings after Pride in July 1999, to get feedback from its constituency on what it had done. These provided a forum for criticism of LMG's perceived profiteering, insensitivity and lack of commitment to diversity. There was also a feeling that the march and festival should be "re-united", so that there was somewhere affordable and accessible for people from outside London to go after the march, making the trip worth the cost and effort.

LMG obviously decided that they didn't like this criticism. They need to conscript the community to do its duty and pay for the festival they have graciously organised for our benefit. They booked the route of the march for Saturday July 1st 2000, and recruited Steve Greenwood from Pride (London) to be their Parade Director, leaving us to choose between ceding control of the march, or organising a separate one. The latter is not feasible, but resistance continues in spite of a virtual news blackout, due largely to

the fact that both Kelvin Sollis, chairman of Chronos Publishing, owners of the *Pink Paper*, *Boyz*, etc., and Chris Graham-Bell, chairman of Millivres-Prowler, the gay publishing empire which owns the *Gay Times* and *Diva*, are part of LMG. Pride (London)'s active membership is small, and so not much in the way of counter publicity - leaflets, etc. - can be produced and distributed. Our medium term aims are to increase the active membership and counter the blackout.

A rare piece of publicity was the article written by then-editor David Smith in September's *Gay Times*. Pride (London) were described as "the nominal organisers of this year's Pride march", and the late Barry Jackson of LMG claimed that, without LMG's (financial) backing, the march would not have happened. This is in spite of the fact that the march has never lost money, unlike the festival, and that the stewarding is organised by an independent group each year. Jackson also alleged that we had "thrown in the towel", and planned to "move Pride to a date in November", forcing LMG to take over.

Not-for-profit Pride's strategy is to raise our profile in the community. On July 1st, we ask as many groups and individuals as possible to march behind our banner, with the slogan "Pride not Profit: for equality and diversity". We encourage people who feel excluded from the Mardi Gras to enjoy the traditional alternative to a commercial festival - the picnic in Hyde Park. Our point is we march for our pride, not for LMG's profits. You are welcome to join us. If you are reading this after July 1st, it is not too late. A re-enactment of the first Gay Liberation Front demonstration in Britain is taking place in London on its thirtieth anniversary on 26th November, 2000. This is a one-off addition to Pride. We hope to remind people of our existence, and of what the non-profit-making