Direct Action

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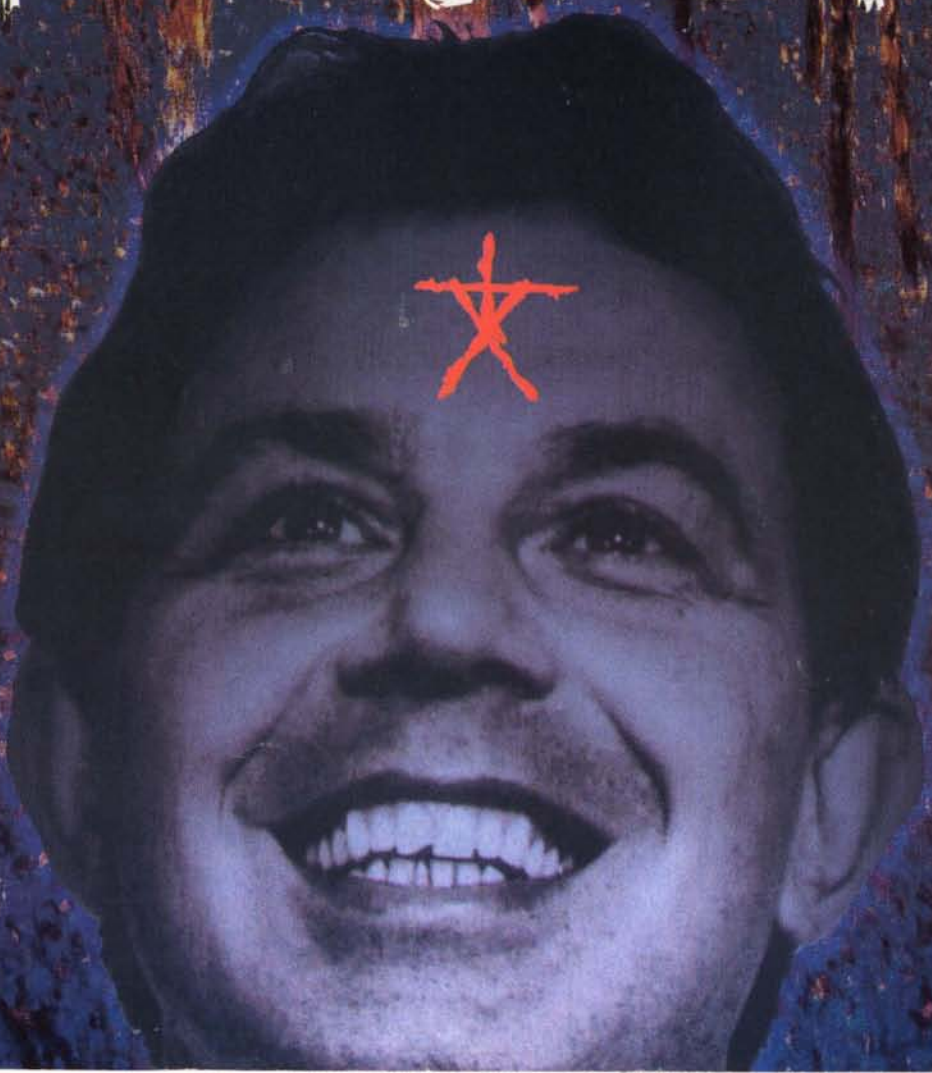

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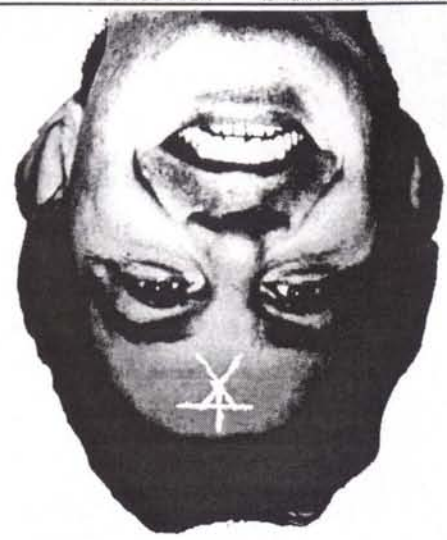
The Ditch Blair Project



We need to have parties and we need to have politics. But the two just don't mix.

They say you can judge someone by their friends. Tony had friends called Clintons. The only way of seeing Bill in a good light is by comparing him against his successor. As DA goes to press, the US election farce is still fresh. 48 million voted for each candidate but even with my maths I can make out that in a country of 275 million people, most people made the only sane choice and did something useful with their day instead.

Here in Blighty the real problem is that the US election looks horribly like a pre-run of the UK one. It is like looking into some kind of future-mirror. Fuzzy around the edges. A cursory glance is enough. Welcome to *blairedvision*.

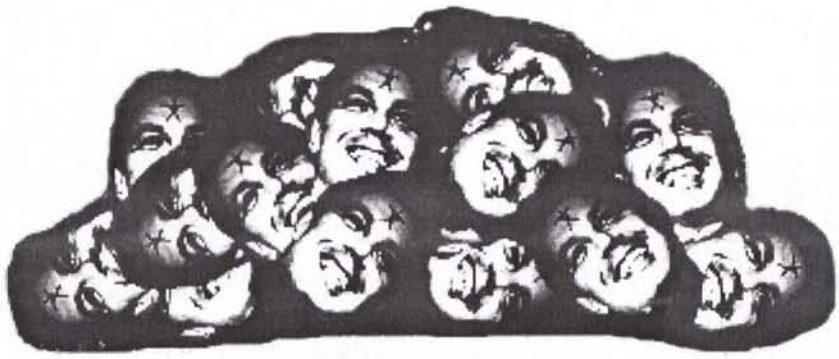
Railing against Tony risks the obvious misnomer. The Ditch Blair Project is just one small brick in a very big wall. The fact is, Old Labour wasn't much better. OK, Tony was the one who actually got rid of Clause 4, but that was just facing up to decades of reality: the Labour Party has a long history of compromise, going back to day one (Compromising Positions, p.4-5).

Party politics is about compromise. You have to choose how much to sell out people in order to keep in with the profiteers. And guess which of the two always gets compromised the most. Given a choice between a political career selling out people and doing something more honest, which would you choose? That's the difference between you and Tony.

He knows how to do the "right" thing (sic). He may distance himself from Thatcher for expediency - but he cannot but like the feel of Thatcherism. Faced with people reduced to begging in the streets of smiley, feel-good, New Labour Britain, tell people to ignore them - they are all drug-taking scum. Faced with people so desperate for a life they risk death to seek asylum, lock them up/kick them out ('NASS'ty, brutish and short-changed, DA16). Faced with protecting workers at work or corporations who kill, pretend (Corporate Killing, p.18-19). Faced with education pledges to live up to, blame it on the workers (Laboured Education, p.20-21). Faced with a love of private profits and rail chaos, fudge and lie (Off the Rails, p.31-33). Lie like the last lot, and more if you think you can get away with it. Say GM food is safe, like they did with BSE.

Face up to it, I am a fake and I fool nobody. The proof is right here.

Tony Blair



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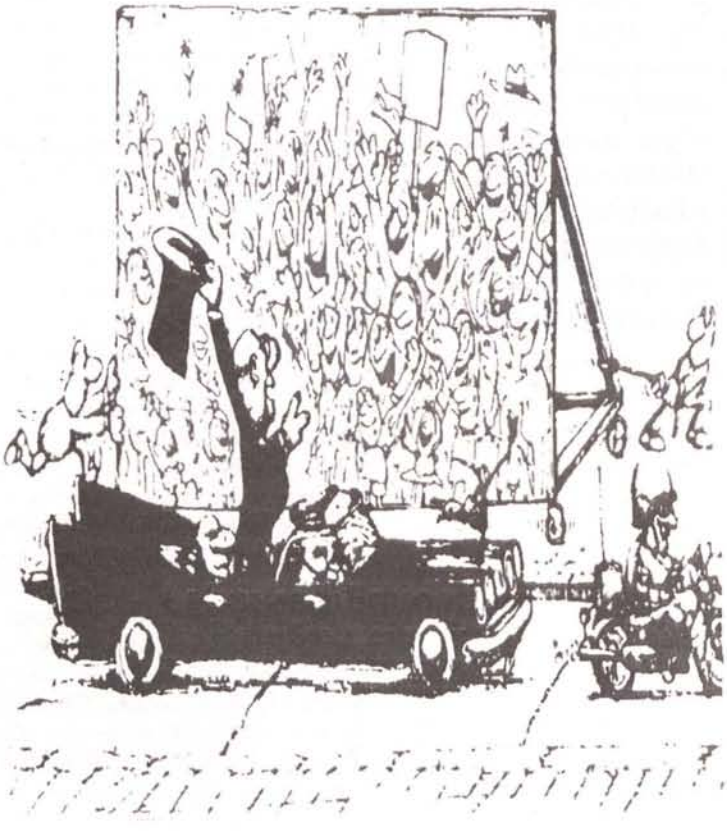


COMPROMISING

TODAY'S LABOUR LEADERSHIP DEFIANTLY EMBRACES THATCHERITE POLITICS - DESPITE WHAT IT SAYS. SO WHERE DID IT ALL GO WRONG? PACK YOUR SANDWICHES FOR A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE TO FIND OUT.

Before the 1997 election, many on the Left were excited at the prospect of the return of a Labour Government. Eighteen years of Tory rule had seen constant attacks on the working class and its institutions. The electorate were obviously sick and tired of the Tories and were looking to get them out. In this sense, the General Election result was as much an anti-Tory vote as a pro-Labour one.

There were, even then, those who questioned the Left's prevailing optimism. Labour definitely pitched their campaign at 'Middle England' while depending on its traditional working class support to hold firm. Now it seems that the bubble has burst and Labour has lost the confidence of its traditional supporters. And the middle classes to whom the government has constantly kowtowed? Middle England did get where it is by being trustworthy and true.

Scepticism about a Labour government at the time of the election was based only partly on the Blairite swing to the right. It also ran deeper, with roots in the long-term ethos of the Labour Party, as well the past performances of Labour Governments.

EVER SINCE ITS FORMATION, THE LABOUR PARTY HAS BEEN A COMPROMISE BETWEEN DIFFERENT INTEREST GROUPS AND, ALTHOUGH SOCIALISTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF IT, IT HAS NEVER BEEN A SOCIALIST PARTY

Ever since its formation, the Labour Party has been a compromise between different interest groups and, although socialists have always been a part of it, it has never been a socialist party. The Independent Labour Party (ILP), the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) and the Fabians formed the Labour Representation Committee (LRC) in 1900. Its aim was to secure representation in parliament for working people that was independent of the Liberal Party. At this time there were Lib-Lab MPs that were essentially Liberals representing working class constituencies. It had two MPs returned in the 1900 General Election. One was Keir Hardie, the other Richard Bell, General Secretary of the Railway Servants, who was, to all intents and purposes, a Liberal.

In the years that followed, various trade unions affiliated to the LRC and the Liberals saw the need to make some sort of accommodation with it. A secret electoral pact was made which meant that in some areas Liberals would not stand against LRC candidates so as not to split the anti-Conservative vote. The result was 29 LRC MPs after the 1906 election. These then became the Labour Party. The infant Labour Party was, from day one, and remained, a coalition between socialists, social democrats and trade unionists. It increased its seats in parliament not by election success but by the accession of the Lib-Lab MPs.

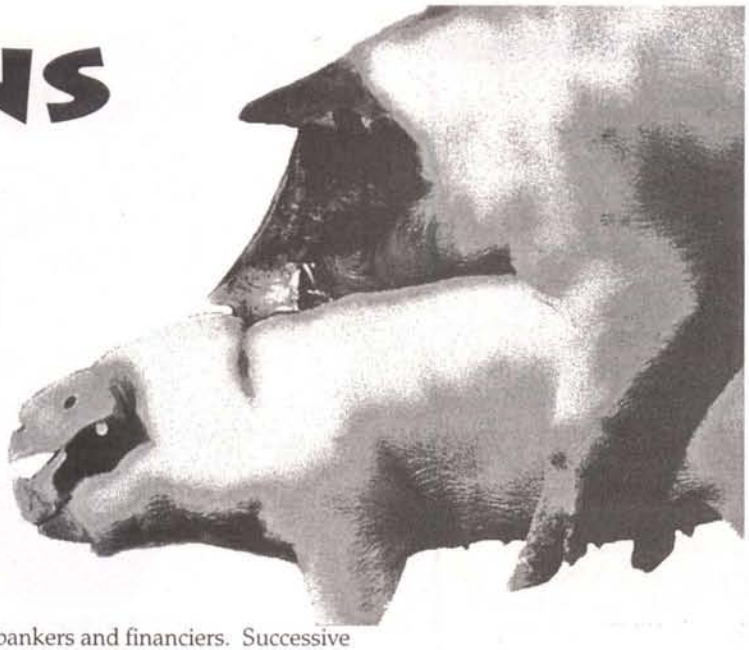
Inside the party, there was also a strong Methodist and nonconformist religious influence as well as middle class Fabians who still followed the policy of 'permeation', the spreading of socialist ideas through the state's existing structures and organisations. These influences never disappeared. Working class militants within the party started to look towards the growing syndicalist movement as a more attractive option, especially during the period of labour unrest just before the First World War. Indeed, the Labour Party intellectuals were so worried about syndicalist ideas spreading that they spent much more time and effort criticizing them than the incumbent Liberal Government.

As Labour developed, the different strands within continued to vie with each other for control of the party. The trade union leaders kept a firm grip on the purse strings while the Fabian influence manifested itself through the drawing up of policy statements.

This can be seen by the new draft constitution, drawn up in 1918, the object of which was to weld together the socialist and non-socialist elements of the party. The result was an executive dominated by union block vote coupled with a socialist constitution enshrined in the celebrated Clause Four. There was also a new policy statement, *Labour and The New Social Order*, drafted by Sidney Webb the leading Fabian theorist that was to form the basis of all the party's policies until 1950.

After the 1922 election, the Labour Party became the official opposition in parliament. Socialist members were highly critical of the leadership, following the course of left-wing criticism from within the party that had been constant since its inception. Outside the Labour Party, the Communist Party, which had been

POSITIONS



refused affiliation, attempted to infiltrate and win control of local Labour Parties. Conference decisions ensured that Communists were debarred from individual membership of the party. The Labour Party viewed them as they did the syndicalists - they were more worried about what they saw as extremists on the left than they were about the forces of capital.

This situation, with the more militant members of the party constantly feeling ignored and sidelined, was worsened with numerous attempted infiltrations and 'witch hunts', which carried on from the twenties and thirties right up to the recent past. In the eighties, Trotskyists, who had joined the Labour Party, were forced out, and campaigns to defend the socialists in the Labour Party were initiated by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), etc. This has been an aspect of left-wing politics in Britain since Lenin's instructions to support the Labour Party "like a rope supports a hanged man". Marxists have been constantly reacting to an agenda set by the internal politics of Labour.

The Labour Party throughout its history has suffered from an unwillingness to tackle the problems of capitalism head on. It has always been at pains to present itself as a 'responsible' party with the ability to manage a capitalist economy as well, if not better, than the Tories. The first (minority) Labour Government of 1924 did nothing to tackle the huge unemployment problem, and the General Strike of 1926 saw Labour sitting on the sidelines hoping it would end soon. It did, but due to the Trade Union Congress' (TUC's) total misunderstanding and misuse of the strike rather than anything Labour did. Afterwards, the Party was openly critical of the strike and direct action as a whole. Beatrice Webb, showing her usual distaste of the working class, called it, "a proletarian distemper" - a position that the Labour Party has maintained ever since.

The party has long tried to avoid using the dreaded word 'socialism' in its policies, so as not to alienate bankers and financiers. Successive Labour governments have failed to address basic problems such as unemployment. Even after its landslide victory of 1945, many of its celebrated achievements, such as the nationalisation of the coal industry and the creation of the NHS, were part of the new consensus that emerged during the war and had the tacit agreement of the other parties. Labour backed away from any radical solutions and even used troops to break a dock strike within six days of taking office. With the agreement of the TUC, they imposed severe austerity measures, prolonging rationing after the war and introducing a wage freeze while avoiding tackling the fundamental class differences in the country.

If the Labour Party has been more progressive on social issues and on trade union rights (which is debatable), this is only in comparison with the appalling record of the Tories. In fact, the Liberals have often been more progressive, simply because there has always been an inbuilt conservatism and prudishness within the Labour Party.

Meanwhile, the struggle for control of the Party has continued between the different Left groups. The struggle has centred around issues like nuclear disarmament, trade union legislation, nationalisation and electoral reform, to name a few. With the election of Thatcher in 1979 and the concerted attacks on the working class, Labour found itself becoming embroiled in even more bitter internal conflicts. Various groups, notably Militant, attempted to infiltrate and capture the party, while on the Right, there were defections and the minority split in the early eighties to form the Social Democratic Party.

Defeats like the miners' strike left the trade unions weaker and paved the way for the 'modernisers' to win control. There was a conscious effort to break with the past and an attempt to capture the 'middle ground' of British

(cont'd overleaf...)

SINCE LENIN'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPPORT THE LABOUR PARTY "LIKE A ROPE SUPPORTS A HANGED MAN", MARXISTS HAVE BEEN CONSTANTLY REACTING TO AN AGENDA SET BY THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF LABOUR

sidelines

Deaf Government?

Despite the new Disability Discrimination Act, deaf people continue to face discrimination in both education and employment.

The Federation of Deaf People organised a march of 9,000 people in London, in support of the recognition of British Sign Language (BSL) as an official language. BSL is the fourth most commonly used language in Britain, after English, Welsh and Gaelic. While other European governments have recognised sign languages, the British Government has not.

Contact; FDP, Post Box 11, Darwin, Lancs BB3 3GH. Fax 01254 708 071. Email contactfdp@aol.com

Beggars belief

New Labour is to splash out (with our money) on a campaign to try and stop people from giving money to people begging in the street. It will not succeed, or address the underlying problems which force people to resort to begging in the first place. The effects of chronic poverty, homelessness, institutional care, and sexual abuse at home or in care, will not be solved by withholding money from beggars. Contrary to the Government's propaganda, there are not enough beds available for the homeless in London. According to the London Street Monitor, a survey of rough sleeping in London found that there were more than 350 people sleeping rough in London this summer. However, there were only 84 empty beds available. Consequently, withholding your money will not drive rough sleepers to a hostel bed. (Source: Release)

(cont'd from last page...)

politics by portraying the Tories as the extremists and dropping any pretence of trying to argue for any form of socialism, no matter how moderate.

The first stage was the abandonment of Clause Four, which, in theory at least, committed Labour to public ownership and a planned economy. Then came the steady onslaught on the 'old fashioned' values of solidarity and workers' rights; 'respectability' with the businessmen and multinationals became all-important. Of course there has always been an influential section of the Labour Party that has been like this ever since its inception, distancing itself from any militant actions. The difference now is merely that the pretence of socialism has been swept away.

Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Jack Straw, *et al* have shifted the Party to a position similar to the Democratic Party in the USA. This being Britain, there is more emphasis on social attitudes, with the 'nanny' wing being dominant. Indeed, recent policies on asylum seekers, drugs, the homeless and beggars have shown a marked intolerance to anyone outside of what they consider respectable society. This has been extended to a 'we know best' attitude in trying to control and dictate what people do in their private lives.

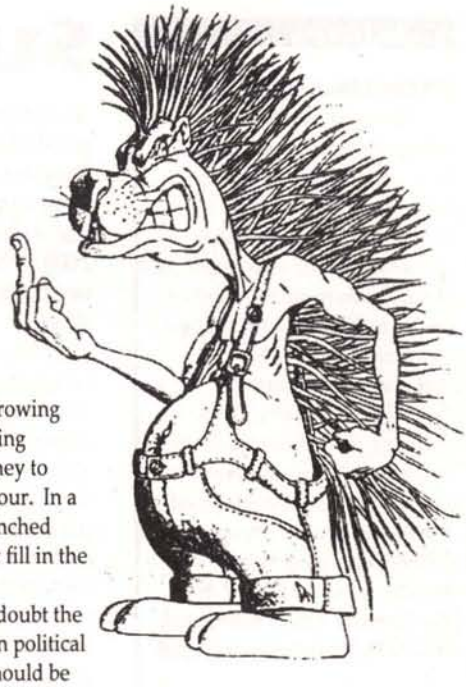
As in the past, the Left within the Party have reacted to all this in one of two ways. Firstly, there are those who have remained in the Party hoping to stop the swing to the right. The problem here is that they have never had meaningful influence within it. Where they have managed to get policies passed at conferences, the leadership has dropped them when there was any prospect of power.

An ever-increasing second group is now leaving the party and looking for alternatives. The Marxists are attempting to woo these 'Independent Labour' members to their own parties by setting up the Socialist Alliance. The groups within this have their own agendas. They have only come together for electoral convenience and consequently are manoeuvring for dominance. The Socialist Party (ex Militant) talks of building a new mass working class party to replace Labour, while the SWP argues for a more centralized structure. They hope to become the dominant force and use the Labour Party as a base for recruitment. The SWP hedges its bets by trying to build on the move towards direct action, witnessed in Seattle and in Prague, but also arguing for this to be in conjunction with a socialist alternative at the ballot box. This is a strong indication that they are seeking to bring the forces of non-hierarchical direct action into line with factional policies under their leadership.

What we are seeing outside of this is a break with representative politics of inaction and a move to direct action. This is to be welcomed but it needs to go much further, until a culture of direct action is established, with solid anti-parliamentarian democratic politics. This means more than just getting out onto the streets to protest – it means new forms of organisation based on solidarity, mutual aid and libertarian principles. The society we live in is an authoritarian, capitalist, centralised one. To replace it completely, we need to organise now in a libertarian, socialist, decentralised way.

Lose the Levy

Why are we still paying for pain?



Attempts by those revolutionaries at the European Commission to turn the new Citizens' Rights Charter into a legally-bind treaty is being frustrated by - guess who? Yes, that's right, the good old citizen-friendly Labour government. Blair has been arguing that though the Charter of Fundamental Rights was welcome as a political declaration, it is unacceptable to the UK as legislation. In other words, rights are OK in principle, just as long as they can be ignored in practice.

The Charter sets out more than 50 existing basic rights and freedoms, most of which are already contained in the European Convention on Human Rights. It does extend these rights in one key area, which is the cause of Labour's opposition. It contains several references to the right to strike and the right of workers to be consulted. The Tories have joined Labour in attacking the proposals to make the Charter legally binding, arguing that the Charter's "strike provision threatens to roll back 20 years of Tory reform". Thus, both left and right wings of UK Thatcherism are united in their opposition to "red Europe".

Many on the Left, including those who at the election advised us all to "vote Labour without illusions", are now convinced that there is no difference between the Tories and Labour. In this, they are wrong. One difference is that the unions still fund Labour to the tune of millions of pounds. This is no different to paying someone to beat you up.

Though many on the Left now condemn Labour, there is still a reluctance to call for the unions to break the historic link with them. Perhaps the socialist Left should amend their slogan to "pay up without illusions", or some such.

Meanwhile, on the front line, there are growing signs that members of trade unions are growing increasingly angry at handing over their money to such an openly anti-trade union party as Labour. In a number of unions, campaigns have been launched aimed at breaking the link with Labour. (Just fill in the form below to do your bit...)

If these campaigns prove successful, no doubt the various left wing parties will argue that union political funds should go to them. Such arguments should be ignored. Workers and their unions are quite capable of campaigning for their own political aims. The idea that economic and political struggle can somehow be artificially split is rooted in intellectual snobbery and patronage. The "logic" seems to be that workers are stupid and not capable of looking beyond the immediate day-to-day. They are therefore reliant on politicians to do their thinking and act on their behalf. In other words, it is based on a load of superior-sounding crap.

The "logic" seems to be that workers are stupid and not capable of looking beyond the immediate day-to-day... In other words, it is based on a load of superior-sounding crap.

The working class has only ever made real gains through self-organisation aimed at direct action. It is to this end that the unions' money should be directed, rather than handed over to political parties. The aim of all political parties is to obtain and then keep power. All else is secondary - including the interests of the workers they claim to represent. Sounds New Labour-familiar...

The idea of using Tory legislation might seem tasteless, but have you tasted Tony lately? This is a question of the lesser of two evils. Complete and send the form below to your Union HQ and copy it to your pay office for immediate relief.

Political Fund Exemption Notice

I hereby give notice that I object to contributing to the Political Fund of the union and am in consequence exempt, in the manner provided by Chapter 6 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (consolidation) Act 1992, from contributing to that fund.

Signature.....

Name.....

Membership number..... Payroll No.....

Address.....

.....

Date.....

Union and branch:.....

sidelines

Good Riddance

Joy at the news of Chris Woodhead's resignation from Ofsted was moderated with regret that he had gone with remnants of honour. He should have been sacked for one of his sundry offences against education, or for sex with his young students. He was forced to retract his claim that 4% of teachers are not up to the job, and amended it to one in every 1,500 being "inadequate", making no apology in the process.

Drugs for the few

It is good to know that Widdecombe, Shadow Home Secretary and darling of the Tory party, has clarified her policy on cannabis use. She has now stated her position on cannabis; "it is not targeted at middle class people experimenting with drugs at University, but at blocking supplies of drugs in run-down estates". Should experimenting students just carry a National Union of Students (NUS) card to show the police when they are caught in possession? Or maybe they also need to provide proof of their parents' income?

sidelines

Monumental Idea

The state builds monuments to commemorate their imperialist wars or to feign sympathy for those who died in them, to make their authority appear immutable by parading their past leaders or simply to impose their strength upon the people. The Autonomous Monuments Collective hopes to construct enduring people's monuments. One idea is for a monument to the memory of those who died fighting fascism in Spain. Anyone interested in the project, contact ACE, 17 W. Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH75HA.www.autonomous.org.uk

Union-friendly?

New Labour have decided to keep almost all Thatcher's union-bashing legislation, for when they need it. But they have also talked up their new union-friendly ideas. Automatic union recognition, making the entire workplace one big focus group so we can help bosses make more money for themselves, etc.

Where does all this friendly stuff come from? Much of it is based on US legislation, including the much-heralded rights to union recognition. Such legislation has not helped workers or unions in the USA. A report by Human Rights Watch found that the US "economic miracle" is no miracle – it has happened largely at the expense of workers' rights, which are feebly enforced and routinely violated by employers. The report says that employers are taking advantage of immigrant workers, and increasing numbers of part-time and contract workers. It goes on to state that the "Labour Law is so weak that companies often treat the minor penalties as routine costs of doing business, not a deterrent against violation". Casualisation kills, and they've been getting away with it for ages in the USA. It's good for business, apparently.

Surveillance Junkies

A number of left-wing papers have already published articles dealing with the Lawful Practice Regulations which the Labour government brought into force recently under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. This gives employers the legal right to snoop on phone or e-mail communications at work.

While it is good that this new legislation is being brought to the attention of workers, there has been little analysis as to why this legislation has appeared now, and why the ruling class finds it necessary. In all hierarchically structured societies, there is the general problem of forming an accurate picture of what is going on in society. It is a natural tendency for people to present themselves to those in authority in the best possible light. We don't go to the boss to report our mistakes and shortcomings. We cover them up or try to put the best possible gloss on our actions. The working class were putting a "spin" on their activities well before New Labour got in on the act.

The problem for the authoritarian Left is that it would be, and is, the first to start prying on us whenever it gets the chance. Information, surveillance, if you like, is power. It is inherently anti-democratic and anti-human rights to spy. The fact that the new regulations impinge on the right to privacy is unquestionable. It remains to be seen whether a challenge under the Human Rights Act would overturn the law. Meanwhile, employers still have the right to read any e-mail to find out if it is a business or private matter.

Even the pro-capitalist TUC can see this, a spokesperson saying: "It is wrong for an employer to be able to pry into what is essentially somebody's private business; even where the company has a policy that people aren't allowed to use the e-mails for external correspondence." It is left to the CBI to welcome New Labour's reactionary regulations, describing them a "big step forward". The current legislation is a further effort on behalf of the boss class to find out what we are up to, and to police us accordingly.

From Government's Explanatory Note to the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000.

These Regulations authorise certain interceptions of telecommunication communications which would otherwise be prohibited by Section 1 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. To the extent that the interceptions are also prohibited by Article 5.1 of Directive 97/66/EC, the authorisation does not exceed that permitted by Articles 5.2 and 14.1 of the Directive.

The interception has to be by or with the consent of a person carrying on a business (which includes the activities of government departments, public authorities and others exercising statutory functions) for purposes relevant to that person's business and using that business's own telecommunication system.

Interceptions are authorised for:

1. Monitoring or recording communications to establish the existence of facts, to ascertain compliance with regulatory or self-regulatory practices or procedures or to ascertain or demonstrate standards which are or ought to be achieved (quality control and training), in the interests of national security (in which case only certain specified public officials may make the interception), to prevent or detect crime, to investigate or detect unauthorised use of telecommunication systems or to secure, or as an inherent part of, effective system operation;
2. Monitoring received communications to determine whether they are business or personal communications;
3. Monitoring communications made to anonymous telephone helplines.

Child Care – French Lessons

New Labour and the Tories share an ambivalent attitude towards working mothers - and all working women. They also share a fundamental contradiction.

On the one hand they talk about the family, how it is essential for children to have the full attention of their mothers at home. On the other, they argue that women are a necessary part of the labour force. Industry and public services would grind to a halt if it were not for the energy and skill of women. A recent study bears this out. Jan Windebank focused on similar groups of working mothers in two urban areas, in France and Britain. In each city, 56 mothers were interviewed, all with children under 12, and all living with the children's father. All were doing secretarial or clerical jobs in large firms. Nearly all were white.

Windebank's study found that the British mothers were more likely to have given up work for a while after the birth of their child. In France, they were more likely to have gone back to work, with the support of creches and nurseries. In Britain, mothers who returned to work generally had complicated and varied child care arrangements, especially for pre-school aged children. In France, for school-aged children there is more collective and official child care provision although, as would be expected, some mothers were critical of the care on offer.

Despite the differences in state-supported child care in Britain and France, researchers found that both sets of mothers viewed themselves as responsible for organising child care in emergencies and monitoring quality of child care generally. More of the British mothers worked part-time, and the majority found the balance of children and work difficult.

This cross-cultural comparison demonstrates the case for demanding more child care support in Britain. Without less rhetoric and more action, improvement in the quality of child care in Britain will unfortunately be a long time coming.

Political Mothering and the Social Construction of Mothering: A comparison of child care stategies of French and British working mothers. Jan Windebank. Jnl Social Policy, 28 (1), 1-20.

LOOKS TORY, TASTES TORY, TALKS TORY, BUT THERE'S A DIFFERENCE. ARE THEY...

TIGHTER THAN TORIES?

IT'S TIME TO GO TO THE BAR. NEW LABOUR TALK ABOUT GETTING THEIR WALLET OUT, OFFER TO GO NEXT TIME, AND SOMEHOW, IT ALL SOUNDS LIKE A LOAD OF WARM, FIZZY, TASTELESS LIES.

CAN YOU TASTE THE DIFFERENCE?

A report by the "respected" City firm Ernst & Young Item Club has warned that if the Labour Government does not begin to spend more of the money pouring into the treasury coffers, they risk destabilising the economy. The report dismisses the argument that pumping the money back into the economy would risk a rise in inflation, arguing that "the Chancellor would simply be putting money back into the economy that he'd already taken out in taxes".

The fact that even "respected" City firms are urging Labour to spend more of the billions of pounds they are currently hoarding highlights just what a reactionary bunch Labour has become. Even with the increased spending on health, transport, pensions, etc., the government expects a surplus of £16 billion for the year 2001-02.

The reality is that you could easily double or triple the £16 billion surplus by introducing minor tax increases for the very rich in order to achieve a small redistribution of wealth in an increasingly unequal Britain. The managers of Britain's top 100 companies awarded themselves an average 20.4% rise this year. The teachers have been offered 3% and told there is no more. A tax reform for the filthy rich is well overdue.

Lest we get confused by all the Labour spin, it is worth noting that net capital spending - the money directly spent by government on infrastructure, schools, hospitals, railways, etc. - fell by 32% in the last financial year (1999-2000), from £3.8bn to £2.6bn. This figure for capital investment is only a quarter of that spent in the early 1990s by the Tories. At a time when the government is awash with money, they are looking distinctly more Tory than Major's administration.

In the next breath, the Labour government claims that they have only turned to private funding for public services (i.e. creeping privatisation in the form of private financial initiatives or PFIs) to fund projects that the government cannot afford. The government has the money but prefers the private sector on ideological grounds. This is plain proof - if it were needed - that PFIs are nothing more than back-door privatisation.

In the run up to the election there has been much talk from the government about massive increases in public spending, much of it on infrastructure, such as railways. Is this a solid promise or an election lie? We need look no further than past form. Labour's first term has been marked by numerous announcements of increases in spending that have never materialised. Furthermore, even if Labour do stick to their spending promises next time, public spending (as a percentage of GDP) will still be below that of the Tories.

sidelines

McFUTURES

Many people think anarchists have paranoid delusions about McDonald's. Those of you who don't read the capitalist media may have missed a report in The Economist *in July, which suggests we haven't been paranoid enough. According to this bastion of the establishment, McDonald's have extended their well-known legal attacks against any business using a common Celtic prefix in their name. The company has sued a sausage stand in Denmark (McAlian's), a coffee shop in California (run by a woman named McCaughhey) and a British sandwich shop (named McMunchies).*

However, the scariest case involves a small Internet-based health care company in Switzerland named McWellness. McDonald's wrote to the US Patent Office's Trademark Trial and Appeal Board, claiming the company is likely to "expand the use of its 'Mc' formative marks to include the same services on which the McWellness is intended to be used". McDonald's, it seems, intends to branch out into medical services, and amongst other things claims to have registered ownership of the slogan "Immunise for Healthy Lives". Other McDonald's registered trademarks include "McTravel" and "McFuture"... The future suddenly seems tasteless.

A CHAD DANGEROUS

The President of Chad has received a $25 million bonus from oil companies for giving the go-ahead for the World Bank funded Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline. He has already spent much of the money on - you guessed - the purchase of military equipment.

sidelines

Mad Mounties

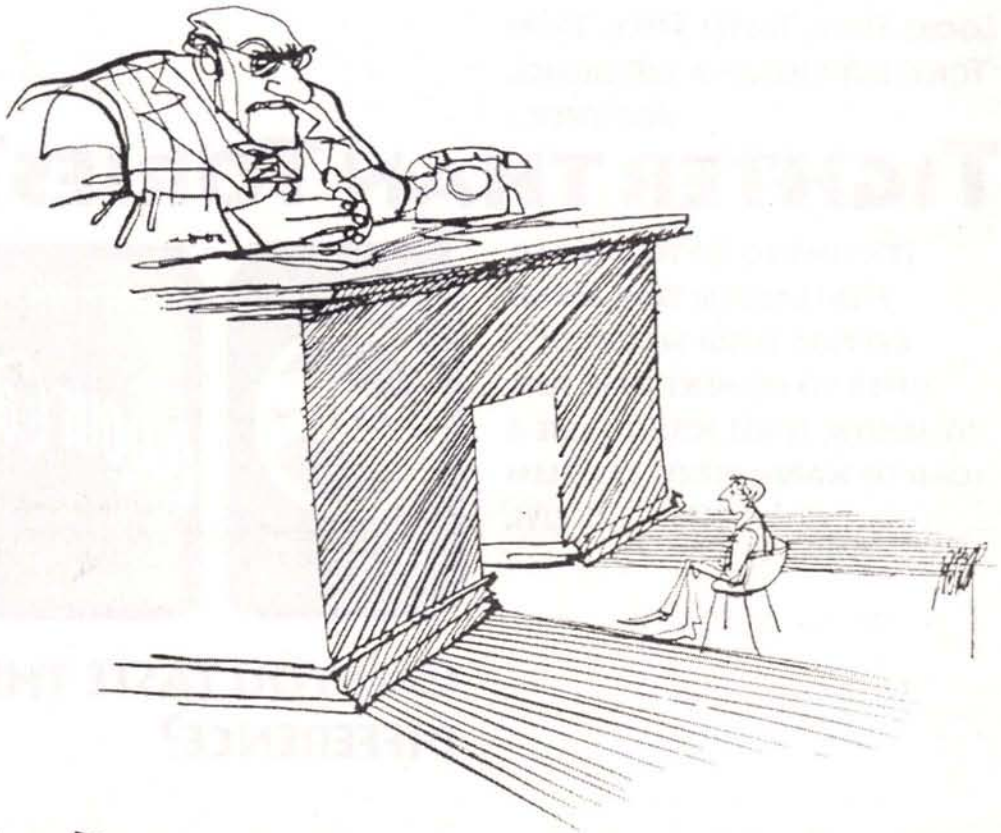
Betty Krawcyzk, a 72 year old great-grandmother has been given a year in prison with no parole for standing in front of a logging truck. Letters of support to Betty Krawcyzk, Burnaby Correctional Center for Women, 7900 Fraser Park Dr., Burnaby, C V5J 5H1 Canada. (Source: SchNEWS, www.schnews.org.uk)

BNRRRRRRRRR

Abbey National Plc clearly decided there was more fast cash in lending money to Tarmac over the countryside than in giving mortgages to people. Their £600m funding of Midland expressway to build the 27-mile private toll Birmingham Northern Relief Road must suit their new image, as they state; "we undertake to conduct our activities with proper regard for the environment". Maybe they need some advice? Give them a call - 0800 731 7774 or 0800 100 800. They're paying. Make sure their "life is complicated enough"! Also, contact Action Against the Toll Motorway (AToM), 07818 687742 or actionagainstthe tollmotorway@hotmail.com.

Chile truths

The Clinton administration has released more than 16,000 documents about US government operations in Chile over nearly three decades, confirming that the United States worked to destabilise the government of former Socialist president Salvador Allende and pave the way for the bloody military coup that put dictator Augusto Pinochet in power. About 13,000 of the previously classified documents came from the State Department, and others came from the CIA and FBI. They showed how US policy makers set out to undo the democratically elected government of Allende in 1970. Pinochet seized power on Sept. 11, 1973, and at least 3,200 people died or disappeared during his 17-year rule.



Whistleblowers

The Public Interest Disclosures Act is now an established piece of New Labour legislation. Better known as "the whistle blowers' law", it was intended to protect workers who are victimised after publicising bosses who may be flouting Health and Safety regulations or practising discrimination in the workplace.

In April, Public Concern at Work, an independent charity that helped draw up the whistle blowers' law, took the government to judicial review. Despite the government's attempts to keep all details of applications to employment tribunals secret, it won a ruling in the High Court that they should be made public.

New Labour's twin obsessions of control and secrecy made a mockery of their claim of a commitment towards a culture of rights when, on July 26, without consultation and without any public announcement, they quietly introduced a statutory instrument to overturn the High Court's ruling. The result is that all the public will know is that an application has been lodged at an employment tribunal and the participants' names and addresses - nothing else. The Department of Trade and Industry call this "a small administrative detail".

This 'small administrative detail' has effectively destroyed the aim of the bill, which was to force companies to follow basic safety procedures, have some sort of rudimentary ethical policy and protect employees who raise valid concerns without having to resort to lawyers.

Apart from the total disregard for the principle of open justice, the government's actions have trampled on an individual's right to follow a moral compulsion to speak out. New Labour's enthusiasm for this bill has been almost impossible to detect anyway. There was no public information campaign at all. If effective, the law would have meant that unscrupulous employers would have become more accountable for their actions. In a blatant attempt to avoid any potential for upset for the bosses, the government overruled the High Court decision without any consultation or debate.

This government may spout the rhetoric of openness and accountability, but the reality is that they are doing everything in their power to increase secrecy for themselves and the bosses.

Workers' rights cannot be guaranteed through lawyers, the courts and parliament; they can only be won and then defended by collective, working class action. Individual workers who see employers flouting basic rights in the workplace need to look to other ways of 'whistle blowing' to protect themselves. The CSL3 are a case in point (see facing page). When workers try to defend their rights or public services and get victimised for it, collective working class solidarity is still the only effective way to fight back in their defence.

URGENT ACTION APPEAL:

SUPPORT THE CSL3!

THE CSL3 - SACKED FOR DEFENDING OUR SERVICES

On September 25th, four housing benefit workers in Newham, London, were suspended by their employers, CSL. The four workers, who are elected staff representatives, have repeatedly denounced the poor service offered by CSL and the stressful working conditions (performance targets, cost-cuttings, deterioration of services, etc.). Their comments, always ignored by the bosses, were sent to Inside Housing Magazine who, unfortunately, named one of the individuals to CSL!
Three of the workers have now been sacked.

THE BACKGROUND

CSL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu - the privatised housing benefits company. London Borough of Newham contracted out most of its Housing Benefit (HB) service to CSL in June 1999.

Housing Benefit is paid to the poorest and most vulnerable in our community to help with housing costs. It is a complex benefit to administer and the council publicly admitted 'teething troubles' with the company. The combination of performance targets, cost-cutting, a backlog of work and 'private sector management methods' have had an impact on service delivery. In a recent radio interview about the problems the company was having in its numerous HB contracts, CSL spokesperson Ian Scotter admitted; "we were naive in estimating the work involved (in administering housing benefits)".

THE VICTIMISATION

Staff have dared to speak out in defence of a service and the welfare of workers at CSL, and have been sacked for it. Such is the working atmosphere, and the treatment that they are receiving, that staff are leaving on an almost daily basis. They are not being replaced, which increases the workload for those left. Now, elected staff representatives have been sacked for taking up these issues with CSL on behalf of the rest of the staff.

THE EMBARRASSMENT

The staff have repeatedly attempted to highlight the problems. CSL have done little but ignore the issues. These include benefit claims that haven't been dealt with, staff victimisation, harassment, bullying, and lack of both resources and a competent strategy to run an effective service. Other local authorities have admitted that "outsourcing" housing benefits has not worked. CSL seem fearful of public scrutiny of the service.

WHERE IS THIS GOING?

The implications of what has happened are wide ranging. If it continues, people applying for benefit will receive a poorer service. If you claim Housing Benefit, work for a local authority, have concerns about housing issues, or have an interest in services in the public sector, you owe it yourself - help stop CSL and their likes.

Support the workers who are facing disciplinary action - discuss it in your workplace and alert your union - offer support.
Contact us - we feel that this is a national issue, and joint action is needed for change. We aim to raise the profile of this scandal, and we need your help to do this. Defend local services - this is not an isolated incident. We are getting reports of similar issues across the country. Question your local privatised council services – see if the same or similar is happening in your area.

CSL3 Support Group

Write to any of the following and register your concern:
Kim Mason, Contract Manager, CSL Group Limited, Broadway Chambers, 2 The Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4QS.
Brian Reece, CSL Chief Executive, 1st Floor Ashton House, Silbury Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HG. Tel 01908 830 900 Fax 01908 848 110
John Connolly, Chief Executive Deloitte&Touche, Stonecutter Court, 1 Stonecutter Street, London EC4A 4TR. Tel 0207 9936 3000 Fax 0207 583 1198
Newham Council Leader-Sir Robin Wales, Members' Post Room, East Ham Town Hall, London E6.
The CSL3 need money for their campaign - send donations (cheques to "S. Stone"). For more information and a list of Deloitte & Touche offices, contact;

CSL3 Support Group, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE.
Email; housingbenefit@hotmail.com

Why was I sacked?

CSL have never denied that the workers were right. Their response has been to victimise three of the workers' spokespeople. We were sacked for gross misconduct on November 20th. The main charge was "causing grave embarrassment" to the company.

The basis of the case against us is that we deliberately sought, through flyposting, handouts and correspondence, to bring CSL into disrepute. The idea is that this would damage current and future business, cause embarrassment to existing clients, and a rift between Clients and CSL. The letter sacking us was five pages long.

So CSL have sacked three people and, in so doing, put their families through misery, just for voicing the workers' concerns. Ignored by the union, UNISON, CSL workers, friends and relatives of the victimised people, have decided to set up a support group. Together with members of the Solidarity Federation, they are carrying out leafleting and picketing of the company.

Urgent support is needed to save our jobs. We feel also that this is a national issue, and joint action is needed for change. CSL are not interested in providing a good service for benefit claimants and now they're victimising and bullying the workers who dare to speak out against this situation. Who will be next?

Sacked CSL Worker

HAGUE MADNESS

Netherlands

It might seem a little odd that people in a settlement 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle should complain about the world getting warmer. But the indigenous Gwich'in residents of Arctic Village in Alaska have good reason to be worried. Strange plants are moving in, lakes are disappearing into cracks in the thawing underground permafrost, and the migration patterns of the all-important caribou herds have changed almost beyond recognition. Don't blame the caribou - they probably don't know what time of year it is.

Speakers lined up at the 'Climate Justice Summit' to tell their stories of devastation wrought by oil companies. One of the main themes of the conference was an emphasis on the leading role being taken by local communities trying to stop the climate change problem at source by confronting oil and mining companies. Prominent among the casualties is Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was hanged in 1995 with eight other Ogoni activists by the Nigerian government for his campaign to drive Shell out of the Niger Delta. Saro-Wiwa's brother Dr. Owens Wiwa spoke of his Ogoni homeland as an 'epicentre' of climate change: "Rising sea levels are going to lead to the disappearance of the Niger Delta, whose people and environment have already been under assault by the oil industry for more than 40 years," Dr Wiwa said. "It is crucial for the drilling to stop, so as to save both the Delta and the world's climate."

Evidence is now streaming in from around the world that recent extreme weather events are directly related to the speed of global warming. The UK suffered its worst floods for 50 years in November, bringing the climate change issue onto the front pages for the first time. At almost the same time in Bangladesh, over four million people were being affected by flooding, with one million driven out of their homes as environmental refugees. At least two islets have already disappeared in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati because of rising sea levels.

In sharp contrast to the, at times mind numbing, official climate negotiations in November, community activists from around the world held a watershed gathering. Members of communities fighting the oil industry, international environmental justice activists, and those facing the rising tide of global warming gathered in The Hague for the first ever "Climate Justice Summit". While government delegates and mainstream environmental groups at the official negotiations debated market-based "solutions", speakers met at a small theatre in The Hague to share experiences of the real impacts of climate change.

Speaker after speaker described the human rights violations and environmental devastation wrought by the fossil fuel industry as well as the industry's responsibility for the global dynamic of climate change. Many spoke of how their communities are either already affected by global warming or will be threatened by the rising tides and extreme weather associated with climate change. Meanwhile, after generating tons of hot air, the Hague Summit disbanded without agreement, as talks broke down. The US was particularly instrumental (their negotiator got pied for turning up) and no-one believed their rouses. The time for talking's over.

CELEBRATE

STEAL SOMETHING DAY

NOVEMBER 26, 1999
participate by participating!

a shameless 24 hour stealing spree!

Canada

For the past nine years, a few self-described "culture jammers" from Adbusters Magazine have dubbed the last Friday in November "Buy Nothing Day."

From their stylish home base in Vancouver's upscale suburb of Kitsilano, the Adbusters' brain trust has encouraged conscientious citizens world-wide to "relish [their] power as a consumer to change the economic environment." In their words, Buy Nothing Day "proves how empowering it is to step out of the consumption stream for even a day." Unfortunately, this is insulting to the millions of people world-wide who are too poor or marginalised to be considered "consumers." Well, this year, while the Adbusters cult enjoys yet another Buy Nothing Day, accompanied by their fancy posters, stickers, TV and radio advertisements and slick webpages, a few self-described anarcho-situationists from Montreal's East End are inaugurating "Steal Something Day". Unlike Buy Nothing Day, when people are asked to "participate by not participating", Steal Something Day demands that we "participate by participating." Steal Something Day urges us to collectively identify the greedy bastards who are actually responsible for promoting misery and boredom in this world. Instead of ignoring them, Steal Something Day encourages us to make their lives as uncomfortable as possible: "Stealing is just. Theft is exploitative. Stealing is the re-distribution of wealth from rich to poor. Theft is making profits at the expense of the disadvantaged and the natural environment."

This international news could not have been brought to you without the following excellent WebSources:

A-Infos News Service; http://www.ainfos.ca/
DAMN (Direct Action Media Network); http://damn.tao.ca/
IWA (International Workers' Association); secretariado@iwa-ait.com; http://www.iwa-ait.com
SchNEWS; http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/index.htm
Labournet; http://www.labournet.org/
Aseed; http://antenna.nl/aseed/
Earth First; http://host.envirolink.org/ef/
Corporate Watch; http://www.corpwatch.org

Colombia

The aerial fumigation program that has grown out of the U.S. government's so-called "war on drugs" is endangering the fragile ecosystems and indigenous cultures of Colombia's Amazon Basin. The fumigation program, which the U.S. finances as part of a $1.3 billion Colombian aid package approved this summer, is designed to eradicate coca and other plants used to manufacture illicit drugs. But critics say the program indiscriminately wipes out legitimate subsistence crops as well as natural plants, and kills birds, mammals and aquatic life. The chemicals are applied by aircraft and frequently fall on Colombia's indigenous peoples, subjecting them to a variety of health afflictions.

The herbicide approved for the program, glyphosate, is manufactured by the U.S. based Monsanto Corporation and is commonly referred to by the trade name Roundup. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide, meaning that any plant exposed to a sufficient amount of the chemical will be killed. The chemical has been sprayed over tens of thousands of acres in Colombia since the early 1990s, but the eradication program has done little to curtail the supply of cocaine that comes into the U.S. every year. Still, Colombian officials - at the request of U.S. policymakers - are once again gearing up to dump thousands of litres of glyphosate on Colombia, this time targeting the country's southern state of Putumayo.

South Africa

Services came to a halt in the Northern Cape as hundreds of SA Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) members went on a one-day-strike to protest against privatisation on 16th November. Samwu provincial spokesman Benjamin Mdluli said municipal workers handed in memorandums at various centres in the province calling for an end to privatisation initiatives. "The memorandums called on municipalities not to retrench workers, to initiate life-line service packages to all communities and to ensure that they created jobs for the unemployed through projects".

Municipal workers who have been taking strike action around the country are, for the most part, low paid. The loss of even one day of wages is, therefore, a serious consideration, with families and children having to share the economic burden. Yet tens of thousands of municipal workers have shown themselves willing to risk much more than one day's pay. Members of both the Cosatu-aligned South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) and Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union (Imatu), affiliated to the Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) are threatening prolonged mass action.

For more info, visit http://www.woza.co.za/sapa/nov00/strike17.htm or http://www.woza.co.za/news00/nov00/samwu16b.htm

Czech Republic

On 11th November, protesters blocked an entrance to the city council in Brno to protest against the eviction of Ladronka squatters. Their intention was to highlight the right of poor people to solve their housing problems through trespassing into privately owned empty houses and flats which are only used as investment properties by speculators.

The protesters prevented the mayor of the city of Brno, who was furiously trying to get through the blockade, from leaving his office. The police were called in, the blockade was broken and one of the protesters was arrested.

For more info, contact:
Solidarita, L.K., PO Box 13, 679 21 Cerna Hora, Czech Republic.
Email: solidarita_praha@hotmail.com

India

On 13th November, over a thousand environmental protesters stormed police barricades in New Delhi and marched up to the offices of the World Bank demanding they be allowed to meet with visiting Bank president James Wolfensohn. They were led by India's most prominent environmental campaigner, Medha Patkar, a commissioner on the World Commission on Dams.

Patkar leads the anti-dam group Narmada Bachao Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement), which has been protesting the Indian Supreme Court decision allowing the Sardar Sarovar dam across the Narmada River to be raised. The organisation campaigns for the rights of the approximately 400,000 people likely to be displaced by the dam project.

The Supreme Court handed down a ruling on October 18 rejecting a six-year-old court appeal against the Rs 370 billion Sardar Sarovar dam in Gujarat, western India. Proponents of the dam say it will produce much needed electricity and flood control. Patkar and other critics point to the hundreds of thousands of people who will be displaced by the rising water and have nowhere to go.

Walking nearly nine kilometres (5.6 miles) in New Delhi to the World Bank's offices, protesters shouted slogans against the global project lender and demanded that it "quit India."

The World Bank has come under fire during the visit of president Wolfensohn to India, after the multinational lending agency seemed to change its stance on the dam project it had earlier declined to support.

The march to the World Bank office met with stiff resistance from the New Delhi police, who set up double barricades in the area. Leading the protesters, Narmada Bachao Andolan women battled with policewomen at the barricades, almost breaking these down.

World Bank staffers said Wolfensohn was extremely busy with meetings, but protester said they would wait for him, if necessary for days, blocking traffic in the national capital.

The Sardar Sarovar dam is the first of 30 large dams and hundreds of medium and small dams planned for the Narmada River which runs through central India. Launched in 1979, the Sardar Sarovar Project, as it is formally called, envisages 135 medium and over 3,000 small dams on the Narmada River.

Letter from Serbia

Dear friends,

We won! I don't have enough words to describe to you all how we all feel now in Yugoslavia! Last night, after burning parliament and national television, celebration started. People were going around kissing and hugging each other, you could see on every face a smile or tears of happiness. During the night small groups of anti-Milosevic people went around city destroying headquarters of Milosevicis (now) ex-party "Socialistic Party of Serbia". There was some looting reported but those were only isolated cases. There was music in the streets, people were dancing with "Let the Sunshine in" and other great songs. University is free also. There was no need for any of us to continue sleeping inside of it, now there is nobody left who wants to take the university from us. Today and in next few days we, students, will take over all of the institutions and locals which once were student governed and were taken from us by the state. Milosevic couldn't go without spilling some blood, there is reported two deaths and big number of injured people, that was the last evil thing that he did to us! He apparently flew away from Yugoslavia, it is pity that he will not get what he deserves. Now we have to understand that we have another enemy to fight with. The new president is also nationalist, strongly, with neo-liberal economic policy. We, anarchists, will have to organise resistance against them. As I earlier said, we supported the General Strike against Milosevic because we think that we will have more space for our actions, and we hope that we will have that space now. What this strike showed? It showed that the idea of General Strike is not outdated as some people said, it showed that when people have the same goal (taking Milosevic out of the power this time) and have enough solidarity they can do everything! Now it is time that we start working on an International Social General Strike, which will stop the capitalistic system and crush states. At the end I would like to apologise for my imperfect English. Also I would like to thank to everybody who sent messages of solidarity to us, it is of outmost importance to us to see that International Solidarity is not just a fancy word everybody is using. Goodbye to you all, from a society which made one big, again only one, step towards freedom!

Anarcho-syndicalist greetings!
Rata

India II

Three people were killed in violent protests in November in India's capital city of New Delhi. The protests, which lasted 4 days, were against the closure of about 7,000 industrial facilities. Thousands of angry owners and workers affected brought the city to a standstill. The response was to the implementation of a Court order to close the polluting plants, which operate in residential areas. At least three people were killed by police, and more than 100 sustained injuries in the violent clashes. Streets were blocked, government vehicles set alight and damage occurred at various places in the city. India's highest Court turned down a request by the government of Delhi to allow it to slow down the process of shifting polluting and unauthorised industrial units due to the demonstrations.

Of the 80,000 industrial units operating from within the metropolis, only about 30,000 have a valid licence. More than 125,000 workers were employed in these industries. They are likely to be unemployed since the government has not made arrangements for relocating them.

The chaos in Delhi has provided the perfect playing field for politicians. Soon after the protests began, opposition leaders from the right-wing BJP held the chief minister Shiela Dixit, who heads a Congress government in the state of Delhi, responsible for the problem as a result of unduly delays and lethargy. Dixit in turn blamed the earlier BJP governments for not adequately planning for the relocation of the industrial units in the Master Plan 2001. Politician's tempers were so high that the legislative State Assembly had to be adjourned amidst unruly scenes. While the BJP members sat in a protest outside the Assembly demanding the resignation of the chief minister, the Congress members led a demonstration asking the removal of the Union minister for urban development, for ordering closure of the industrial units without first providing them with alternative sites.

The Delhi government buckled under public pressure and decided to amend and redefine household industries to allow certain industries to continue operating from residential areas. But the minister for urban development ruled out the possibility of any change in the master plan and said that efforts will be made to acquire more land for relocating and rehabilitating these industries outside the Capital city.

Greece

On 13th November, 40-50 anarchists entered the university "Macedonia" of Thessaloniki, Greece, where the Mexican ambassador was giving a speech about the economic situation in Mexico and the aid that can be given by the European Union. The anarchists entered the building, threw eggs at him and shouted slogans in favour of the Zapatistas.

Euskal Herria

On 13/14/15th October, there was an EC European Summit with all presidents and ministers discussing policies for Europe. Most of us were too busy recalling the glorious days of Prague, some remembering the activists who still remain in the Czech prisons and occupying Czech embassies in Europe to show support. However, the summit went ahead anyway, in the cities of Biarritz and Baiona (Bayonne). These are not the most stable times in Euskal Herria (Basque Country) and Baiona is in the central part of the French-occupied Basque Country.

Two thousand Basques demonstrated over the weekend, demanding independence, the repatriation of dispersed Basque prisoners and opposing capitalist Europe. Buses and banks were set alight and police cars destroyed (all in all nothing out of the ordinary for the locals). There were 100 arrests.

Brazil

In October, civil police from the Federal District of Brasilia assassinated Gildo da Silva Rocha, Press and Publicity Secretary of SINDSER (Union of Civil Servants and Public Employees - CUT affiliated). After a union meeting, Gildo and two other comrades left for Ceilândia to organise a picket at the regional offices of the Urban Cleansing Service. When the comrades began to set up the picket, plainclothes police appeared, ordered them to the ground and began shooting. Two comrades, Geraldo Rufino and Edson Sampaio - who were detained - went down; one of them, Geraldo, was nearly shot in the foot, while Gildo ran towards the car and got inside. He was shot 17 times by the police, one of the bullets entered Gildo's back and killed him. Intending to cover up this vile murder, the police planted a weapon in the vehicle as well as stolen cheques and a joint of marijuana, later claiming that Gildo returned fire and was involved in drugs. The representative of the 15th governmental district of Ceilândia, João Emilio de Oliveira, stated that "the police did not know that the men were trade unionists and were setting up a picket". Once again, the universal police logic of "shoot first and ask questions later" was imposed.

Send messages to: Governador do Distrito Federal, Joaquim Domingos Roriz, Palácio do Buriti - Praça do Buriti, Brasilia – DF, 70075- 900. Fax (61) 224-2063. Email the Secretary of Social Communication: scs@scs.df.gov.br. Copies to: CUT: cutdf@brnet.com.br PSTU: pstunac@uol.com.br

Norway

On Saturday 11th November, the autonomous house "Blitz" in Oslo organised a demonstration in solidarity with the Palestinian people. A march took place from the central university building to the Israeli Embassy, also passing the Norwegian Secretary of State/ Foreign Ministry, responsible for the Oslo Agreement, and the US Embassy.

Outside the Israeli Embassy, the Blitz' Noise Brigade played drums, and demonstrators started to throw stones and eggs filled with red paint at the embassy. Numerous windows got broken and the embassy building was left decorated with red "blood". The police tried to intervene but were unsuccessful. Finally, a rally ensued, with speeches and solidarity messages, before everyone returned to the Blitz house. By this time, numerous riot police had gathered outside the embassy, together with dogs, horses and vehicles. They followed the 200 demonstrators back to Blitz, and attacked them outside the house. A scrap ensued, and although there were casualties on both sides, the the house was successfully defended.

Mexico

Mexican workers who never received aid payments promised to them by the government blockaded a gas plant in November. About 300 workers took over the Ciudad Pemex natural gas plant in the coastal state of Tabasco. They wanted the company to give them tax rebates the federal government had promised them as part of an aid package for flooding a year ago. The rebates are equal to about 15 per cent of their wages, and the workers never got the money. A union representative suggested the money may have gone to the campaign fund for the ruling PRI party, which won the state governorship in October amid charges of fraud.

For more info: chiapas-i@eco.utexas.edu; http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/chiapas95.html

Preview: Canada -Global Action Against Capitalism: A22/01

Quebec City has the dubious honour of hosting the Summit of the Americas, which brings together all the so-called leaders of North, Central and South America (except Cuba). For a few days, Quebec will be turned into a militarised zone as these heads of state, and their big business pals, gather for a series of meetings, photo-ops and posh dinners. The stated purpose of the Summit is to put the final touches to the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement (FTAA), which aims to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the entire hemisphere. The FTAA is supposed to be adopted no later than 2005.

For more info, visit: http://anti-capitalisme.ctw.net/ or http://www.quebec2001.net/

Prague

On the 26th of September Prague hosted the annual meeting of the international monetary fund. It also became the focal point for the latest global day of action against capitalism. As thousands danced on the streets, fought with the police or blocked roads, solidarity actions took place around the world.

In the event, after almost a year of preparations, the Prague anti-IMF/WB activities ended with the media, the local Czech authorities, and the bankers wandering off even before the official summit was completed.

Whether this sudden ending was due to the activists' threat to the banking establishment in Prague or the Fund/Bank's "nothing else to say" attitude, we will never really know. The Bank/Fund agenda has now firmly turned to the battle between its two largest donors- the US and the EU- and contrary to their mission, nothing new has been achieved related to global poverty alleviation. At the time when the protesters were still constructing the pink cardboard tank, the G7 bosses were meeting with the Fund governors about how to save the dollar through helping the declining Euro. They also talked of plans for the sale of US oil reserves, again for the sake of stabilising the market price of oil. Economic problems were discussed as the international resistance agenda was successfully going on with the counter summit, an alternative summit of activists organised by the local initiative INPEG.

The alternative summit was a success despite the limited resources and constant governmental repression. It managed to attract a local and international audience, and discussed the social and economic causes that have been excluded from the IMF/WB agenda. The counter summit ended with an evening cultural event, a festival of arts and resistance, which was brief, again due to the state repression on the streets. S26 itself started with a gathering of approximately 9,000 people in Namesti Miru square, where protesters gathered before going on a mission to block the delegates inside the congress centre. The task was fulfilled. Four different marches, divided by four colour brigades (Yellow, Pink, Blue and Pink/Silver), chose their own way toward the congress palace, after an initial unity march.

The right wing Czech police needed no provocation, and soon began assaulting hundreds of people. An estimated 950 people were arrested, denied their legal rights, and many were beaten in custody and denied access to legal aid, food, medicine, clean water and toilets. Some are still being physically tortured in Czech jails. The mainstream media didn't accurately report these human right violations, but have instead loyally picked up the old story about young, dissatisfied and aggressive youth. They seem to have forgotten why 10,000 people came to Prague in the first place.

Many of those arrested report of being prevented from sleeping for up to 36 hours by the police. The fact that only 25 of the hundreds arrested were actually charged demonstrates not only the random nature of the arrests but also the reality of the police riot that took place on S26 and S27.

Photographs that have been published in newspapers and on the Internet reveal the presence of police agents-provocateurs dressed as rioters, and police with their i.d. removed. According to the Czech newspaper Lidove Noviny (September 29), "observers have filmed a man smashing a McDonald's window and then walking away through a police cordon without any hassle"; "reporters met policemen dressed up as demonstrators in black sweatshirts with black scarves or hoods over their faces. At Tylovo Namesti, reporters saw one of the masked policemen hit metal bars on a showcase window with a pole torn off a railing; later, he arrested activists". Obscenely, Interior Minister Stanislav Gross reacted to the evidence of undercover agents by calling for the people presenting this evidence to also be arrested (Prague Post of Wednesday, October 4, 2000).

There is international outrage at the police abuses and the massive cover up of them the Czech state is now involved in. Demonstrations have happened outside Czech embassies all over the world and tens of thousands of protest letters and emails have poured in from organisations and individuals.

It is vital we put on more pressure to get everyone released and all the charges dropped. Why not print copies of letters (e.g. see box on facing page) and get others to sign them?

For news of what really happened in Prague and for updates visit the website: www.prague.indymedia.org

S26

Violent repression continues

On 23th of October, special units of the police surrounded and arrested three militants of the anarcho-syndicalist Czech FSA-IWA (Czech sister organisation of the Solidarity Federation). This formed part of a wider campaign by the Czech security forces and the media against those suspected of involvement in the S26 demonstrations.

The media have accused the FSA-IWA of being well-organised and benefiting from their membership of an international organisation. Photos of demonstrators have been published, with calls for people to identify them for the police.

The day before the arrests, the FSA-IWA's computers were totally destroyed. The ongoing (illegal) campaign of repression by the Czech state is the latest chapter in a long-term strategy to try to prevent the FSA-IWA's radical struggle against fascism and capitalism.

For more info on the latest and how you can help, contact:

AIT – Secretariado, Apdo 4141, 18080 GRANADA, Spain. Email: secretariado@iwa-ait.com Website: http://www.iwa-ait.com

I demand the immediate release of all prisoners still in Czech jails from the S26 demonstrations against the IMF and World Bank. I demand that all the charges against people arrested on that day be immediately dropped!

Signed:

Address:

Fax, phone or post to the following;
Office of President Vaclav Havel:
Tel. 4202 24310855
Fax. 4202 24373196
Email: president@hrad.cz

Ministry of the Interior:
Tel. 4202 61421115
Fax 4202/6143 3552-3
Email: stiznosti@mvcr.cz
Police email: oks@mvcr.cz

Ministry of Justice:
Vysehradska 16, 128 10 Praha 2
Tel. 4202 21997111
Fax 4202 24919927
Email: wsp@wsp.justice.cz

READ BEFORE TRAVELLING:

In light of recent human rights abuses, safety of any visitors to Czech Republic cannot be guaranteed.

Human rights organisations are looking into hundreds of official complaints of police beatings and numerous other gross violations of human rights. Meanwhile, the Czech government is attempting to deny that any of these incidents have taken place; in spite of hundreds of witnesses to these brutal crimes at the hands of their police force.

Women have been strip searched by male officers and forced while naked to perform exercises for the enjoyment of male officers; many people have been denied food and water and sleep sometimes for days; thirty prisoners were detained in an outdoor courtyard with no blankets or food and beaten when they tried to sit down; one woman jumped from a two story window after severe abuse by police and later was physically abused by medical staff; she is now in hospital in Vienna with serious and permanent injuries; many people were beaten up both before and after being in police stations; police have allowed fascist thugs into cells to beat prisoners up; most people were denied access to any legal advice and/or interpreters, and many have been forced to sign documents in Czech.

The vast majority of the people abused while in police custody had committed no crime whatsoever. Many were arrested for simply walking down the street completely uninvolved in any hint of a crime. Some were tourists, media and local people. All but two people from S26/27 have now been released, less than 10 have been charged.

Nobody visiting the Czech Republic is safe until action is taken against the police involved to ensure the abuses stop. Even if you are lucky enough not to get arrested while visiting, you are still not safe. Recent visitors have been badly beaten by gangs of fascists while walking around tourist areas and metro stations, often under the eyes of the Czech police, many of whom are openly fascist themselves and obviously support such attacks.

Show your outrage, stay away from the Czech Republic and advise others to do the same. Contact the Czech Government via The Embassy of the Czech Republic (Tel. 020 7243 1115). If you are still unsure, take a look at the following website. It shows just some of the first hand accounts of severe brutality and sexual harassment at the hands of the Czech police:

http://www.crosswinds.net/jailsolidarity

CORPORATE

Corporate killing appears to have become a somewhat catchy label for the inevitable results of capitalism's criminal promotion of profit over people. It is also something that Blair, Straw & Co have pledged action on. But their business mates have so far persuaded them otherwise - after all, they are the ones getting away with the corporate killing.

TARMAC HAS KILLED 13 OF ITS WORKERS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, YET NO TARMAC DIRECTOR HAS EVER FACED DISQUALIFICATION, LET ALONE IMPRISONMENT... THE AVERAGE FINE PER KILLING WAS A MERE £11,475

In recent years, the rail companies have repeatedly hit the headlines with one disaster after another. However, as DA14 points out ('Making a Killing: Business as Usual'), the list of guilty companies is not a short one. Tarmac, for instance, has killed thirteen of its workers over the last ten years, yet no Tarmac director has ever faced disqualification, let alone imprisonment, and the average fine per killing was a mere £11,475. With such paltry penalties, corporate balance sheets show a healthy profit, while workers sacrifice life and limb. But won't New Labour's introduction of a new crime, corporate manslaughter, bring about an end to this lax attitude to safety violations? This is what the hype and spin would have us believe, but the reality will be far different - in fact, more of the same.

The catalyst for the proposed legislation has been the high profile rail crashes at Southall and Paddington, which resulted in widespread publicity concerning the total inadequacy of current legislation. Regarding the Southall crash, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) failed to persuade the courts that corporations could be charged with the common law offence of manslaughter. Consequently, the CPS refused to initiate legal action over the Paddington disaster. The resultant public outcry at the sight of criminally negligent rail companies and their directors openly violating safety legislation and then getting off scot free with killing scores of rail passengers temporarily forced New Labour's hand. However, if New Labour have anything to do with it, the corporate killers will continue to get away with it.

While Southall, Paddington, Piper Alpha or The Herald of Free Enterprise or a number of other disasters are the high profile cases, the majority of corporate killings receive nowhere near as much attention. According to TUC figures five people per week are killed at work. And this doesn't take into account members of the public killed by corporations' activities nor those workers and others killed by the long term effects of such activities. Looked at in this way, the whole issue begins to take on the appearance of corporate slaughter.

Many of these deaths occur in the deregulated and casualised end of the employment spectrum. These largely pass by with little comment beyond the local media. It was in such a casualised, unsafe, unregulated environment that Simon Jones (see DA16) was killed at Shoreham docks by Euromin and Personnel Selection. This is one of the few killings that has led to a campaign both to secure a conviction (despite CPS refusal to act) and to publicise and challenge the virtual slavery of casualisation (see adjacent box). The growth of the casualised sector can be entirely put down to the deregulation policies of successive governments since Thatcher,

KILLINGS

including the present New Labour administration. As such, it is one of the most important sectors in terms of New Labour's record low unemployment figures, one of the factors they will be counting on to ensure another election victory. They are not about to let this be threatened by rising health and safety costs.

As a result, the much vaunted corporate manslaughter legislation has already been watered down. The proposals finally put forward by Straw in May stop well short of imprisonment for directors of guilty corporations. Instead, there will be the threat of disqualification from involvement in business and of fines potentially running into millions of pounds. But such threats merely bring on a serious attack of *déjà vu.* Unlimited fines, for instance, are possible under existing health and safety legislation, yet companies that breach these laws rarely, if ever, get more than the equivalent of a slap on the wrist as the case of Tarmac amply highlights. In fact, Straw wants any charges against directors to be brought separately from corporate manslaughter charges and only in cases where evidence directly implicates such an individual, as is required by present health and safety legislation. The cost-cutting decisions of directors may lead to health and safety violations and death but they themselves will not be charged with manslaughter. Besides, the requirement of direct implication leaves open the possibility for directors to wriggle out of the firing line by finding some scapegoat in middle management or even lower down the chain of command.

The legislation has also been weakened by allowing the police, army and "some other groups" to claim crown immunity. "Some other groups", of course, is unspecified, but it's not hard to imagine that by the time it finally gets into the statute book, some vested interests will have lobbied themselves into this category. What's the betting that this will include many companies in the casualised sector? There is also to be a supposedly new role for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in investigating and prosecuting cases of corporate manslaughter. But this is the same HSE that is responsible for overseeing current health and safety legislation with its pathetic fines and suspended sentences. It is the same HSE that is so understaffed and which has been so chronically underfunded for the last two decades (the current New Labour administration being no exception) that many accidents at work go uninvestigated.

The picture that emerges is one of a load of spin about addressing the real needs of the victims and relatives of corporate killings, but a reality of little real change. While corporations will now face manslaughter charges instead of, or in addition to, charges of breaching health and safety law, the legislation is likely to be so watered down and toothless as to preclude anything more than the current level of penalties. It will therefore do little, if anything, to improve the working environment. For this to happen we must take the fight directly to the corporate killers themselves, as the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign against casualisation has done.

THE PICTURE THAT EMERGES IS ONE OF A LOAD OF SPIN ABOUT ADDRESSING THE REAL NEEDS OF THE VICTIMS AND RELATIVES OF CORPORATE KILLINGS, BUT A REALITY OF LITTLE REAL CHANGE

CASUALISATION KILLS

The Simon Jones Memorial Campaign (see DA16) is fighting casualisation and the impunity with which bosses seem to be able to flout the law and kill workers cheaply. See p. 28→

WWW.SIMONJONES.ORG.UK

Laboured Education

The Higher Education sector has been promised more money. Problem solved? Well, actually, it is not for education workers or students - it's more for paying people to check up on them.

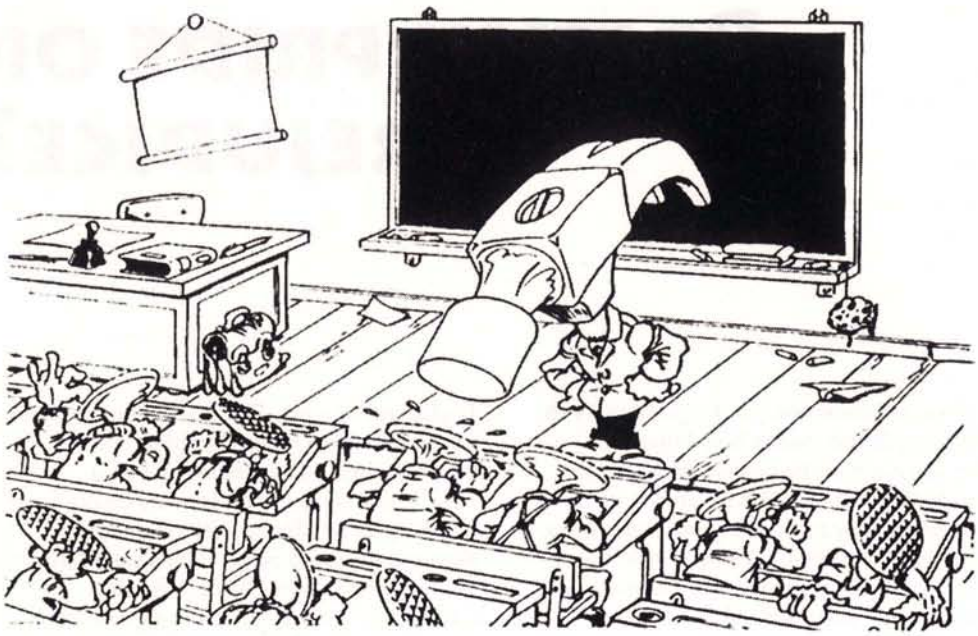
So, with the announcement of an extra one billion pounds (nearly £978m for the pedantic) for Higher Education, we are all supposed to celebrate, but then just on the tail of this comes the announcement that this money is subject to the odd string – how very unsurprising.

Higher Education has gone through big changes in the last ten years. Among the biggest are the acceleration of the expansion of student numbers without consummate resources, and the rapid deterioration of staff pay and conditions. Worse off, as ever, have been manual workers; cleaners, catering workers, porters and estates staff – on low hourly wages; they have to work long hours to make barely enough to live on. This has not been exactly helped by the dramatic rise in privatisation of services. Following a pattern similar to that of Compulsory Competitive Tendering in local government, key services are being sold off allowing management to take a step back from the flak about crap pay and conditions and cuts in services. But it's not just here that pay has suffered; lecturing staff have seen stagnation in their wages with a huge rise in workload and the expansion of casualisation. Clerical and administrative staff have had their intrays piled high by the Government and the quangos it employs, demanding more and more details, in a bewildering variety of formats, of how the money they haven't been providing is spent. So whilst student numbers go up and the 'quality assurance' bureaucracy increases, workers have seen their efforts to cope belittled with insulting pay levels.

MUCH OF THE MONEY EARMARKED FOR PAY (£35 MILLION OVER THREE YEARS) WILL DEPEND ON THE FORCING THROUGH OF PERFORMANCE RELATED PAY AND SCHEMES BEING DEVELOPED TO DIRECT EXTRA FUNDS AT 'HIGH PERFORMING ACADEMICS'

So what can we expect from this new cash we have all welcomed with open arms? Well, for a start, the small print points out that much of the money earmarked for pay (£35 million over three years) will depend on the forcing through of performance related pay and schemes being developed to direct extra funds at 'high performing academics'. Performance related pay is a fancy name for piecework – the more numbers you shove through, the more you get paid. The more students you gain, keep and get through (which is increasingly the basis for how universities themselves get funded) the more chance you have that someone might decide you get a less derisory pay offer. You bring in lots of research money by doing the research that business wants, and your university boss may look kindly on you – as an individual. Collective bargaining will only remain for the basic level, just about in sight of any inflation award, and what remains of national bargaining is increasing under fire from management seeking to opt out of even the measly pay awards agreed nationally. How it is actually worked out for academics is going to be mind boggling enough, but how on earth will it be applied to support staff? Answer, it probably won't; the bit about 'high performing academics' gives that away. The money is earmarked to stop the dreaded 'brain drain'; the supposed flight of academic staff to the private US universities. How any redistribution of wages is supposed to compete with US universities that charge huge amounts in fees and receive massive amounts in funding from big business is not clear. Despite soothing noises from Labour, recent developments actually seem to bring the idea of exorbitant top-up fees nearer to reality than ever.

One billion, no matter how welcome, and even if it were stringless, wouldn't be enough to bring the quality of the long neglected basic estate of current universities up to acceptable standards, let alone expand it to the proposed 50% of the population which is supposed to pass through HE. An extra 45,000 students are planned for the next academic year, mainly in work-related courses and particularly the two year foundation degree – which is neither really a foundation for anything nor a degree. Foundation degrees appear to be a rehash of the old ideas of training with a bit of HE,



which were the ideas behind HND's, GNVQ's and the like. Aimed at having lots of employer involvement, preferably in the SME's (small to medium enterprises), it's a further example of a move from education to training and conditioning. The opportunity to run a pilot for these courses was put out to competitive tender, though of course it was not called that. Universities were asked to submit detailed proposals based on vague ideas, in order to be the lucky ones to actually be given a bit of money to develop these new qualifications. Whether anyone actually wants to study on these courses or not does not seem to have bothered anyone.

Another chunk of this much-lauded billion is to go on widening participation, again another issue much welcomed. Widening participation is a big thing in most universities and is driven by two basic principles. Firstly is the genuine desire of many of those working in HE to include and engage with the whole of society. The second is in order to get more money. The increase in student numbers has seen more or less saturation of the traditional HE entrant; the largest section of the increase has been addressing the historic under-representation of women in HE. In order to reach Tony's magic figure of 50% participation by the age of 30, universities are going to have to attract those with no tradition of entering HE in large numbers – the working class. What the government fails to see, or refuses to see, is that the major hurdle to widening participation is no longer the entrenched attitudes of universities – though these still exist – it is their own policies. Labour introduced fees and continued with the abolition of grants. Furthermore, their policies relating to benefits and social security actively mitigate against mature students (the majority of those targeted by widening participation initiatives). Widening participation initiatives have also been dogged by the Government's obsession with keeping control of the money available, again through a process of competitive bids. How much money is spent on developing and submitting bids and then on providing the volumes of 'quality assurance' to prove that the money is not being used on big gin soaked parties?

So in our celebrations of the arrival of this (nearly) billion quid, we are faced with more and more examples of Labour's attitude to higher education. For a start, it is not really about education as a way of empowering and developing knowledge and understanding, it's about training and conditioning students to take low level middle management posts. The 'quality assurance' mechanism shows Labour's obsession with keeping things under control, of having masses of quantitative data with which to bash or to bask in reflective glory. Government is not interested in whether students actually learn or understand, but purely in how many of them can be groomed to pass at various levels assessment for the minimum amount of money spent. That universities have to bid for additional funding shows that the Government would rather waste money on piles of paper work, which cannot be genuinely used to assess the relevance and value of what is being done. It shows their real contempt for any ideas of education and their love of control and manipulation of information. It is more important to Labour to have facts and figures, however spurious, to show that n% of the population attended some form of course and gained some form of qualification than to invest in a real education system. The insistence on performance related pay shows their open hostility to the ideas of collective bargaining. New Labour's belief is in the old laissez-faire ideas that you make the nice, reliable rich work harder by paying them more, and you make the untrustworthy poor work harder by paying them less and monitoring the life out of them. DA

NEW LABOUR'S BELIEF IS IN THE OLD LAISSEZ-FAIRE IDEAS THAT YOU MAKE THE NICE, RELIABLE RICH WORK HARDER BY PAYING THEM MORE, AND YOU MAKE THE UNTRUSTWORTHY POOR WORK HARDER BY PAYING THEM LESS AND MONITORING THE LIFE OUT OF THEM

British pride or prejudice?

The debate on Britishness bubbles away in the background, while the tabloids daub a hideous caricature. Meanwhile, beyond a wry smile at a lost empire, the world passes by the question of British national and cultural identity and what it means.

Of course, there remains no question for the Right; being British means Rule Britannia, cricket, last night of the proms and loving the Queen Mother. The Right have always used English when they mean British and vice-versa, wrapping themselves in the flag, suspicious of 'Johnny Foreigner', especially the Germans, and declaring that if you want to live here, you should obey the(ir) rules.

The Labour Party began to challenge this notion in the mid-eighties, with Neil Kinnock claiming patriotism as one of Labour's principal values. Then Tony Blair, in 1995, in his first speech as leader, claimed, "Labour is the true patriotic party" and called on voters to help turn Britain into a nation reborn, "One Britain. That is the patriotism for the future."

Beginning last March there has been a return to this theme as Labour seeks to become the natural party of government. They have distanced themselves from the ridiculous 'Cool Britannia' episode looking to a kind of Britishness in a European context. The Blairites claim that a true reading of British history reveals a nation committed as much to Europe as a far-flung empire. As a government minister explained, "Britain has never been a chauvinist country. From Plantagenets, Tudors, Hanoverians, Palmerston to Churchill, we have been committed to Europe." Leaving aside the fact that the Plantagenets and Tudors were English monarchs seeking to establish a united Britain by force, the only other real commitment to Europe has been a commitment to wage war.

The recent report by the Commission on the future of multi-ethnic Britain predictably unleashed outrage in the conservative press with its suggestion that "Britain" and "British" have racial connotations of "white colonialism" and no longer serve as a satisfactory description of a multi-cultural society. Laughing Jack Straw entered the debate, attacking the lack of patriotism on the political Left.

The problem is that everyone seems to be using the ideas of national identity and cultural identity indiscriminately. No one can pin down what it means to be British beyond some woolly phrase like 'decency' or 'fair-play' (sic). This is hardly surprising, as Britain is essentially a political creation. It is simply an economic union dominated over the centuries by the English ruling class. The 'Celtic Nations' were forced into this 'United' Kingdom, yet still maintain their own identities within it.

The island we live on is made up of many diverse peoples. Once, they were Celts, Romans, Angles, Saxons, Danes and Normans. In the centuries since, Irish, Africans, Caribbeans, Asians, various Europeans and numerous others have been added. A multicultural society has developed without any help from - indeed despite, politicians.

Personally, I don't identify myself as British. If anything, I am English because that is where I was born and have lived all my life. Having said that, in common with many people in this country, my family has origins from beyond England, in my case Ireland and Scotland. It is one thing recognising where you come from in a cultural sense but it is quite another thing to identify with the nation-state that leads ultimately to xenophobia. I can be proud of my cultural origins while respecting other people's. Ultimately though, I can recognise affinities between working class people the world over - more so than similarities between the English/ British ruling class and myself. My heritage lies with the Peasants Revolt, the Diggers and Levellers of the English Revolution; with the Luddites, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists; with the Irish navvies, who helped build the canals and railways, and with the countless workers who fought for a better life and to change society. This ultimately binds me with others the world over who have taken part in similar struggles.

It is in the interests of the ruling class to promote an ideal of Britishness, to promote patriotism, to try to bind us together under a false notion that we all have a common heritage. The ruling class of this country generates its own cultural values through various means, including the mass media. This is done to make us compliant and accept our political and economic situation. The argument over Britishness is one between different factions of the ruling class who are vying for power. What we need is to re-establish our own cultural identity based on different values, values of solidarity, mutual aid, and respect. A culture that accepts and celebrates diversity and rejects any form of prejudice that divides us.

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 if you want it printed in full.

Amazed and confused

Dear DA,

I read your review of our booklet *The Couriers Are Revolting* with some amazement. When the DIWU was going from 1989-92, we received criticism and ridicule from most members of the Direct Action Movement (the Solidarity Federation before its name change). The gist of the criticism was that "You cannot just start a Union without a previous industrial organisation". Instead, you promoted, and promote, anarcho-syndicalist networks which remove militants from the workplace to talk amongst themselves.

When the DIWU dissolved, I left the DAM and joined the IWW because The Wobblies' stated aim and practice is to form militant industrial unions NOW (as the DIWU did). We have had some success in Britain - supermarket workers in Poole, 10 members; couriers in London, 12 members; College workers in Edinburgh, 12 members; and large scale organising campaigns amongst postal workers and factory workers in Devon and elsewhere.

Now, ten years on you say the DIWU is "legendary", "meant business", etc. In another ten years, will you still be sodding about in your networks and the IWW in 2000 was "legendary" and "meant business", or will you join the IWW today and be a participant instead of a spectator and reviewer? DP

It wasn't the only DIWU review but it was the most glowing. People in Networks organise at work, though they talk too - don't you? A huge mass-movement of "apolitical" Wobblies? Judging by your figures, the "political" Solidarity Federation-IWA seems to be doing rather better. What we must do is work collectively to spread anarcho-syndicalist ideas, and not be afraid to pat ourselves and each other on the back for strides which may lead in this direction. eds.

Raging in Birmingham

Dear DA,

In Birmingham, Labour is steering a funding path directly into the arms of private sector health care providers, removing public accountability through the abolition of Community Health Councils as defined in the NHS Plan. An overview of the crisis and chaos that 'public investment' in private markets is causing under local authority/ social services care may offer some pointers for the future. It may also highlight new ways to organise at community and localised levels against state and local state restructuring, which has a direct effect on communities, both socially and economically.

The Community Care Act, introduced under the Conservative administration of the 1980s, promoted the active growth of care services for local and health authorities from large and small private organisations. Many small businesses were set up, often by former Carers, to receive public funds and provide care for, in the main, local elderly communities.

However, as we've now found out in Birmingham, this process is now in meltdown. The context is critical. First, EU Convergence criteria and state-macro inflation management is vastly limiting the spending of local authorities. Second, the recurrent impact of reduced funding means that what remains of public sector provision is now threatened with 'externalisation' (privatisation). Third, many of these new social policy restructuring programmes are occurring through 'best value' initiatives. Fourth, and most crucially, many unions (most predominantly UNISON), are hamstrung by a national policy of 'appeasement' to New Labour commissars and, in some cases, by direct political attacks on branch structures, substantially weakening the capacity of local action in response to management attacks.

All these issues have featured in the RAGE (Residents Action Group for the Elderly) campaign in Birmingham, where the social services department is hell-bent on cutting costs to the level of the private sector, which, concurrently, receives 75% of its funding from the local authority.

The response from residents, their families and community organisations has built on an earlier campaign which saved five homes from closure by utilising the new local authority scrutiny committee structure. UNISON's role has been to facilitate the production of campaign material and fund academic reports into the illegality of the council's programmes. As part of the campaign, family members have recruited and organised staff in the homes, assisting the rapidly growing stewards' network. UNISON are now organising these new members through branch structures. The campaign has also used best value legislation (summarised in DETR Circular 10/99) and Human Rights legislation against the council. Families have held meetings at all 30 homes, held 5 community conferences, and have got the support of academics and many community groups representing many varied groups. A mass survey has been accomplished reaching many hundreds of people. All this adds up to the best value consultation process, as defined by law. Though recognising the contradictory nature of this relation, the campaign has followed the terms of legal regulation, unlike the authority.

RAGE has followed the law and the council hasn't. Many community groups are actively opposed to the process as a direct result of the discriminatory effect it will have on staff. This is recognised in a leaked council document. Most importantly, there is now a huge body of people opposed to the council's plans. Hopefully, all this will count as the social services committee considers the community option.

If you want to offer any organisational and personal support, please contact UNISON Birmingham Branch, 0121 631 1136 and ask for the stewards dealing with the RAGE Campaign. Winning in Birmingham will be crucial for the rest of the country.

RAGE Campaigners.

NOT FUNNY

MAD BASTARD ALERT!

"If we don't succeed, we run the risk of failure." George Bush, Jr.

"One word sums up probably the responsibility of any Governor, and that one word is 'to be prepared'." Governor Bush, Jr., 12/6/93

"When I have been asked who caused the riots and the killing in LA, my answer has been direct and simple: Who is to blame for the riots? The rioters are to blame. Who is to blame for the killings? The killers are to blame." George Bush, Jr.

"It isn't pollution that's harming the environment. It's the impurities in our air and water that are doing it." Governor Bush, Jr.

"I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy - but that could change." Governor Bush, Jr., 5/22/98

"We're going to have the best educated American people in the world." Governor Bush, Jr., 9/21/97

"A low voter turnout is an indication of fewer people going to the polls." GovernorBush, Jr.

Karen Homing Solidarity

Dear Friends,

I have enclosed a letter from Karen Homing who is presently into her eighth year of a fifteen year federal sentence for selling LSD. I have been corresponding with Karen for over 3 years. Karen is doing her time in Carswell Medical Facility at Fort Worth, Texas. It is a women's prison hospital. Karen needs help desperately to highlight her plight. Other women have died in this prison due to inattention and neglect of doctors and nurses.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented what happens in American prisons, i.e. basically torture, control by stun guns, gas, special swat teams... Rape is endemic, as is violence. People with mental health problems are shown no compassion; sometimes they are incarcerated in super maximum control units where they are locked down for 23 hours a day in a concrete cell, and their exercise is in a small concrete yard. I would appreciate it if you could ask for people to write to the prison and demand that Karen gets appropriate treatment for her illness; She also sometimes needs a wheelchair and they (the authorities) will not provide her with one.

Yours sincerely,
DM

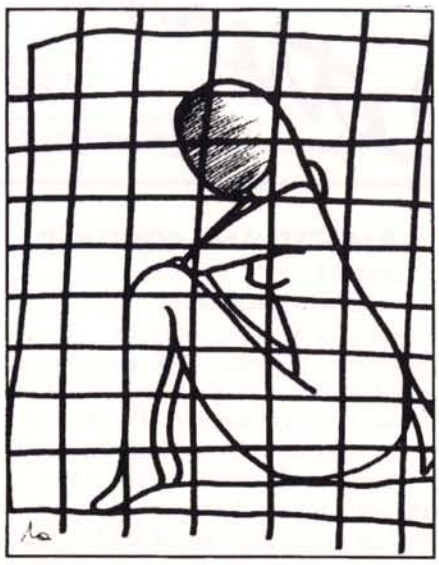
Dear Friends,

Please help. I am a U.S. federal prisoner. After years of being misdiagnosed and mistreated, I have just been informed another major attack of the disease would mean my feet would have to be amputated below the ankle. This is directly due to the neglect I have endured over the years.

In 1989, I was briefly held at FMC Lexington, where doctors diagnosed me with rheumatoid arthritis. I continued to be treated for this illness. For years I argued with the doctors, but no one would listen. I had never been sick before, and it did not make sense 'that the strongest medications for arthritis had absolutely no effect upon me. I kept telling the doctors something was wrong. I repeatedly asked if it could be another illness. "No", was always the reply.

Eventually, I came across an article stating 10% of arthritis patients were being treated with antibiotics. The rheumatoid specialist denied them to me. After five months of my continual harassment, the clinical director at FCI Tallahassee prescribed me antibiotics. I began to experience some relief.

On June 12, 1999, I was transferred to FMC Carswell, the only medical facility in the country for federal women, where it was immediately discovered I have Lyme's Disease. I have seen two Infectious Disease Control doctors, but due to the needs of the general population, these doctors specialize in HIV and hepatitis. I have yet to see an actual Lyme's specialist, and have been informed none are available. Thus far, I have been treated based upon information (greatly outdated) I provided the doctor



myself. A team of surgeons reviewed the x-rays of my hands. There is nothing they can do to repair them. Last Tuesday, the podiatrist told me my feet are irreparable and another serious attack of the illness would mean they would have to be amputated.

Please send letters demanding I be seen immediately by a LYME DISEASE specialist, and what their plans are if they cannot find one. The same letter can be sent to each of the following:

Warden J.B. Bogan/Assoc. Warden Gordon, Hospital Administrator Chastain, FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Ft. Worth, Texas 76127, USA.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Karen Horning, #00644-049 CC5, FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127, USA

MARK MOVED..

On 13th of September 2000, Mark Barnsley was transferred to HMP Frankland. Mark is currently amongst the general prison population (not in segregation) at HMP Frankland and is now much closer to his family and friends in the North of England. For those unfamiliar with Mark's recent treatment in prison; in April this year Mark was beaten up by screws, along with 6 other prisoners while at HMP Long Lartin, and charged with 'barricading a cell' (see DA16). After being unlawfully segregated and then 'ghosted' (regularly moved from prison to prison) for nearly 5 months, he was briefly moved to Wakefield prison early in September, where an 'adjudication' (internal Prison Service 'kangaroo court') was held over the incident. The governor of Long Lartin was present at all of the prisoners' adjudications. Long Lartin screws blatantly lied about what had happened and Mark was subsequently found guilty of 'barricading a cell door', the result being that he will spend an extra 3 weeks in prison through lost remission. In their eagerness to rush this process through, HMP Long Lartin have acted unlawfully throughout, withholding evidence (including CCTV video footage of the incident) from the prisoners' lawyers, which would show clearly that Mark and the other prisoners were in fact locked in a cell and then beaten by screws.

"Mark Barnsley is an innocent man serving 12 years in prison for crimes he didn't commit. This would normally be seen as a miscarriage of justice but it is doubly so in Mark's case, as he was the victim of the crimes he was charged with. Like many innocent people in prison, and there are many, Mark has been denied justice.

After he was attacked by a group of drunken students the police arrested Mark. Ask yourself; would a man out with a friend and his baby attack 15 odd drunken students ? Ask yourself; would you think it a fair trial if the judge refused to allow evidence that proved some of the students had committed perjury to be presented in front of the jury? Ask yourself if the victim of an attack is the person to put on trial. Ask yourself why Mark got 12 years for supposedly wounding his attackers and yet other far greater crimes receive shorter sentences.

The police, the students, the local press and the judge by their actions have entered into a conspiracy to deprive an innocent man of his freedom.

Mark's crime is to be a local activist and working class. To the judge and the police, the attack on Mark meant they could get rid of someone they saw as undesirable. The actions of the state have made Mark Barnsley a political prisoner. I support the campaign to free Mark Barnsley."

C4 Comedian Mark Thomas.

Source: Justice for Mark Barnsley - CAMPAIGN BULLETIN - WINTER 2000. Write to: Justice for Mark Barnsley - PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD13XX. www.appleonline.net/markbarnsley/mark.html Write to Mark directly at his new address: Mark Barnsley WA2897- HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD, England.

Killing Inside

The number of racist complaints against police escalated by 75% last year (1999) to the highest figure ever recorded.

Zahid Mubarek was convicted of the theft of £6 worth of razor blades, and sentenced to 90 days imprisonment at Feltham Young Offenders Institution. He was placed in a cell with a racist, Robert Stewart, who has a violent history, and who makes no secret of his admiration for those who murdered the black teenager Stephen Lawrence. What happened next was predictable – Zahid was murdered by the racist, on the day he was due to be released.

Why was Zahid imprisoned in the first place? When two of the men suspected of the murder of Stephen Lawrence were arrested for the theft of 15 kegs of beer from a pub, they were only fined £100 each. In Zahid's case, it was his first offence, whereas the two racists in the Lawrence case already had criminal records.

There are levels of injustice within the so-called "justice" system. Disproportionate punishments are dished out to working class people and those from ethnic groups. However, this is not observed because of its informal nature. I was once pushed down some concrete stairs by police officers. Such things are not reported and so do not show up in the figures.

Just to show ny age, I was also once arrested on an anti-Vietnam War demo. At the police station I was placed in a cell with someone who had been detained on another matter. He appeared to be seriously mentally ill, and was hearing voices. He was powerfully built and aggressive, and soon began to incorporate me into his delusional system of ideas, and I began to fear for my life. I shouted but no-one came.

Since, I have worked as a psychiatric social worker and, in the course of my work, come across people who appeared to be held in similar circumstances. While visiting police stations in the role of "appropriate adult", under PACE (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act), I could not see why prisoners needed to be held in cells with disturbed people when other cells were available. Unless the police chose to.

The death of Zahid Mubarek was not an accident. Robert Stewart had written 200-odd letters which were not only racist, but predicted Zahid's murder and stated Stewart's intention to do further harm to the Mubarek family. Stewart was proud of his hatred – he had R.I.P. tattooed on his forehead, and was openly cocky about his bigoted stance. Prison officers had intercepted at least one of Stewart's racist letters, yet still failed to separate him from Zahid.

Events like this are far from rare. They are orchestrated across the capitalist world. Hank Fahy was convicted of rape and murder and placed on death row. Fahy's daughter was 4-years-old when he went inside, and 18-years-old when she too was raped and murdered. In July 1995, Fahy was moved to a Philadelphia city prison (rather than the state prison at Graterford, as is customary) and soon found he had been put on the same block as the young 18-year-old convicted of killing his daughter. He immediately realised what the state was setting them both up for – he was supposed to kill the young man accused of murdering his daughter. Instead, he forgave him and befriended him. Something which, as he said, the system cannot do.

Prison staff view incidents like the above as being part and parcel of the punishment. The idea seems to be, if you have received a custodial sentence, you deserve it. Harjinder Singh, 23, served three months at Feltham in 1995 for GBH. He was later cleared on appeal. He said, "I'd hear people being beaten up and know the guards wouldn't do anything about it."

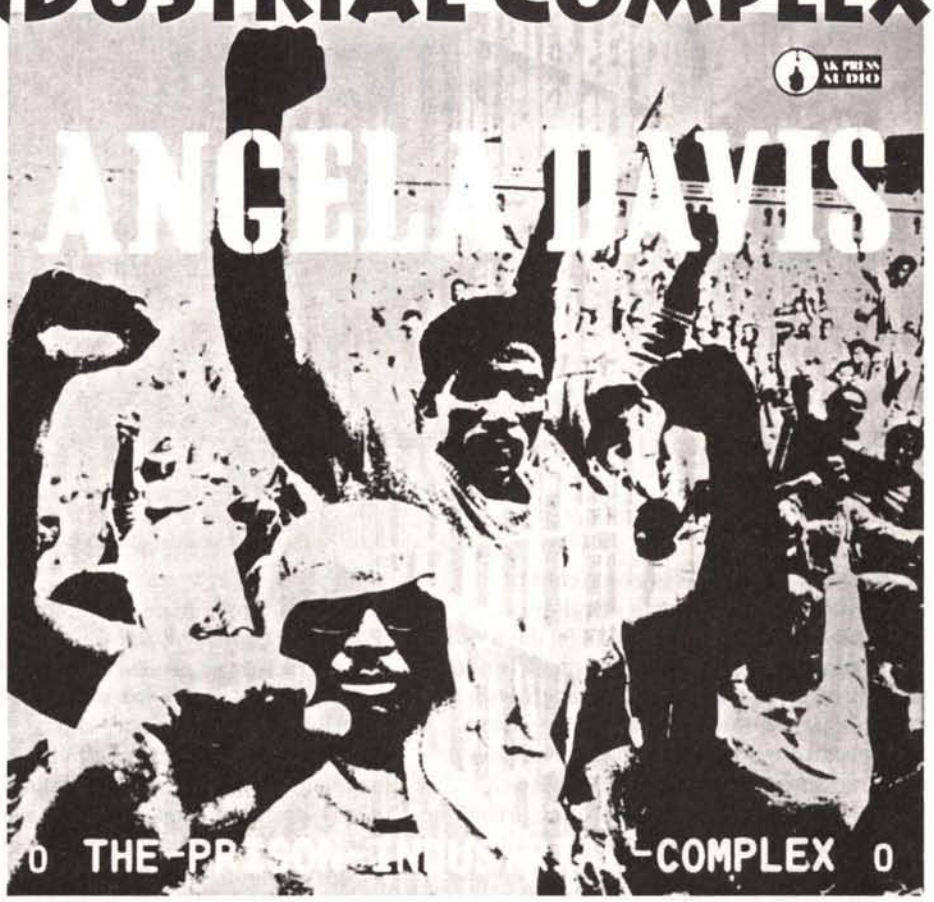
Zero Tolerance - Institutionalised Racism

Last 26th July, in Hyde, Manchester, two plain clothed police officers spotted a piece of kebab thrown on the ground. They told five youths of Bangladeshi origin to pick it up. They ran away, and the police gave chase. One was followed to a local Mosque where a prayer meeting was taking place. One of the youths, Atique Miah, 15 years old, and 65 year-old Monhur Ullah, whom he had gone to for help, were both bitten by police dogs. Atique was put in a headlock and hit in the face several times, before being attacked by a group of baton-wielding officers.

They arrested Atique, and Darab Uddin, who was on the way to the Mosque, was hit for asking why they were attacking him. Two other adults who tried to intervene, Omar Ali and Fozlu Miah, were also arrested and charged. In response to the police action, 400 people have staged a mass protest outside Hyde police station. Chief Superintendent David Sykes dropped all the charges and promised that the complaints would be investigated. He apologised to the Bangladeshi community. However, a formal complaint has been lodged with the police complaints authority. The officers have been removed from patrol in the area where the incident took place, but they have not been disciplined or suspended.

THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Angela Davies, AK Press Audio



This 54 minute CD is a recording of a talk given by Angela Davis at Colorado College in May 1997. It serves as an excellent introduction to Davis' own life as an American activist and gives some background to some of the momentous events of the late 20th century in US politics. Angela Davis is an internationally renowned writer, scholar and activist. For her, it all began around the time of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, in which four of her friends were killed. The director Spike Lee made a film of it a few years ago. She was also involved with the Black Panthers, which led to her serving time as a political prisoner. She now campaigns widely against the detestable attempt by the American prison service to boost the economy via forced labour.

Davis calls the modern US justice system the prison-industrial complex because, as she puts it, the justice (sic) system is the increasingly large and profitable servant of a political ideology of hate and fear. In order to rule, the State has to have a bogey man with which to frighten the population. In the past it has been communists. McCarthyism sought to whip up national hysteria against an imagined threat - the US communist party. Such antics appear laughable from this distance, when we consider that the American CP was politically probably on a par with our own Liberal Democrats. Nevertheless, the fear and paranoia generated at the time by the state and media was literally incredible.

This is not conspiracy theory, this is about how the system works, and how it is endorsed by the majority of the American mass media, who campaign for a 'safer society' by encouraging the electorate to vote for such laws as 'three strikes and you're out', thereby filling the prisons to bursting point and keeping the industry turning over nicely. It is nothing short of modern day slave labour carried out with the sanction of the US government.

Once the Criminal Justice System had been privatised, this was always going to happen. They need to make a profit - in fact, they need to make more profit than their 'competitors'. They need more 'clients' to keep their shareholders and bosses happy. None of this is any surprise to anybody familiar with the workings of capitalism, but Davis brings a special clarity to things.

The Vietnam War was used as a national rallying point/scare tactic and, more recently, so were Sadam and Milosevic. Davis points out that these false threats have now been replaced in the public consciousness with groups such as women on welfare, immigrants and, top of the list, young men of colour (black, Latino and Native American). The statistics are shocking, like the disproportionate number of imprisoned young black men; 32% of all black men between 18 and 25 are either in prison or under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

The media use these figures in their ideological campaign to persuade people by stealth that criminals can be recognised by virtue of their race. This creates two things; endemic racism, and a smokescreen for the real criminals, the corporate criminals.

Davis demonstrates effectively the way in which the prison system is becoming an integral part of the US economy. In so doing, she raises questions for us in Britain. There are lessons to learn from the American experience for Britain, especially since our own government is eagerly employing its own version here.

Davis weaves the facts and figures into the text with powerful and searching analysis. The cynical oppression of poor Americans - the enemy within - is starkly illustrated. My only criticism is that the CD is too short.

Why listen to this CD instead of reading one of her excellent books? (also available from AK). The spoken word format might prove better for those with limited opportunities to read a longer book. It also carries a power and expression sometimes lacking on the printed page. There are times during the CD when the hairs on the back of your neck are guaranteed to stand on end, and that is down to a combination of the startling facts imparted by Davis and her sometimes spine tingling delivery.

If you go on the presumption that 'whatever happens in America we get next', then it's well worth listening. Here is a crisp and dark insight into how the British Criminal Justice System will look in the not too distant future; that's if we are not there already.

Working Class First!

The working class and anti-capitalism.

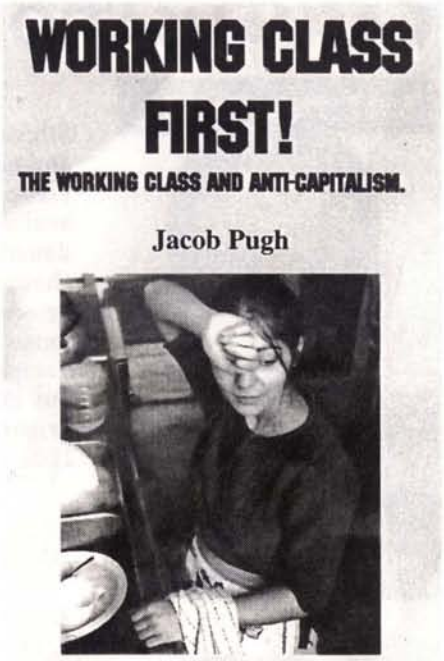
Jacob Pugh, 61pp, £2 (plus 60p postage), ISBN 0953 888 207
Anti-Capitalist Debate Press: Order from AK Press & Distribution, PO Box 12766, Edinburgh EH8 9YE
(0131 555 5165; orders@akedin.demon.co.uk)

There is no shortage of dusty old pamphlets with no pictures in swamping the anarcho-milieu. But this is different - and not just because it is crisp and new.

Lots of the best stuff is old and has an accessibility problem. Rudolf Rocker is brilliant (ask AK for stuff by him) but let's face it, getting your head around it is not exactly like flicking through the weekend supplements. For more modern and accessible, there's quite a bit of academic (and pseudo) stuff around, but it's not, in the main, particularly sharp or relevant. This is where Pugh's pamphlet is as rare as rocking horse semen. New, relevant, accessible, not long or boring – and razor sharp.

The basic line is that working class people in Britain have not achieved affluence during the post-war period. They have more money, but needs which could be met in the past without making a cash payment, now necessitate buying commodities. These new needs are not fundamentally a creation of advertiser manipulation or due to 'relative poverty' - they have a real basis in urbanisation and suburbanisation and ultimately, in the capitalist economy itself. People need to buy more and more commodities to meet their everyday needs. Spending more does not make you rich, it makes you poor. Being forced to spend means ordinary people live in a state of constant financial precariousness.

Quoting sources along the way, Pugh explodes the myth of working class affluence and so directly confronts those activists who concentrate exclusively on environmentalism or solidarity with the poor of the developing nations. We are poor and we are being kept poor and sold a lie about it. And it doesn't end there. Pugh's conclusions are clear – we need to struggle against such myths and oppose capitalism, because only the end of the profit system and inequality can bring real prosperity to working class Britain. He ends the pamphlet with a program for the combination of working class struggle in the developed world with struggles in the developing world and the environmental struggle. Not only is this a rarity in successfully combining an analytical approach with working class reality, it is a good read to boot. In short, the most relevant new pamphlet in living memory.



Anarchism, Marxism and the Future of the Left

Interviews and essays, 1993 – 1998. Murray Bookchin.
AK PRESS - £13.95

Murray Bookchin was born in New York City on January 14, 1921, to immigrant parents who had been active in the Russian revolutionary movement of Tsarist times. In his early years, he played an active role in the Communist youth movement but was soon to become dissatisfied with its authoritarian stance. After being heavily involved in the trades' union movement in the United States, particularly in the General Motors strike of 1948, he again became disillusioned with the 'vanguard' role of the working class. This led him to become more involved in libertarian socialism.

In 1952 an article of Bookchin's was published entitled; 'The problem with chemicals in food', which led to reforms in German food and drug legislation. It's a shame it never had the same affect in Britain and the US.

Bookchin, a prolific writer, is accredited as the founder of the theory of Social Ecology, and has had a major influence on the green movement and the future of green politics since the 1970s. He took his teachings to the Alternative University of New York, one of the largest 'free' Universities in the United States, where he acquired an international reputation for his advanced courses in social theory and alternative technologies.

His activism nowadays has been restricted due to his age and ill health, but he still gives lectures and courses at the Institute for Social Ecology in the US each summer, where he is director emeritus, and occasionally gives lectures in Europe.

His most recent writings, included in this book, are based around a 'new politics' and the role of the 'new Left'. The 'new politics' in question are described as 'libertarian municipalism', a politics based upon direct-democratic popular assemblies on municipal, neighbourhood, and town levels. To avoid the danger of civic authoritarianism, he has suggested a civic confederalism, by which a decentralised society confederates in opposition to the centralised nation-state. He also calls for a municipalised economy, in opposition to the present corporate capitalist system, and to the nationalised economy and workers' ownership and self-management of industry advocated by Marxian socialists.

He believes that the only way to 'revive' the Left and build an effective social revolutionary movement is to first reclaim the knowledge that past generations possessed, and master it for ourselves. Some individuals reading this who are already involved in a revolutionary movement might think this to be pretty obvious stuff, but it is these basic facts that have been overlooked that have made the 'Left' so disorganised. In an interview entitled 'Building a Movement', he says; "I strongly believe that the existing social order will finally generate revolutionary impulses, basically because of the damage it must inflict on people's lives. When this begins to happen, groups must be in place – explicitly revolutionary groups – that can educate, mobilise, and help the majority of people work for basic social change... I cannot stress strongly enough the need to form such revolutionary leftist organisations".

Bookchin has his critics, many on the 'Left'. He is accused of being vague and confused. But he is not an armchair thinker and his rage against capitalism remains strong. His selfless efforts to reorganise and redefine a distorted Left based on Libertarian Anarchism and Social Ecology will have a lasting influence on Left politics.

CASUALISATION KILLS

Stickers, posters and a campaign video are available for a donation; cheques should be sent to Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 2DX.

The video "Casualisation Kills", produced by the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, is simply a must. Production is excellent, and the subject matter is so rock hard-hitting, it needs a Parental Advisory angry warning (warn your parents they'll be angry).

Too good to keep to yourself, so why not invite people round or make it a public event? On Tuesday 31st October, Manchester SF hosted a public viewing. The meeting was well attended and the ensuing discussion was lively and wide-ranging. The outcome was a resolution to organise action to tie in with the aims of the Campaign. This will be against Personnel Selection, the employment agency that sent Simon to his death at Shoreham docks. Hopefully, people from "Riotous Assembly", the Manchester-wide anti-capitalist forum, will get involved too. Watch this space. Meanwhile, casualisation continues to kill and maim, so the only option is to do the decent thing. Get your copy from the Campaign, and get active locally. You won't regret watching.

For more on the Simon Jones memorial campaign see DA16, or www.simonjones.org.uk

Reading Capital Politically

Harry Cleaver
2nd ed, AK Press and Anti/Theses Press, 2000
£8, 192pp. ISBN 1902 593 294

This book is apparently intended to be a kind of introductory analytical toolkit. It is mainly a detailed study of the first chapter of Karl Marx's Capital. The idea is that, once we have followed the book and got the hang of how to do it (read Marx politically, that is), we can then go off and perform a similar task on the rest of Marx's voluminous writings.

I have some misgivings, so let's get them out of the way. Cleaver is an academic and it shows. He is also a lifelong follower of the faith (Marxism) and clearly knows his stuff – which could be a good thing.

The real point at which Cleaver begins to hit the button is in the excellent historical introduction to working class struggle in the past century. For the remainder, if you were going to write a book about another book, picking a crucially important one that is pretty difficult to read is a good idea, i.e. good choice. Marx's critique of capitalism is still starkly relevant, and this interpretation leaves you in no doubt how today's rich greedy bastards are getting away with it (still).

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Winstanley and the Diggers 1649-1999
Andrew Bradstock (ed)

Frank Cass Publishers, 184pp. £13 pb.
ISBN 071 468 1571

Last year was the 350th anniversary of the diggers occupation of St Georges Hill in Surrey, in April 1649. In the years 1645-53, there was great ferment in English society, with serious questioning of old institutions, values and political/religious beliefs. This was a period of intellectual excitement when, to quote Gerrard Winstanley, the main theorist of the diggers; "...the old world...is running up like a parchment in the fire." It wasn't only the ideas of the old society that were being called into question, it was also the new ideas of the dominant puritans, and the Protestant Ethic itself. For a time, it seemed anything was possible. In the aftermath of the civil war, real revolution threatened – a revolution to establish communal property.

Do the Diggers have anything to say to us now? No doubt our readers are accustomed to a critique of the bourgeois Protestant Ethic from secular and "socialist" perspectives alike. But there is more to Winstanley's ideas, even though they are inevitably couched in the politico-religious language of the time. This collection includes an item; "Was Marx a 19th Century Winstanleyan?", in which the author, Holstun, apparently seeks to reinforce the view that movements in the past are just like modern moments but using old-fashioned and/or religious language. Nevertheless, in general, this book is a useful contribution to the research and scholarship of this important period in history.

'The Trophy Is Democracy'
Merseyside, Anti-fascism and the Spanish Civil War.

Dave Auty, 32 Pages. £3

This pamphlet will be of more interest to those into the local history of Merseyside than to people after stuff on the anarchist contribution to the Spanish Revolution. Anarchists are mentioned only twice in thirty two pages; once in the chronology, '4 May 1937 Anarchist and POUM uprising in Barcelona', and on page 11, a brief reference to Federica Montseny. Apparently, the suppression of the POUM was due to a difference with Spanish Communists. No mention of Moscow's hand in the events, no mention of the Telephone Exchange or the murder of Anarchists.

Then it's on with the usual diet of Stalinist Popular Frontism; how the gallant International Brigades almost saved democracy alone. You've heard it all before, so no need to dwell on it here. Twenty-seven Merseyside men died serving with the International Brigades, and I would not for one minute suggest they were aware they were being used as a tool of Soviet foreign policy. Over sixty years on, Dave Auty should have been aware of it. The chapter dealing with the anti-fascist struggle on Merseyside is interesting, but anyone wanting a good background to this historic conflict would be advised to read 'Lessons of the Spanish Revolution', by Vernon Richards.

You Can't Win

Jack Black, AK Press - £12.00

You Can't Win, by Jack Black, is the fascinating account of his own life on the road and rails of north America in the early part of the twentieth century. His story of the 'underground' world of the hobo takes you from one jailhouse, whorehouse, hop joint and courtroom to the next, meeting characters with colourful names such as Foot-and-a-half George, the Sanctimonious Kid and, among others, Salt Chunk Mary.

Jack turned 'rebellious' at a young age after a strict and harsh upbringing by his father and convent school nuns. Their attempt to 'knock him into shape' only inflamed him into fighting against authority at every level.

The first individual to have any lasting impression on the young Jack was Jessie James. When Jack read of Jesse's murder by one of the James' own gang, Jack was devastated and decided that he too wanted to be an outlaw and take revenge for Jesse's death. This he never achieved but it was from here that his adventure as an 'outlaw' began.

Jack Black proceeded to live a life outside of the establishment's laws, which resulted in him surviving day to day by means of burglary, robbery and mugging, and when caught for his crimes, was constantly being incarcerated.

He claimed that one long stretch he served he was completely innocent, but he wasn't too bothered, as he figured that he had avoided being caught on so many occasions that he 'owed them one'; a very strange philosophy indeed.

Surviving on the road was hard. He experienced the death of many of his close and trusted friends and did numerous stretches in prison, which themselves included many beatings at the hands of the prison officers. One was so bad that he almost died, and he was virtually starved to death in many others. Eventually, after years of abuse, he decided that the only way he could survive was to go 'straight'. With the help of a solicitor that he befriended, he did just that and settled with a job as a librarian. This was a position that suited Jack because, during the numerous occasions he was in prison, he had managed to ease the boredom and keep his sanity by reading every book he could lay his hands on.

As he grew old and tired of life, he mysteriously disappeared over night, never to be seen again. Jack always told his friends he never would permit himself to become a burden on anybody as he got older and said that if this became the case, he would take a boat, row out into New York Harbor, tie weights to his feet, and drop overboard. Many of his friends believed he had done just that. 'You Can't Win' was a bestseller in 1926 and went through five reprints. This re-release is a 'lost classic'. It deserves further attention.

Anarchism - Daniel Guérin

Monthly Review Press

Guérin's *Anarchism* is more than just "...perhaps the best short introduction to anarchism there is", as proclaimed on the cover; it is a reminder as to what anarchism can be.

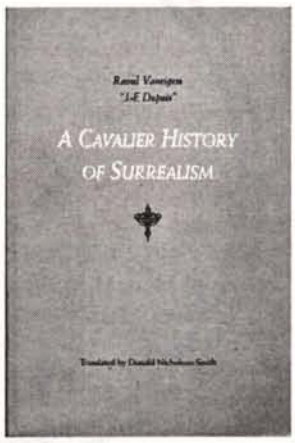
Around the time 'Anarchism' was originally published (1965) there was a renewed interest in anarchist thought. Presumably, Guérin considered this an opportunity to clarify things for the 'battles' ahead, and this he accomplished admirably. In the book Guérin writes of a climate of optimism, but, unfortunately as we now know, nothing lasting was to materialise out of the sixties. Now, with recent anti-Capitalist demonstrations on both sides of the Atlantic involving large and various anarchist groups, things are different. In today's populist anarchist media-driven age, books such as these will go a long way to dispelling the myths about anarchism and 'disorder'.

The book is divided into three parts. First, Guérin discusses the anarchist objections to the state and authoritarian socialism. Then, he demonstrates the need to build a libertarian society organised on two levels; economically in the form of a federation of self-managing workers' associations; and territorially in the form of a federation of communes. Proudhon saw this form of organisation, which is organised but with no centralised authority, as "the highest degree of liberty and order to which humanity can aspire" - a society based on individual freedom. Not until we achieve individual freedom for each and every one of us will we advance as human beings. Finally, Guérin turns to the historical role of anarchism and, interestingly, the role of anarchists during the Russian and Spanish revolutions, where he charts the attempts of the Bolsheviks to suppress anarchists and their ideas. In short, a serious candidate for converting the uninitiated to anarchist ideas.

A Cavalier History of Surrealism

Raoul Vaneigem "J.-F. Dupuis"- . AK Press.

Vaneigem is often cited as one of the leaders of Situationism, a movement which, while part of the broad anarchist church, owes more than a little to the 20th century art movements. There is little doubt about the writer's passion for his subject and his knowledge of key surrealist works.



The writer doesn't give a chronological or very detailed account of the movement; rather, this is a subjective impression of the political direction of Surrealism. Don't expect any discussion of the artistic merit of surrealist works or descriptions of paintings or poetry. Discussion of Surrealist art itself is largely left out in an effort to explain the convoluted political trajectory of the movements' main exponents. This discussion seems to centre almost entirely around certain surrealists' infatuation with the communist party. Anarchism is barely mentioned, and Dada (possibly anarchy's closest artistic manifestation and precursor of Surrealism) is unceremoniously dismissed on several occasions. It is surprising that the author gives Dada such short shrift and generalises about its shortcomings when it would appear to me that Situationism owes as much if not more to this maligned movement as it does to Surrealism.

While Vaneigem acknowledges the stupidity of those Surrealists who stuck with Stalinism, there is little context supplied with which to make sense of the text. For instance, it would have been useful to know that leading Surrealist Aragon and non-Surrealist Picasso were lifelong Soviet apologists, refusing to publicly condemn even Stalin's crimes when Kruschev himself had admitted them. We do get mention of Dali, probably the most famous of the movement, and his flirtation with fascism. However, there is no mention of the Futurists links to Italian fascism or Dada's link to anarchism circa First World War. This is certainly a "cavalier" history as it jumps about all over the shop and, to be fair, it does what it says on the tin. However, you won't find out very much about the actual art of Surrealism from this book and, to fully understand it, I would suggest the reader needs a fairly good knowledge of 20th century western art to begin with, or a decent reference book to hand.

The intimate minutia of one artistic movement and some of its loathsome characters might be of interest to some of you but I would caution the uninitiated. One for the art student or the deeply committed only, I fear. For those genuinely interested in the fascinating art of Surrealism (and Dada), I suggest you look elsewhere. This book would appear to be of limited interest to the casual reader and maybe of more use to those seeking a new angle on Situationism.

Your Revolution/ The Higher Standard

DJ Vadim feat. Sarah Jones. Ninja Tunes CD/12inch

HipHop, we are told, now outsells all other music styles in the USA and must be pretty close to that level in the UK too. Sad then that so much of it is as reactionary and narcissistic as the majority of general pop music. Of course there are progressive HipHop acts and, considering raps roots in the work of, amongst others, Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets, it is refreshing when someone comes along to burst the macho gangster's bubble.

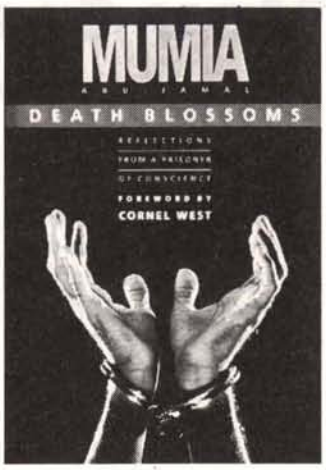
This song, originally on DJ Vadim's album USSR Life From The Other Side, is a welcome release and is a must for anyone tired of the self-indulgent crap of Biggy Smalls and co. Name-checking Scott Heron and his classic The Revolution Will Not Be Televised, Sarah Jones tells us,

"This song goes out to all those women and men in New York and London, LA to Tokyo struggling to keep some self-respect in a climate of misogyny, money worship and mass production of the illegitimate child of HipHop-HipPop".

Over a brooding down beat loop, she rips into Shaggy, L L Cool J and the rest. No one is spared as Jones wit and wisdom combine with killer rhymes to undermine the sleazy world of HipPop crimes (whoops!).

"The real revolution aint' about booty size, the Versachi's you buys or the Lexus you drives... the revolution will not happen between these thighs".

The Higher Standard is pretty damn fine too!



Death Blossoms

Mumia Abu Jamal

Plough Publishing, 157pp.
ISBN 0874 860 865
£8

My copy came from an SWP bookstall, and it is published by Plough Publishing House, run by the Bruderhof movement. The Bruderhofs are radical Christians, and the radical political and the spiritual are reflected in Mumia's writings.

As ever, Mumia is powerful and emotionally moving, and there can be no doubt as to his sincerity. However, the two tendencies, and the tensions between them, do raise difficult questions for the atheistic and anti-clerical libertarian left, and the further development of the libertarian Left in the post-marxist era.

Spirituality is staging a comeback. Radical politics activists have a lot of thinking to do to put ideas across in non-secular, non-Christian settings. There are few ideas of how to engage with those who are approaching a revolutionary position from, say, an Islamic background. Reading Mumia helps, on one level at least, to grapple with these linked problems. If you prefer less grappling, just lie back and be stunned by Mumia's energy.

Off the Rails

The wheels may be finally coming off the Thatcherite bandwagon. The free market orthodoxy, which has dominated much of Britain's social, political and economic landscape for the last thirty years, is showing distinct signs of wear and tear. The union-bashing, low taxes, cut down services, and privatisation that signified '80s Thatcherism have failed. The "loadsamoney" society and associated gross inequality, social dislocation, bent politicians, corrupt officialdom and fat cats are the reject legacy.

For all its revolutionary claims, Thatcherism did not transform British society in the way it professed to. In key areas such as health, education and welfare provision, free market ideas and private sector control have been systematically opposed. Despite Tory and media efforts, most people have stubbornly clung to the idea that such things are too important to be handed over to the private sector. The Thatcher revolution was stunted. She wanted to change Britain into a low tax, low public spending, free market, USA-style society. But, despite years of free market orthodoxy overdose, Britain remains a high tax, high public spending European-style society.

Thatcher's dream to turn us into the USA has failed. The economic problems that dominated the 1970s, most notably hyper inflation, are long gone. The idea that society's problems can be cured by simply union-bashing and handing everything over to the private sector no longer wash. Indeed, the problems now confronting society, such as gross poverty, crime, and failing health and education systems, are now recognised as stemming directly from Thatcher's reforms. The free market is increasingly seen as the problem rather than the solution.

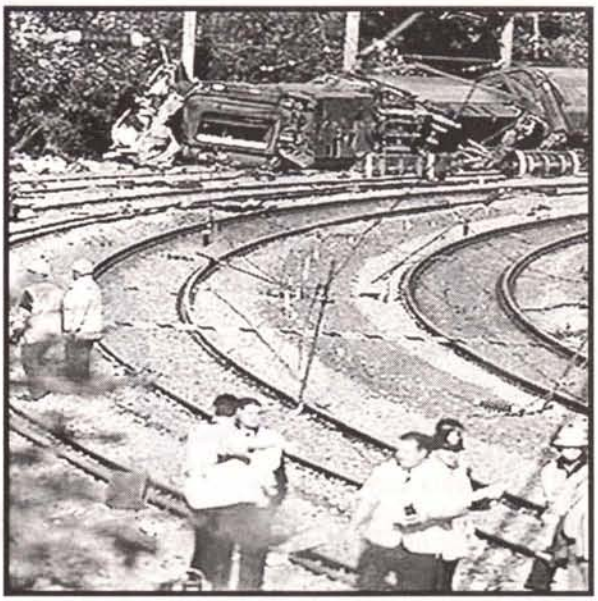
Times are changing, people are looking for new solutions. If nothing else, the autumn floods brought that home. With global climate change finally arriving on (and well over) the doorsteps of middle England, did people demand that flood control be handed over to the private sector? No cries of "bring in MacDonalds, so we can have a free toy with every sand bag, *and* get told to have a nice day by an inane smile". No, the plea is for collective solutions in the form of the state.

Nothing exemplifies this changing mood more than the ongoing rail crisis since the Hatfield train crash. Perhaps Hatfield will one day be seen as the moment that much of Britain's unease with Thatcherism crystallised, and the power of free market ideology began to finally crack. Profit, carelessness over safety, and a broken rail leads to broken ideology. Prior to Hatfield, the media and politicians had attempted to blame just about everything and everybody for the state of Britain's slowly disintegrating rail network. After Hatfield, the lies and deceit could no longer be maintained, the state of the railways could no longer be blamed on human error or technical failure, and the real failing is there for all to see - privatisation. Hatfield finally brought home the fact that privatisation of the railways has been a disaster for both passengers and workers.

At the heart of that failure lies greed. Privatisation transformed a chronically underfunded but well-maintained nationalised industry, under which safety was paramount, into a cash rich, badly run network where passenger safety was secondary. Under nationalisation, the aim was to get passengers from A to B safely. Under privatisation, the industry is a means of making money. Railtrack gets huge public subsidies – more than the nationalised version did – and routinely returns hundreds of millions in profits. Only the returns are to shareholders, not taxpayers or passengers.

Unable to resist the too-good-to-be-true privatisation cash frenzy, management got into buy-outs that made them millionaires overnight. Since Thatcher, the management practices of (1) making oneself redundant and then getting miraculously rehired as consultants or under another job title, and (2) congratulating oneself with massive boardroom salary and bonus hikes, have become routine. Unfortunately, however

NOT ONLY HAS HATFIELD DEMONSTRATED THE BANKRUPTCY OF FREE MARKET PHILOSOPHY, IT HAS ALSO EXPOSED THE TRULY THATCHERITE SOUL OF THE LABOUR PARTY



routine, such things still stink. Under rail privatisation, the railways have become a money milking machine. Safety has been replaced by milking as the number one priority.

The fact that greed was put before safety is not new, but Hatfield has emphasised the juxtaposition. Sequences of events have clarified stark reality; rail crisis made worse by flood crisis – result, free market crisis. Free market spectacular failure – what next? Vacuum. The only truly immediate "safe" option is to take the industry back into public ownership. Could the worm turn? No longer the case of rolling back the state, but state rolling back free enterprise; a major psychological blow against the free market cause still coming to terms with the Tories' defeat and the fact that their time has past.

With no solutions, the free market pack turned on each other. The media attacked Railtrack, Railtrack blamed the way the industry had been privatised (!), while current Tory politicians blamed past Tory politicians. Most amusingly, the new caring sharing Portillo, in his quest to distance himself from right wing orthodoxy, began to claim that an impostor had driven through rail privatisation while a treasury minister. In a classic "not me gov", Portillo took to the airways claiming that he had had nothing to do with rail privatisation and had harboured grave doubts about it all along.

The nearest to a "reasonable" free market explanation so far is that the original rail privatisation programme was far too complex and that the whole industry should be reorganised and broken down into a regionally-run private sector. This would be based on the pre-nationalisation days, when the industry was run by regional companies. It proved so disastrous that it was one of the main causes for nationalisation in the first place. In other words, it too is a crack pot idea. It is indicative of the growing rift between free market politicians and public opinion that they still think they might get away with the idea of further disastrous privatisation of the already disastrously privatised rail industry.

Not only has Hatfield demonstrated the bankruptcy of free market philosophy, it has also exposed the truly Thatcherite soul of the Labour party. While in opposition, Labour vehemently opposed rail privatisation. After privatisation had gone through, they changed their minds and argued that the billions it would cost to re-nationalise was not affordable. A lame excuse given that they are committed to spending £60 billion over the next 15 years.

On coming to power, Labour were confronted with a slowly disintegrating rail network. Now opposed to re-nationalisation but under growing public pressure to do something about the increasing train accidents and poor performance, as with so many of their ideas, they have turned to the USA for a solution. There, powerful regulators police strategically important industries. They announced they would toughen up regulatory powers and put in place the Strategic Rail Authority to provide leadership and co-ordination to the myriad of companies now running the industry.

More importantly, though they supported privatisation, they rejected the Tory argument that the railways could be run without public subsidy. It is worth remembering that, under privatisation, the state subsidy was to be reduced and finally phased out next year. At the time, the free market Right had proudly boasted that Britain would have the only railway system in the world that would run without any form of state subsidy. How wrong they were. In agreeing to pump money into the privately run system, the Labour party may just have pulled the chestnuts out of the free market fire. The fact is, only through massive state subsidies can the privately run railways be made to work.

Even if the cash and the complexities of having so many companies can be overcome, there remains the problem of recreating a safe and strategically important rail network when it is being driven by profit motive. The firms involved, by their very nature, can and must constantly seek to put profit before everything – including safety.

As the privatised rail system develops

LIKE MARXISM, FREE MARKET ORTHODOXY'S TIME HAS PASSED... NEITHER CAPITALISM NOR STATE CONTROL CAN PROVIDE REAL LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO WORLD PROBLEMS

(or not), it is going to be constantly, compared to its state-run European counterparts. On all counts, it is and will continue to be found wanting, both in terms of costs, value for money, and service. The only thing that will arrive on time is the regular profit dividend to shareholders. The best that can be hoped for is a rail network similar to the American health system. It costs far more to run than a state run alternative, and is engulfed by periodical scandals where firms are exposed far putting profit before safety.

One of the crucially important facets of the privatised rail system is the way in which it will slowly eradicate less/non profit making services. This has been happening with "competitive" bus services for over a decade, and the result is there for all to see. In short, it makes it impossible to even begin to introduce an integrated sustainable transport system.

It need not have been that way. In the wake of Hatfield, Labour could have used the railway crisis to break free market ideology. It could have announced that the railways were being taken back into public ownership as the first stage in developing an integrated transport policy designed to confront growing climate change which is already confronting us. The re-nationalisation of the railways could have been used to tap into the growing disenchantment with all things free market and begin to move the socio-political agenda of Britain on from Thatcherism.

Instead, Labour, bankrupt of ideas, offered nothing but "jam tomorrow" in the form of greatly increased regulation and massive payouts to private companies. Its solution to dealing with the wayward Railtrack was to grant it an extra £15 billion of public money. The very company who has basically admitted murdering people for money in the form of quick profits was rewarded. Its share price immediately soared by 5.4% in one day.

Hatfield proved once and for all that Labour is not for turning. No-one can seriously doubt that Labour is Thatcherite to the core. Within days of the Hatfield massacre, it attempted to push legislation for the privatisation of air traffic control through the House of Lords, only to be defeated by those dependable revolutionary peers, on the grounds that they feared that selling of traffic control would threaten safety. Even Tories were voting against it.

The Blair vision has become locked into a Thatcher mentality. It remains convinced that the Thatcher revolution has changed the public perspective forever – that only by adopting the free market did Labour become electable – so it cannot change now for fear of another dark age. Nothing could be further from the truth. Meanwhile, it sits on a pile of cash, only begrudgingly increasing public spending, for fear it may upset the City and the media. Devoid of principle and the courage that comes from principle, Labour stumbles on, hoping it can retain enough of its popularity to ensure its one and only goal - another term in office.

Despite New Labour, Hatfield may yet still prove the turning point. Blind to the idea that people may be growing disillusioned with free market solutions, Labour faces increasing hostility. This will worsen as it attempts to push through back-door privatisation in both health and education. With public distrust towards the free market, galvanised by Hatfield, and future Hatfields, people will increasingly call for health, education, and the railways to be taken out of the profiteers' hands.

Like Marxism, free market orthodoxy's time has passed, and it no longer offers any real solutions. Anarchism is being offered an opportunity. State control of society can but result in the nightmare that was the Soviet Union. As for free market control – well, look around us. Neither capitalism nor state control can provide real long-term solutions to world problems. Historically, anarchism has opposed both, and in place, offered a co-operative self-built, collectively-run, real alternative. The opportunity exists to rebuild a revolutionary initiative in Britain, here, out of the ashes of Hatfield.

SF Contact Point:

SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE
Tel. 0208 374 5027 Email; solfed@solfed.org.uk

www.solfed.org.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. 0208 374 5027.
Red & Black Club, PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX. Tel. 0207 358 1854.
South West Solidarity, SWS, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.
South Herts SF, PO Box 493, St Albans AL1 5TW. Tel. 01727 862814.
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.

Direct Action - delivered

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About Solidarity Federation...

Solidarity Federation was formed in March 1994. It is a federation of groups and individuals across England, Scotland & Wales. Everyone involved is helping to build a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian solidarity movement. The basic foundation used for doing this is the Local group.

LOCALS

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, forming a basis for 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 anarcho-syndicalist International Workers' Association (IWA). 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 five 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 21st IWA Congress in Granada, Spain, in December 2000, groups across four continents are seeking affiliation to the IWA, to add to the seven new sections welcomed at the last Congress four years ago.

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 (above left).

Events/Campaigns/Gatherings...

Solidarity Federation

Education Workers' Network
Strike ballot news issue out now. For everyone in the education sector; cleaners, teachers, students, lecturers, admin., etc. Info from EWN, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW.

South-west Solidarity
Swindon-Bristol based with contacts across SW England and always looking for more. Write for a free newsletter. South West Solidarity Federation, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.

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. Tel. 01727 862814

Manchester SolFed
Support and Advice Sessions Drop in, first Wednesday of the month, 7pm, followed by Discussion Meeting, same day, 8.30pm.

February 7th - Anarchosyndicalist Universities?

March 7th - Human Rights & Wrongs

April 4th - Capitalism in Crisis

All sessions open & free at: The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road, Fallowfield, Manchester. Or contact Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. Tel. 0161 232 7889

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. 0208 374 5027.

Sheffield SolFed
Casualisation Kills – The Simon Jones Case. Public meeting in Sheffield, Saturday 10th February 7.30pm. Contact DA for venue details.

Lancashire Solidarity Federation
We are newly formed in November 2000 and ready for action! If you are in Lancashire and up for it - contact us (via. Manchester Solidarity Federation for the moment). Regular meetings in Preston and contacts in Lancaster and Burnley. Other areas welcome.

Catalyst
Freesheet of the Solidarity Federation - IWA

3rd issue of the quarterly freesheet is out now - with an emphasis on making the difference at work. If you like DA, you'll like Catalyst. Send a stamp or phone for your copy - or for a bunch to hand out at work or play. Catalyst, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. Tel. 0161 232 7889. Email; manchesterSF@scandrac.demon.co.uk

Selfed Collective
For self-education - we develop and share ideas and skills for revolutionary activity

Following the success of our 99/00 course... we've gone online. 'A History of Anarcho-syndicalism'. 24 pamphlet-sized Units, plus the opportunity to participate in discussion meetings. Pamphlets are a quid each - or get them ALL FREE in FULL VERSIONS - easily downloadable from the new SelfEd website.

Online FREE course starts January 2001 - register now-

www.selfed.org.uk

DA ON THE WEB

DA is pretty monochrome - and that may change. Meanwhile, if you like pretty colours, get on the Web for the only technicolour DA production. Just slip into your local cybercafe or switch on, and at the right moment type:

http://www.direct-action.org.uk

Friends and Neighbours

[To get listed here, write to; DA (F&N), PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR, da@direct-action.org.uk]

Corner House
Latest Corner House Briefing Paper "The Malthus Factor: Poverty, Politics and Population in Capitalist Development" No 20, July 2000. GM, food supply and corporate dominance facts - available (£2 to 'Corner House Research') from The Corner House, PO Box 3137, Station Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1YJ. Email versions; cornerhouse@gn.apc.org

Anarchist TU 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

London Anarchist Forum
LAF Meets Fridays, 8pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London.

Covance Campaign
Covance Inc. claim to be the world's largest contract animal testing organisation, with labs and breeding centres all over the world. To get involved in surprise demos, weekly pickets, etc. at the Harrogate Lab, or to get campaign materials, contact Covance Campaign, PO Box 323, York. Tel. 07977 637 293.

Local GMO Actions
www.gm-info.org.uk has maps showing UK GMO-related site. Offices, etc. are also included. Also GE briefings available from Corporate Watch, 16b Cherwell St, Oxford OX4 1BG.

Pride
Pride (London) aims to re-establish the Pride March as a community event in 2001. Membership is open to anyone who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered. Membership is £10 (£5 concessions). Pride (London), BCM Box 6097, London WC1N 3XX. Tel. 07071 781904. info@PrideLondon.org http://www.PrideLondon/org

Loombreaker
Send a stamp for a copy- c/o Manchester EF!, Dept 29, 22a, Beswick St, Manchester M4 7HS. loombreaker@nematode.freeserve.co.uk Also join the Riotous Assembly for action planning - 1st Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm, Yard theatre (opp. Junction Pub), 41 Old Birley St, Hulme, Manchester.

Simon Jones Campaign
For the latest and how to help, see www.simonjones.org.uk. Stickers, posters and a campaign video are available for a donation; cheques should be sent to Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 2DX.

Birmingham 6
As DA goes to press, the trial resumes of the 6 people charged with public order and obstruction after the anti-capitalist demo on June 3rd (DA16). For info and messages of support to Ian Garland, Ritchie Green, Guy Hindle, Roger Duckworth, Andy Pates and Dave Gardner: s26brum@hotmail.com

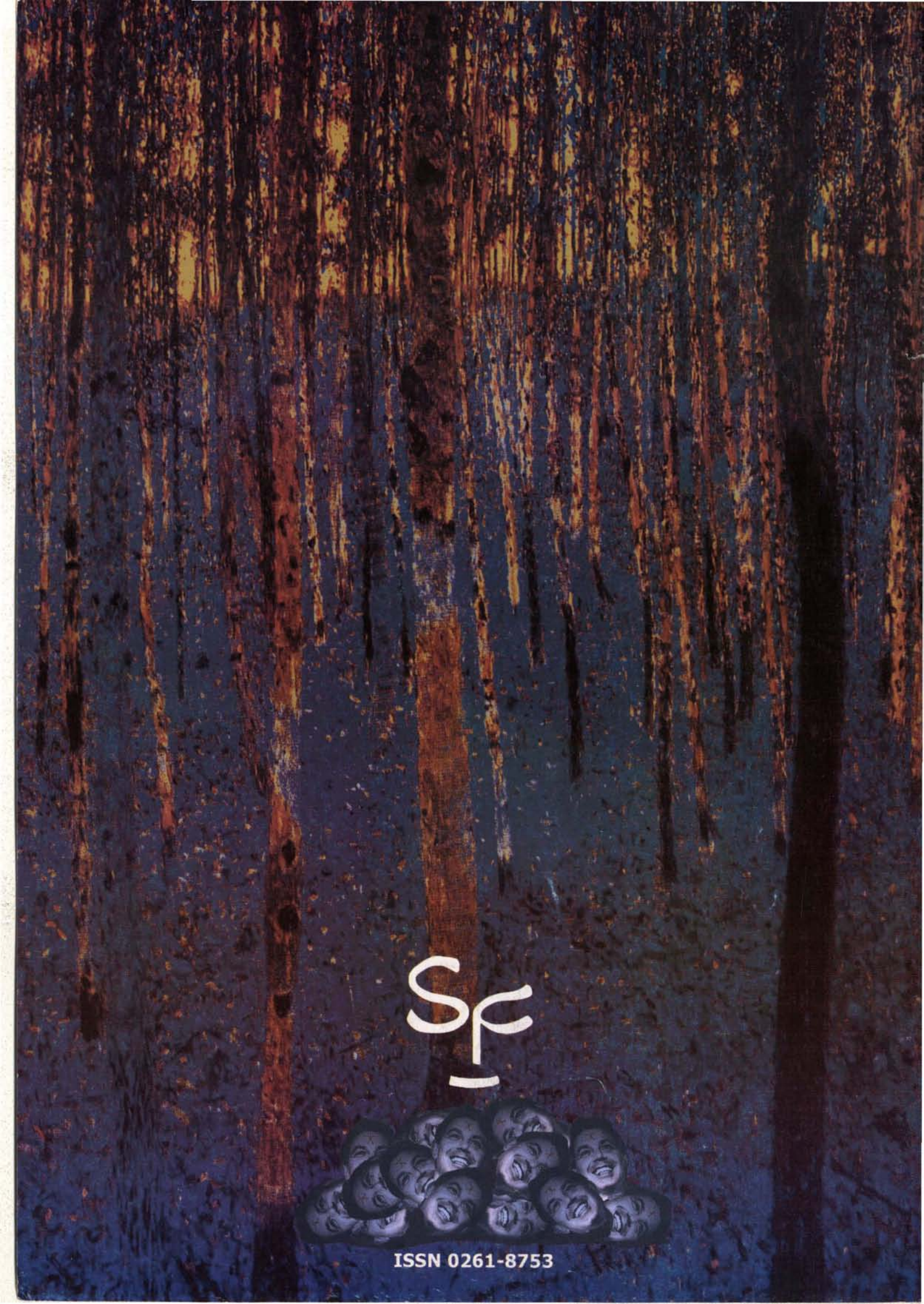
Kate Sharpley Library
KSL - the long running source and publisher of lesser known gems of history. For details of backlists, current pamphlets and projects, contact KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX. Send a stamp for a current newsletter.

March 2001: Global Women's Strike
On 8 March 2000, women in 64 countries went on strike! Prepare for 8th March 2001 - strike for a world which values all women's work & all women's lives, an end to no pay, low pay & too much work. Called & co-ordinated by the International Wages for Housework Campaign, Crossroads Women's Centre, 230a Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2AB. Tel: 020 7482 2496 Fax: 020 7209 4761 E-mail: womenstrike8m@server101.com Website: http://womenstrike8m.server101.com

National Civil Rights Movement
Support for asylum seekers. Pickets of ASDA by Manchester Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers, c/o Immigration Aid Unit, 400 Cheetham Hill Rd, Manchester M8 9LE. Email; Markrantz@aol.com Nationally, contact NCRM, 14 featherstone Rd, Southall, Middx UB2 5AA. Tel. 020 8574 0818

Pork Bolter
Worthing anarcho-news and comment that's so dry you'll want it even if Wothing's too far south for you to have heard of it. Send a stamp or just ask to; Pork Bolter, PO Box 4144, Worthing BN14 7NZ.

Plain Wordz
Independent distributor of T-shirts, music, posters, info., books, cards, magazines, pamphlets, etc. All proceeds go to prisoner support campaigns. For a catalogue, just send a SAE or IRC to Plain Wordz, PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1 3XX. Email: plainwordz@hotmail.com



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