Direct Action

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Zhong Guo Rising

Globalisation
(neither Left nor Right)

Mess o' potamia

smallworld

IWA 22nd Congress Issue:
Rediscovering Global Solidartity

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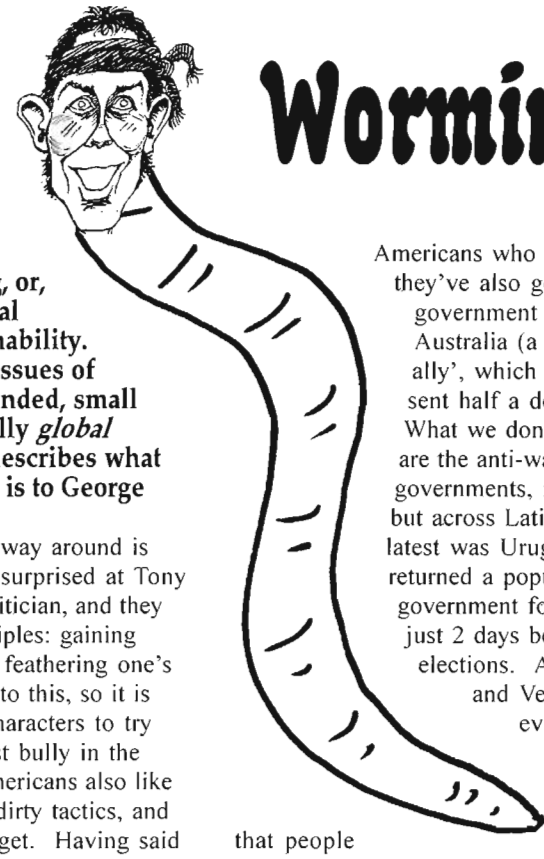
Direct Action

Global Worming



Last issue had a lot about global warming, or, more accurately, global climate change and sustainability. This issue, we turn to the issues of internationalism; small minded, small world politics, and especially *global worming* - which loosely describes what Tony Blair's foreign policy is to George Bush's.

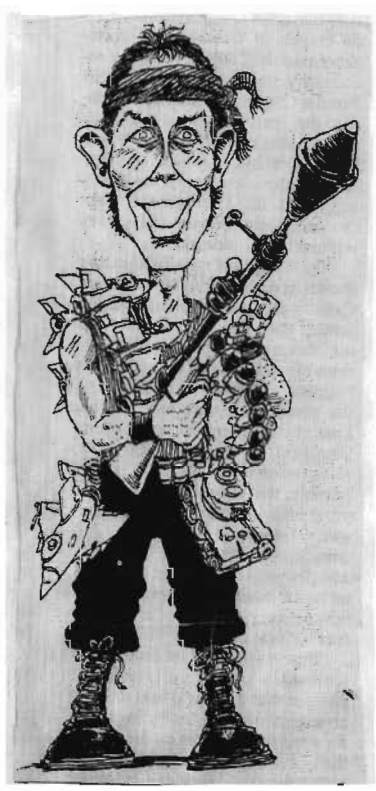
Of course, worming your way around is not something we should be surprised at Tony Blair for - after all, he is a politician, and they all have just three main principles: gaining power, staying in power, and feathering one's nest. All practices are linked to this, so it is 'natural' for these types of characters to try and chummy up to the biggest bully in the class. Clearly, quite a few Americans also like a bully, especially if he uses dirty tactics, and has a dirty great election budget. Having said this, many don't, and indeed would vote for anyone to try and stop him, however dour, rich, distant and cardboard cut-out-like they are.

Anyway, we are getting off the point, which is that prime 'Bush habitat' is full of low-lives who belong firmly at the bottom of the food chain, Starf**cks fans *(Note on (Inter)Nationalism, p.4)*. Over Iraq, October saw the 'official' Labour climbdown over the infamous 45-minute claim (Tony got Jack to do the honours), and the official defence was that it's OK, because Tony didn't know he was telling bare-faced lies to Britain and the world *(Mess o'potami: Democracy Doublespeak, p.6)*.

Meanwhile, Chinese leaders increasingly question the notion that China faces a 'benign security environment' in the post-Cold War era, and Chinese military development concentrates on acquiring the capability to fight a high-technology war *(Zhong Guo Rising, p.16)*.

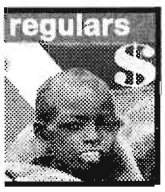
But it's not all bad news. Even in terms of electoral politics, all we hear on the news is that it's not only the Americans who voted for war, they've also got a tame government re-elected in Australia (a so-called 'key ally', which means they've sent half a dozen troops). What we don't hear much of are the anti-war left wing governments, not just in Spain, but across Latin America. The latest was Uruguay, which returned a popular front left government for the first time, just 2 days before the US elections. As for Argentina and Venezuela, recent events there (see recent DAs) have demonstrated that people have an appetite for much more than simply left voting - they want real direct democracy too.

Once you start to look beyond electoral politics, the news gets better still. Within these pages are two articles dealing with aspects of the global anarcho-syndicalist movement - its beginnings *(140 Years of Difference, p.30)* and its present and potential *(Rediscovering Global Solidarity, p.22)*. Internationalism and the fight against globalised casualisation, are hot topics for the 22nd IWA Congress.



So is anti-war activity. Problem is, now Bush/Blair have let loose the dogs of war, all sorts of consequences occur. If you 'precision carpet-bomb' cities full of civilians you should expect big problems - a point which everyone in the world seems to find obvious, except those in total denial - i.e. those in the Bush habitat.

Anyway, once again we are getting off the point: The Blairworm is a major non-natural pest which needs eradicating, and in the meantime, we need to resist its spread across this small world.



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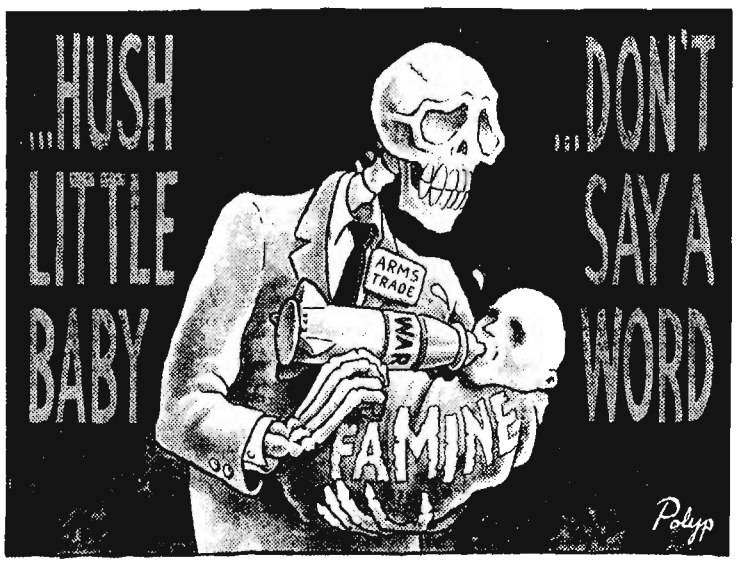

Notes on (inter) Nationalism

Here's another one of those big poncy words straight out of the Guardian or some other pinko paper, usually used to mean the opposite of *nationalism*. A lot of people don't like nationalism as it can mean wars, bigotry, massacres, gas chambers, putting shit and firebombs through 'foreigners' doors, using 'savages' as slaves, bigotry again, football hooliganism, ordinary hooliganism, the BNP, the KKK, fascism, racism, torture, bigotry again, religious fundamentalism, union jack shorts and English breakfasts in Benidorm.

This crew want to be able to go and kill any animal that moves (including humans), anywhere in the world they feel like, just like they used to when Britannia ruled the waves.

There's probably a lot more, but the idea is that nationalists see *their nation* as a separate thing from other, usually inferior, nations. So, they don't want *their nation* to be shit on by another, they don't want *their people'* to be tainted by 'coloured blood', they don't want '*their culture'* or *'country'* swamped by people who don't walk into pubs and say "A pint of your best foaming bitter landlord and where can I water my hounds old chum". No, 'Johnny foreigner' should pass the cricket test or fuck off 'home', where he can get the shit blown out of him by nationalist bombs with the little lion or the bald eagle stamped on them. There's variations of this all over the world, but even the most extreme of bigoted nationalists realise that there's stuff in other countries that they can't do without. Onion bhajees are a good example. These are made from redundant Indian barge drivers and seem to taste great after sixteen pints of good 'English' lager and, by golly, they look great on the Italian tiled bog floor after a good British spew.

So, what's the solution? Well, Adolf had one answer, *Inter-nationalism.* This is where one *nation*, usually with a 'good strong leader' (some times called megalomaniacs, or just 'nutters'), goes and takes over another *nation* by force and *inters* it under its flag. Then they can have what they want, coal and iron (for Adolf), onion 'bargees' and tiger skins for the British in India. The problem is that some other *nations* feel a bit pissed off because they can't have any, so they (or the 'leaders' of them) have a war about it. People get killed (not the leaders, who tend to lead from a few hundred miles away, underground with the gin), houses, factories and banks get bombed and, while there's plenty of money to be made; life's little essentials (like good cocaine) are hard to find. It disrupts ones life.

So, you get a dispute between the 'old warhorses', those who love people strutting around in uniforms with loads of medals, like the lovely Queen Mother, her delicious (to eat) offspring and all the rest of the aristocracy, landowners, spivs, shysters and 'Idle thieving bastards'. This crew want to be able to go and kill any animal that moves (including humans), anywhere in the world they feel like, just like they used to when Britannia ruled the waves. War, as long as it isn't near them, gives them a job trooping the colour, changing uniforms (Charlie boy was the *real* action man), playing war games, growing handlebar moustaches, whipping servants and listening to songs about gods and kings and queens. Some of them even sell bombs.

But, help is at hand, there's people like 'Big Toe' who's every living breath is taken on behalf of the '*International Community'*. These thoroughly modern people are on the other side of the dispute and reckon that wars are bad because they disrupt the market. They want the whole world to benefit from the 'Free' market, just like us Europeans have through the 'common market'. 'Free' trade brings entrepreneurship, orange phones that take pictures, silver telly's, silver cars, Nike bandages (like tennis players wear on their heads), Starf**ks coffee and money, because of the famous 'trickle down effect'. 'You know it makes sense'.

But, over the last few years, 'Big Toe' and his buddy the 'Bush Baby' (see the back cover of DA32) have been really *Nationalist*

Internationalists; they want to end all *nationalist* war and defend their own *nations* at the same time by converting the whole world to good old (thoroughly modern old though) Christian capitalism. In this world, everybody renounces the devil of coo-operation and equality and bows down to the god of money and consumerism. Missionaries go everywhere, changing peoples cultures, giving them governments and taxes, selling them Coca Cola, stopping them smoking, drinking binges and having the odd shag. Starf**ks is the stuff of the future, keeps you awake at the monitor. If anybody resists, blow the f**k out of them. If you don't believe it read the last DA where 'Bush Baby' says its gods master plan to 'export death and violence to the *four corners of the earth'* (obviously not as modern as 'Big Toe', with his round earth theory). The trouble is that 'Bin Liner' seems to have the same kind of idea; only he wants all the world to be Muslim. Apart from that, well, he is also a death and violence missionary. It's hard to say which is worse, no tabs, shags and binges with one and no ale, laughing, or whatever with the other. All this, while people are getting massacred, raped, tortured and oppressed by bloodthirsty fundamentalists of all descriptions.

So, *nationalism* and *international nationalism* are bad news. There's the *International* market though. The idea is that as *we* all trade 'freely' with each other around the world, the market in everything goes global. We can buy stuff from anywhere, 'communicate' with anyone, travel anywhere thanks to 'Dumbo Jetset Airways' and while we're there we can 'interact' with 'their culture' as they skivvy for us. When all the world drinks Starf**ks, eats Panninis and plays football for Chelsea, we will be truly *Internationalists.* The problem is that while this might suit the people benefiting from the global dosh that's slopping around, a lot of other people have to suffer crappy, dangerous jobs, low wages, long hours, and not enough holidays to even think about going global. In some of the countries Dumbo jets reach people are simply slaves from a very young age. Some escape by Dumbo, only to be murdered in Morecambe Bay. This is getting worse all over the world, as is the pollution caused by Dumbo shit. Every time a 'jet set' jet takes off all our efforts to use the right bins are wiped out (even those jets full of new missionaries, travellers and other forms of 'right on' middle class). This form of *Internationalism* brings the world closer to some people, but destroys it for others.

Thankfully, there are some people who try to bring the nations of the world together to save it in the 'spirit' of peace. Hands across the sea, it's a knockout, saris, samosas, steel bands, euro pop and all that. There must be millions of doves flying about up there

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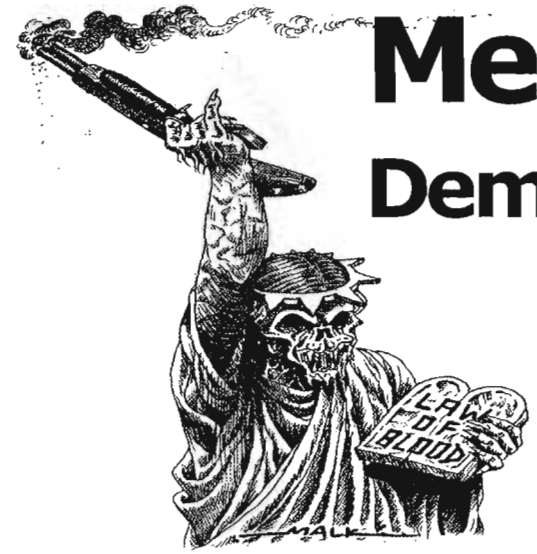


Mess o' potamia:
Democracy Doublespeak

So here we are, trapped in a choiceless democracy which seems to breed hypocrisy faster than a WMD vanishing into thin air in Iraq. Democracy is supposedly a celebration of freedom. It's our gift to the Iraqi people. We're all liberators. Don't worry because behind every bomb and every bullet, we bring choices, and we bring people power. That's the theory right? But the fact is that almost half of us don't even bother to vote. So how liberated do we really feel?

...whilst the rest of the world tries to sort out the consequences of America's lone ranger mission, America walks out of pretty much every important international treaty going.

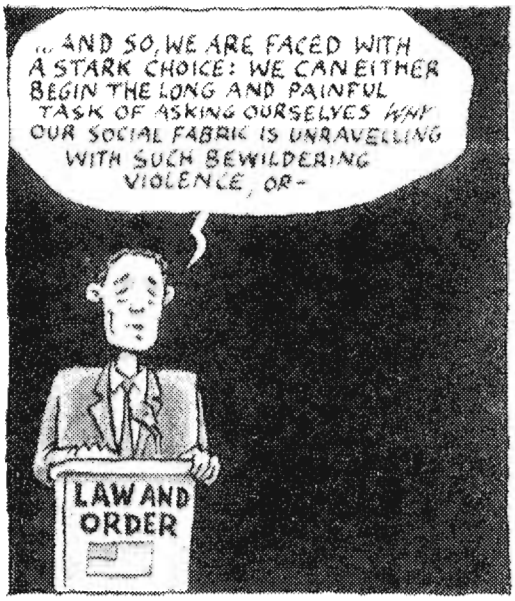
Modern democracy characterises itself by double standards. Terrorists are described as good or bad (or liberators) depending upon their usefulness to the game of power politics. Were Saddam Hussein's actions any different to the thousands of deaths caused in Zimbabwe by the corrupt regime led by President Mugabe? How can we differentiate Hussein's use of chemical weapons upon innocent people from the atomic bombs dropped by America, killing tens of thousands of innocent people in Japan? Or the use of the chemical Agent Orange (is this not a weapon of mass destruction?!), which massacred thousands of innocent victims in Vietnam? The after effects of this chemical agent are still felt today by new generations of Vietnamese babies, as some continue to be born with birth deformities as a result. Is it not terrorising to bomb and murder over three thousand innocent people in Afghanistan, as America did during the Afghan war in 2001? Is it not terrorising to fund the bombing and murder of Palestinians by Israelis as America has done?

Is murder initiated by Americans different from murder initiated by Iraqis? Or Afghans? Is murder not murder, morally reprehensible in modern, civilised democratic society? It would seem, in the eyes of the American government at least, that terror is only defined as terrorising when perpetrated by those who are not American.

And whilst the rest of the world tries to sort out the consequences of America's lone ranger mission, America walks out of pretty much every important international treaty going. It has abandoned the Kyoto Protocol, refused to discuss the landmine/cluster bomb ban, and turned its back on the International Criminal Tribunal. This allows America to maintain its position as the world's biggest polluter. It allows it to carry on blowing kids into 3,000 different pieces, and to carry on detaining "suspects" without legal representation and without the possibility of trial.

When Al-Qaeda attacked the world trade centre it did so in the knowledge that they were dealing with an American President who would react foolishly and rashly. He would react by lashing out at a Muslim country and taking thousands of innocent Muslim lives. This in turn would cause more and more Muslims to convert to terrorism in their desire for revenge. Top Al-Qaeda men would watch the carnage and with each new set of deaths repeat their call for a holy war. Al-Qaeda itself would not even need to spread propaganda regarding the Christian/Muslim divide, as Bush could do this all by himself, by carving the world up into some sort of makeshift video game of goodies and baddies as he informed the world of the "axis of evil". Bin Laden has always urged a holy war between Muslims and the West and, ironically, Bush has served as his greatest recruiter. Who can forget his rhetoric following the world trade centre attacks: "If you're not with us, you're against us" and "we will hunt you down, wherever you may be". The problem with this was he didn't know where they were. And whilst the US regime lashes out wildly at where they might be, it kills more innocent people, which infuriates more Muslim people so that they resolve to engage in exactly the type of holy war Bin Laden wanted in the first place.

In a world defined by such hypocrisy, a



kind of upside down logic occurs. We use weapons of total destruction to try and eliminate the threat from Weapons of Mass Destruction. We bomb the shit out of Afghanistan in order to free Afghan women from oppression and then fail to blink an eyelid as it becomes an international wasteland of corruption, drugs and poverty. We justify our actions by referring to our soldiers as "liberators", whilst foreign soldiers (who are often fighting for their land and livelihood) get labelled as "militants", "insurgents" or "terrorists". America conducts a war of terror and calls it a war on terror.

As if all this wasn't hypocritical enough, New York Mayor, Giuliani, said after the World Trade Centre attacks of 911; "Freedom is about authority. Freedom is about the willingness of every single human being to cede to lawful authority a great deal of discretion about what you do". Thus he resorted to a classic piece of double speak that George Orwell would have been proud of (sic). In this world of crazy talk, Blair condemns the "terrorist" actions of Saddam Hussein, whilst Jack Straw shakes hands with President Mugabe. They tell us that the Iraq war is about bringing peace to the people of Iraq. And there we have it. The Orwellian nightmare in 2004. Ignorance is strength. Freedom is authority. War is peace.

...cont'd from page 5...

wondering what they are doing, since people let them go in the hope they'd flutter past the warlords and touch their hearts, making them give up their weapons for the plough (or monitor). They are real *internationalists* and can be seen in churches and *Internationalist* cafes all over, with fairisle jumpers and sandals on. They want more international institutions and governments to do more about international things, like land mines, starvation, ethnic cleansing (genocide), asylum seekers and refugees. They want more international laws and more world governing bodies and get worried about whose going to run them. They get wrapped up in voting, parties, electioneering, getting jobs in the international and poverty industries, going on demos, and attending meetings. Meanwhile, back on earth all these disgusting things still go on. That's because they're dreaming.

Asking states, governments, international bodies, lawyers and politicians of any ilk to look after the affairs of the people of the world is like asking a cat to look after your budgie. They're only there to look after the interests of the bloodthirsty, idle, thieving bastards that look good to eat if pickled in gin.

Nations and the states that run them developed over hundreds of years to pursue their dream of owning the world, having wars to get more of it, getting richer and richer, killing and shagging whatever they want and doing no work. It's that dream that gets sold to us, repackaged in a puritan wrapper, with the promise of coloured gadgets and Dumbo air-miles if we work hard for *them* and think in a *nationalist* manner 'It's for the good of the country and the economy'. Bullshit. There's only one *internationalism*, that's where those of us who don't own, or 'manage', the place (the world) co-operate socially *again* (see DA32), forget the different clobber and colour and act in solidarity to get our world back from the *nationalist internationalist* madmen (sic).

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ON THE EDGE

SMOKING SOLUTIONS

Following the ban on smoking in the Irish Republic, Liverpool is moving towards being Britain's first smoke-free city. Parliament is to be asked to ban smoking in enclosed work spaces, shops, restaurants and pubs. Fines for firms and individuals have been suggested of up to a £1,000 and, given the Government's interests in anti-smoking, and authoritarian social control solutions generally, it is likely to be granted.

The obvious and sensible options, such as extending the provision of smoking and non-smoking areas, and installing effective ventilation to safe-guard workers' health, will of course be overlooked. While Labour rhetoric is all about choice, reality is all about authority and control. Atmospheric pollution is not just a question of passive smoking, but also of the health of workers' (and customers) in the workplace. Real solutions involve investing some time and effort in changing current practices - things which are anathema to Labour, although they are common sense to the rest of us.

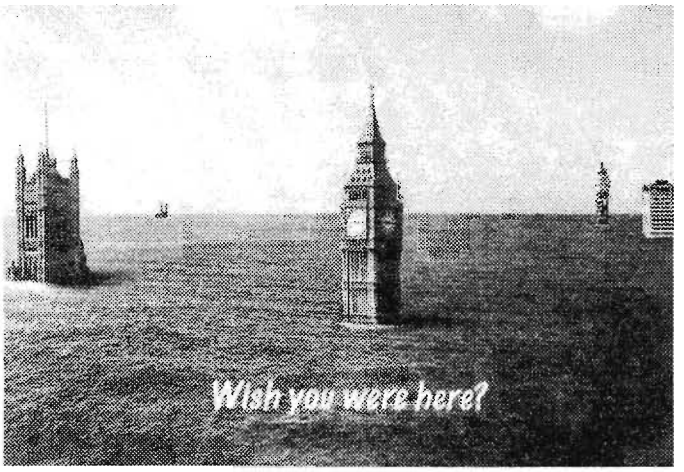
POVERTY MANAGERS

The government has stepped up its drive to force people into low-paid jobs by announcing a benefit increase of just 50p a week from next April, the smallest rise for 30 years.

Millions of claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Housing Benefit and Income Support will see payments go up by just 1%, less than a third of the 3.1% inflation rate. For under-18s the award is even more miserly - 33p to £33.38.

Research shows we need a minimum of £91 a week on which to live - almost twice income support. Yet commentators and politicians still accuse people of deliberately staying on benefits, as if £55 a week was an attractive sum. New Labour has a Victorian view of those on Income Support or JSA as the "undeserving poor", who need to be forced back into employment (any employment) for their own good. What's next? Introducing 'labour colonies' to separate these 'wastrels' from the decent deserving poor?...

Sequestration debate



While the global meltdown gathers pace, others are looking for alternatives, some imaginative in the extreme or possibly disastrous. One of these is burying CO_2 under the sea. Greenpeace has argued strongly against the idea, saying that the sea should not be treated as a dumping ground, as this merely hands the problem on to future generations.

Also, burying CO_2 diverts political attention and money away from dealing with the root cause of the problem: That is to say, the continuing dependence on oil and coal, which allows the energy companies to carry on in the same old way.

However, the burial of CO_2 has already begun, with the Norwegian oil company Statoil burying CO_2 in the North Sea. It has to be noted that this CO_2 has not been extracted from the atmosphere, but has been separated from natural gas which contains more CO_2 than is allowed in the gas distribution system. This excess is pumped back into the saline 'Utsira' aquifer 1000 metres below the seabed. Since 1996, about 1 million tonnes of it have been injected into the reservoir, about 3 per cent of Norway's CO_2 emissions. Statoil has now also opened one in Snohvit, in the Barents Sea, where 700,000 tonnes will be stored annually at a greater depth. If the CO_2 had been released into the atmosphere Statoil would have had to pay CO_2 emission taxes.

Here in Britain, the Government's strategy on global warming and CO_2 emissions is in total disarray. The Commons Environmental Committee reported that the Government would fail to meet its target of reducing Britain's emissions by 2010 by a substantial margin. While emissions from industry and energy production fall, there is still rapid growth from cars, trucks and aircraft.

In the long term, energy must be produced using renewable fuels, but governments and the powers-that-be are dragging their heels. It is not possible to have a sustainable planet while capitalism rules. The new industry of CO_2 disposal and 'atmospheric management' must be brought under workers' control. The fate of the world cannot be left to the politicians and capitalists who are only interested in power and profit. They cannot be allowed to fiddle while the world burns.

The war on children

War is an everyday reality for children in many parts of the world. As a result, hundreds of thousands of children are killed, disabled or orphaned each year. Meanwhile, others are forced into official or unofficial armies, or raped or sexually abused.

According to the criteria in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by every country in the world bar two, torture of any sort is absolutely prohibited, yet this, along with cruelty and inhuman degrading treatment are now widespread in over half the world's countries.

While the horrors of armed conflict unfold across the world, much initiated historically or recently by Britain, here, it is children who have been suspected of criminal activity who are most at risk of ill-treatment at the hands of the state. Blair, Blunkett and co. are now planning what looks like a cross between concentration camps and military training camps for children as young as six years old. Those who learn to obey orders and meet strict standards of discipline will 'win' (sic) a place in a military cadet force. And those who fail to be brainwashed and subdued? The Government doesn't seem keen to talk about them.

Joint projects have already been set up between youth-offending teams and the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, RAF Halton, and the Royal Navy's Sea Cadet Corps. The general idea seems to be to take disruptive kids and convert them into killing machines, so they can continue the next generation of global mayhem and abuse amongst the world's children.

European Social Forum

The European Social Forum came to London in October. "A giant gathering for everyone opposed to war, racism and corporate power, everyone who wants to see global justice, workers' rights and a sustainable society."

This sounds pretty good, except that the 'official' events were state-sponsored by Ken Livingstone to the tune of £400,000. Oh, and the whole event was hijacked by the Socialist Worker's Party, who as usual tried to turn it into a party rally through selecting speakers, distributing "branded" placards, having masses of paper-sellers, and generally leabing out the real politics.

Despite this, instead of standing idly by, thousands of people from more than 70 countries took part in both ESF and alternative, autonomous events. Amongst these, BEYOND ESF was a free direct action conference and celebration of self-organised cultures of resistance. On the Friday there was a Day of Dissent Against the G8, with workshops, discussions and a benefit party.

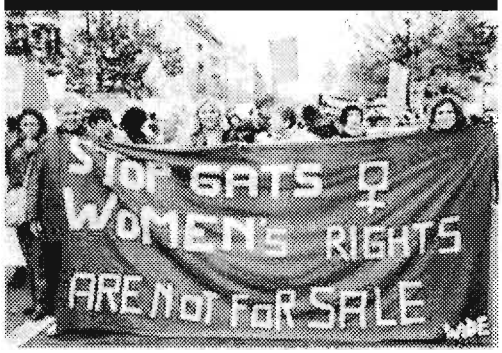
Squatters complained that the ESF had increased police pressure and surveillance on them. One SchNEWS bod who joined a demo said "Around 30 cyclists and 50 samba drummers visited climate change criminals on Friday as part of a Rising Tide organized demo. Accompanied by around 150 police, 6 vans and the usual photographers. Nice to know we present such a threat to civilization. If there is ever a terrorist plot in the UK we'll be OK as long as they parade through London dressed in pink!

ESF - the downside

A young man brought a kettle, cups and a few packets of tea bags into Alexandra Palace, site of the third European Social Forum (ESF), and set himself up in one corner of its great hall, underneath a felt-tipped sign reading "Free Tea". He was suggesting donations for his local peace group in exchange for the drinks. An enthusiastic queue had formed.

This you may think is part of what the event was about; ordinary people making contact with each other and mutual support. This, after all, was what the ESF was all supposed to be about; people from across a continent sharing experiences, free space, inspiration and hot drinks in the search for a better world.

It didn't last long. Soon, a security guard with a buzzing walkie-talkie arrived. A short conversation ensued in which the free-tea man was politely but firmly asked to cease his largesse. He was, it seemed, in direct competition with the official caterers, who were charging £1.40 a cup. Muted outrage ensued. A potential drinker started haranguing the security guard, but the free-tea man tried to defuse the situation. "It's all right", he said resignedly, "he's only doing his job."



The next G8 Summit is to take place at Gleneagles golf course and hotel, in Perthshire Scotland from 6th-8th July 2005. The Dissent Network is calling for a convergence in Scotland with the aim of shutting down the G8, while building ongoing resistance to capitalism. A lot of work will be needed to make this a reality, from educating people about the G8, mobilising people locally through actions in the run-up to the summit to sorting out spaces for people coming to Scotland to protest, so get in touch if you want to be involved. www.dissent.org.uk

Stop G8!

Making Whistleblowing Work

Apparently, workers are now first in line to be sued over an accident or disaster, because of "botched" legislation. Under the new health and safety regulations, bad employers can now pass the buck to their staff after any workplace accident, according to whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work (PCW).

Workers face having to pay unlimited damages if they don't raise concerns about health and safety risks. This means if the current regulations had been in place for the Potters Bar train crash two years ago, the worker who inspected the track weeks before the incident would have been made the "statutory fall guy".

PCW is an independent authority on whistleblowing, providing free help to prospective whistleblowers, helping create a culture where it is safe to blow the whistle. PCW's Guy Dehn said: "It's unacceptable that such a far-reaching and radical new law can be introduced with no publicity and without even a word of advice or guidance to those it affects."

Insurance premiums and legal costs could rocket too for businesses, even though the law targets workers, because ministers ducked the issue of employers or employees should insure the liability, leaving the matter to the courts.

http://www.pcaw.co.uk/

ON THE EDGE

FIZZY OCEANS?

The oceans have absorbed half the carbon dioxide that humans have pumped into the atmosphere in the last 200 years, becoming acidified in the process. Since 1800, atmospheric CO_2 has increased from 280 parts per million to 380ppm today. A recent study* states that the figure would be 435ppm if it were not for the oceans. Chris Sabine, an oceanographer at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), says; 'The oceans are producing a tremendous service to humankind by reducing the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere, which can lead to global warming...'

When CO_2 dissolves in seawater it forms carbonic acid which in turn can dissolve the shells of marine organisms. It is extremely difficult to predict how all this will affect marine life.

***Science*, 305, pp.362-367.**

SUB DEMO

In October, 18 people from Trident Ploughshares and Theatre of War locked themselves into a 45-foot model Trident submarine outside No.10 Downing St. They were calling on the government to disarm the submarine, in compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

A spokesperson said "While Iraq has now been conclusively shown not to have had any Weapons of Mass Destruction, Britain has them aplenty, and - in flagrant disregard of international law and treaty obligations, is doing nothing to rid itself of them."

BIO-WARNING

The threat posed to the world by biological weapons is now far greater than that from nuclear and chemical because of the "riotous" development in biotechnology. This warning comes from the British Medical Association in its second report in five years into biological and genetic weapons. The report, written by Malcolm Dando, head of Peace Studies at Bradford University, warns that the "window of opportunity" to tackle the spread of these weapons is shrinking fast.

ON THE EDGE

IN-VOLUNTARY WORK

Director general of the CBI, Digby Jones, reckons staff who don't do voluntary work should be barred from pay rises or promotion. Of course, you won't see him in the local charity shop. He's the chairman of St Mary's hospice in Birmingham and he thinks just because he has the time to swan around at functions and meetings, the rest of us should work for free.

"What I would like to see is that you are not getting promoted, you are not going to get your pay rise if you do not show - just as if you had not been on a training course, for example - how many hours you have given to a voluntary organisation," he said at a LibDem Conference meeting.

The Lib Dems are suggesting a national volunteering scheme, similar to Germany's policy, which offers charitable work instead of military service.

Thousands of people volunteer in this country and the last thing we need are bosses and supposedly liberal politicians telling us when and where we should do it. Politicians don't seem to understand the basic principle of volunteering i.e. that it's voluntary!

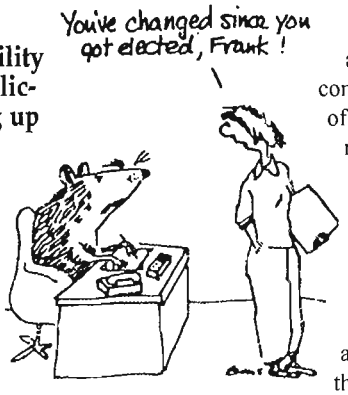
HIROSHIMA PLUS60

Soon after the bombing, as reporters converged on a ship off the coast of Japan to cover the surrender of the Japanese, one independent reporter named Wilfred Burchett took a train for 30 hours to Hiroshima. He couldn't believe what he saw: people with their skin melting off them, images of people engraved on the sides of buildings. He sat down with his Hermes typewriter in the rubble, and tapped out the words, "I write this as a warning to the world." He wrote of a new thing he called 'bomb sickness'.

Another reporter did a ten-part series on the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was William Leonard Laurence of the New York Times. He was also on the payroll of the Pentagon. One of his headlines was, "No Bomb Sickness Found." He won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting. Wilfred Burchett died of cancer decades later, but always traced it back to Hiroshima.

Global solidarity or boss-led cabals?

It seems there is the possibility of British and German public-sector trade unions linking up to campaign on pay and conditions. At the European Social Forum in London in October, a memorandum of understanding was announced between the British public-sector union, Unison, and its German opposite number Ver.di.



The unions feel that they can improve conditions by joint action in privatised and state-owned companies in both countries, which could include strike action and other forms of industrial action. The memorandum sets out in full new areas of joint cooperation, including reciprocal membership companies to be targeted. These include E.On, the owner of Powergen; RWE, owner of Thames water and Npower; EDF, the French owned utility; the caterers Sodexho and Compass; and the cleaning company ISS.

Certainly, public services in Europe are under attack through cuts and privatisation, but it remains an open question as to how much comes from this initiative. At the end of the day it will boil down to how much solidarity between workers is facilitated, rather than co-ordination between union leaderships. The memorandum implies that if strike action occurs in transnational companies where both unions has members, then the action will be co-ordinated. Clearly, this could mean increased workers' solidarity - or union boss conspiracies.

Just as global corporations organise across national boundaries to extract maximum profit from workers, so it makes sense for us to organise as widely as possible to protect ourselves against such tactics. One thing we can say for sure at this stage; if "reformist" unions are getting together, then it is beholden to us as anarcho-syndicalists to link up with our German comrades and industrial militants with radical action. The global anarcho-syndicalist organisation, International Workers' Association, will be discussing such issues in its 22nd Congress (see p.22).

Getting on ... The gravy train

No qualifications but want to get ahead in life? Want an extremely well paid job with lots of side benefits for not much work? Do you want to visit foreign countries for free? Then join a political party and take the first step towards becoming a councillor, or even better, an MP.

As if we didn't know already, recent figures have shown that if you can board the political gravy train, then you could be set up for life. Local councillors can receive around £9,000 per year, but this is supplemented with money for 'special responsibilities', such as being a cabinet member, mileage, subsistence - and to pay for carers. They can also earn up to £9,000 and £2,000 for being a member of the police and fire authorities, respectively. Council leaders pull in around £45,000, which includes £8,000 for subsistence and mileage.

They don't even have to attend that often, as long as they meet a minimum requirement. Then again, there are always 'fact-finding' trips abroad to be had, not to mention twinning your town/city to a nice location somewhere.

But that is nothing when compared to the luxuries you can get if you become an MP. Basic pay starts at £57,485 a year, but that is only for starters. Most of the money comes in the form of allowances, expenses, perks and pensions. This boosts the annual income up to around £120,000 and rising.

Of course, MPs reckon they are worth it, but when it is compared to other 'public sector' workers it becomes hard to justify. Nurses start on £17,000. Firefighters £8,677 rising to £25,000 after 15 years service (with few expenses entitlements), while secondary teachers earn from £18,000 to £27,000.

One great advantage the MPs have is that they can vote on their own salary increases. No other workers can do that, and they don't stick to inflation, oh no. In 1996, they voted themselves 26% when inflation was 3% and the rest of us were being told to show restraint.

As for the perks, they are manifold. There's a fantastic pension package, so no worries for MPs over any pension shortfall. Housing extras that any council tenant would kill for, including rent or mortgage payments and hotel, electricity and gas bills taken care of. There's unlimited travel between the constituency seat and Westminster, and free trips to Europe. Then there are the allowances for offices and paying secretaries and researchers, maybe even a spouse or other relative. Add to all that subsidised food and drink, free parking and free trips to London for spouse and children and it soon adds up to a nice little earner.

Concrete Jungles

Little has been done to cut carbon dioxide (CO_2)emissions, the main greenhouse gas behind global warming. Politicians, as ever, do not wish to upset their industrialist friends. Despite regular weather and climate warnings, Government has been quite successful so far in burying this particular piece of bad news. Everyone has heard of Al Qaeda, but few of the Kyoto Protocol.

Governments are reluctant to annoy the oil and automobile industries or the motorist, and are therefore looking to ways of reducing climate change without sacrificing modern living. John Harrison, a technologist based in Tasmania, reckons that his alternative cement based on magnesium carbonate rather than calcium carbonate would fit the bill. Harrison wants to replace Portland cement with his new eco-cement, a magnesium-based material which could soak up CO_2. This material, he maintains, is more durable than Portland and could be cheaper.

Every year, some 1.7 billion tonnes of Portland cement is produced, a quarter of a tonne for everyone on Earth. This produces massive amounts of CO_2, because of the huge amount of energy used in the kilns to raise the temperature to 1450°C, and also the process itself. For every tonne of Portland cement produced, about one tonne of global warming gas gets released into the atmosphere. Cement manufacture is responsible for almost 7% of industrial CO_2 emissions worldwide.

With eco-cement, the kilns do not need to be run on hot magnesium and the energy needed is halved. The process produces CO_2, but it is mostly reabsorbed in the setting and hardening process, called carbonation. Magnesium carbonate crystals are stronger than those of calcium carbonate, so adding to the strength of eco-cement. In porous masonry blocks, eventually virtually all the material will carbonate, so that a tonne of concrete will absorb up to 0.4 tonnes of CO_2.

Conventional cements could take centuries to absorb as much as eco-cements can absorb in a few months. Consequently, a tower block could perform much the same atmosphere function as a growing tree. In addition, organic waste, like sawdust, rubber and plastic, can be used as a bulking material in the eco-cement without it losing significant strength, thus providing further stores of carbon, while reducing the amount of eco-cement needed.

"In the past, the upper class used to send their idiot sons into the clergy or the army; now they can become an MP."

They also have long holidays and guess what? No-one really notices when they aren't there. Of course, it is the poor sods who have to work for a basic wage with little or no perks that have to pay for all this - i.e., us!

So here's what to do. Firstly, join a political party. You may have to bend a few principles, but you'll soon learn to live with that and it will get easier as you go on. One of the good things nowadays is that there are more parties to choose from. Besides the old 'big three' of Labour, Tory or Lib-Dems, you now have the up and coming UKIP, Respect (The opportunist coalition), and, if you are a bit unsure, the Greens (you can always switch later). The important thing is to make sure you check out who will give you the best chance of working your way up without it becoming too obvious that you are a complete sham.

Once in a party, you may have to do some boring tasks to establish yourself but don't worry. If you find the right person to toady up to they will always be willing to give a fellow schemer a helping hand. It does help if you come from a nice middle class family or, even better, if you are upper class, then it becomes more of a hobby. In the past, the upper class used to send their idiot sons into the clergy or the army; now they can become an MP. The middle classes have their own networks from the xenophobic, "foreigners are not to be trusted they're just trying to do down old Blighty" (try UKIP), to the muesli munching, trendy lefty 'alternative' types who would generally aim for Respect or the Greens. In between, there is so little difference between the three main parties that you could probably fit into whichever one is strongest locally. You may actually sink so far as to believe in the politics one day, but it's no matter if you don't.

Once you've "made it", then you can take on consultancies for whichever multi-national or pressure group you feel you can stomach. In that way, if you ever lose your position, you'll have something stashed away to fall back on. If you're especially clever/ambitious/creepy, you'll be able to get in on the European jamboree and be made for life.

Even if you are found to have cheated and lied and exceeded your generous allowances, no matter, you can make a living through the media, like Neil Hamilton (although it's obvious his wife, Christine, is the brains of that operation. She cleverly got her husband to do the dirty, while she sat in background and reaped the rewards).

Lying itself it not something you should worry about. In fact, the bigger the lies, the more likely you are to succeed, and climb the political ladder. After all, look where it got Tony Blair.

ON THE EDGE

TONY'S ORWELLIAN VISION

The Blair Junta recently produced its draft ID Card Bill. Up 'til now, the main controversy has been about people being forced into carrying the card everywhere they go. Well, how do you feel about having a chip in your ear?

The US Food and Drug Administration has recently approved the use of Radio Frequency ID (RFID) tags to identify patients and access their medical records, and these will be implanted into the passports of American citizens. Already, US Homeland Security has ordered the first million tags, and, based on usual form, what happens over there will soon happen over here...

Initially, the tags will allow customs officers to scan passports to bring up personal details and biometric data. In October, Axalto, a leading French-based RFID maker, got the contract to produce the chips, to be delivered by 2006.

Meanwhile, over here, people are unlikely to leap at the chance of an implant, whether in their ear or their passport, seeing as the British remain largely opposed to ID Cards. Then again, we were also opposed to NHS privatisation, invading Iraq, and countless other reactionary measures, and the Blair Junta took no notice, so don't hold your breath.

SHOWDOWN WITH THE FEDS

Rural Whatcom County has had Feds crawling all over it after a patron reported that some one had written a Bin Laden quote in the margin of a book from the local library. The quote allegedly read: "Let history be witness I am a criminal." When the FBI got a grand jury subpoena, demanding the library release the names and addresses of everyone who ever checked out the book, the library filed a motion to quash it - citing the rights of library users.

The FBI withdrew the subpoena (apparently, if they had used the Patriot Act, the library would have had no defence). The FBI still has the Bin Laden book. Librarians point out, it's overdue.

ON THE EDGE

100,000 DEAD IN IRAQ

A US scientific study on the effects of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 by coalition forces establishes that at least 100,000 people died as a result, the majority being women and children. The study by at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore and published in The Lancet, also notes that the most common cause of death has been violence caused by US air strikes. The risk of violent death after the invasion is 58 times greater than before.

The figures are based on "conservative assumptions", notes Les Roberts, who led the study, and excludes Falluja, a hotspot for violence (if included, the estimate rises to about 200,000 deaths to September 2004). He also notes that the invasion has caused much more misery than if it hadn't happened, and calls for an "urgent political and military response".

INDYMEDIA ROBBED

In October, the British web-hoster, Rackspace Managed Hosting, handed over two Indymedia servers to the US authorities. Then, confusion reigned. As Indymedia UK put it several days later: "Five Days after the seizures there is still an almost total information blackout from the authorities in the UK, US, Switzeland and Italy. Indymedia still has no confirmation of who ordered the seizures, who took the servers in London, why the seizures took place, where the servers are now located, and whether they will be returned."

Later it emerged that Blunkett authorised the action, and the Swiss and Italians asked the US to seize them, through the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) which formalises UK-US cross border policing. The Home Secretary is supposed to refuse such requests if they they are "an offence of a political character" - and this is clearly a continuation of attacks on independent media by the US Government. The Italian state has also had a campaign of harassment of alternative media since the G8 summit in Genoa.

Although the servers have now been returned, Indymedia still don't know who took them. www.indymedia.org.uk

Laing O'Rourke 'Contrick'

Workers at several Laing O'Rourke building sites are refusing to sign a new contract – or 'contrick' as they call it – despite threats of the sack if they don't. Under the bosses' plans, pay will be halved; holiday pay slashed; bonuses decided by management; and forty days' notice required for days off.

Even though there have been no negotiations; even though no one has viewed the whole contrick yet; even though there has been no ballot over accepting it, the company union, UCATT (Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians), still urges workers to sign. Other unions, including the GMB (General Municipal and Boilermakers Union), which has advised its members not to sign the contract until they have been allowed to see it in full, have been barred from Laing O'Rourke sites.

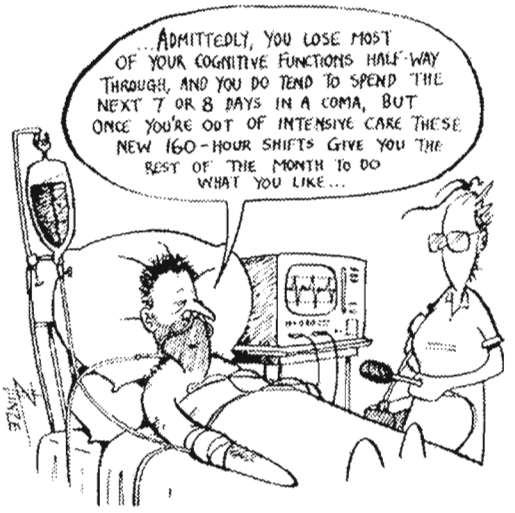
In mid-October, activists at the London, Kings Cross site called a meeting against the contrick. Over 100 workers attended, including many from other Laing O'Rourke sites in London – Canary Wharf, Terminal 5 at Heathrow and the Newham Hospital PFI project.

In fact, Kings Cross is the scene of a separate dispute over the sacking and threatened blacklisting of activist, Steve Hedley. Over 100 workers walked out in support of Steve and, on Friday, 8th October, morning rush hour traffic was brought to a complete standstill in King's Cross as a picket line halted all deliveries to the site. Since then, Steve has been offered £2,500 to stop causing trouble. He has refused. Workers have also set up picket lines over the contrick and are threatening further action.

The Laing O'Rourke 'Contrick' follows a string of disputes over the summer and autumn. After four weeks of relentless picketing and campaigning, 240 sacked Wembley Stadium construction workers were reinstated on full pay in September. New bosses Fast Track Site Services had demanded 66-hour working weeks and tried to tear up national agreements. Meanwhile, 100 IT workers in Swansea went on strike over plans to privatise their jobs. The council's deputy leader accused their union of attempting to "hijack public services." ...Which is exactly wha[illegible] council that wants to privatise them is doing!

Sites where workers have refused to sign:

Berkshire – Ascot Racecourse;
Kent – various Channel Tunnel rail link sites;
Liverpool – Paradise Street;
London – Newham Hospital; Heathrow Airport; Canary Wharf; Kings Cross (Channel Tunnel rail link);
Manchester – various Greater Manchester Police Authority projects;
Oxford – John Radcliffe Hospital;
Sussex – Gatwick Airport.



Below are some extracts from the leaflet, *Don't Fall for the Laing O'Rourke 'Contrick'*, which has been distributed at the London sites:

'We're all going to end up on the cards whether we like it or not. The question is whether we go on PAYE with a cut in money or with the same take home pay as now. The new contract cuts our basic pay and introduces a complicated bonus system that can be withheld at management discretion. No one denies this, not even the company.

'The company is trying every trick to con us...We are being called into small meetings where UCATT union officials and company managers tell us to sign up to the deal or else we will be down the road. UCATT...have become part of the Laing O'Rourke machinery – industrial relations policemen against the workforce.

'The contract has been agreed between UCATT and Laing O'Rourke as some kind of national sweetheart deal. The [workers] who do the actual work...have not been part of the negotiations...

'There should be a national ballot of all Laing O'Rourkes workers to accept or reject the deal

'If there is going to be a new contract, then we demand:

NO CUT IN TAKE HOME PAY
NO COMPLICATED DISCRETIONARY BONUS SCHEME
FULL HOLIDAY PAY (BASED ON AVERAGE TAKE HOME)
FULL SICK PAY
PENSION SCHEME
REDUNDANCY PAY
EFFECTIVE START DATE FOR EVERYBODY SHOULD BE WHEN THEY FIRST STARTED WORKING FOR LAING O'ROURKES NOT WHEN WE SIGN THE CONTRACT

'They can try their bully-boy tactics all they like but if we stick together across this job and all the other projects, we can get this con-trick overturned.

Chechnya

Since the fall of Stalinism, the world has grown larger; now we hear of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Ossetia. These countries were unheard of, at least in the west. Under Stalin's rule from 1924-53, whole nations, the Chechens, the Kalmyks, the Crimean Tartars and the Ingush were deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia. They were eventually allowed to return to their ancestral homes in 1957.

In the face of continued Chechen rebellion against Russia, the Russian media have depicted the Chechens as thugs and bandits, responsible for organised crime within Russia itself. While we all would condemn the hostage taking at the school in Beslam, which ended in a bloodbath, with over 300 dead and 400 wounded, the fact is that the Chechens lost at least a quarter and maybe half of their total population in transit alone, as they were deported *en masse* to Kazakhstan and Siberia.

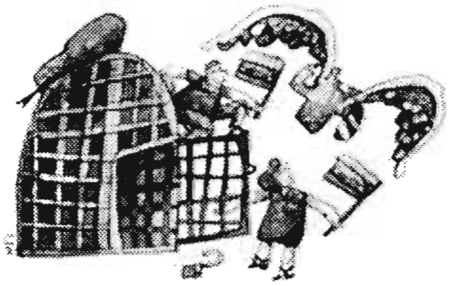
Medecins san Frontiers (MsF) report in their quarterly news that, "after more than a decade of brutal conflict, public services in Chechnya, including medical services, are in dire straits. Large numbers of people live without running water, electricity or gas."

"The conflict has left about 260,000 people displaced, with 53,000 in Ingushetia. despite the continuing insecurity, the Russian and Ingush authorities have been forcing the Chechens to go back. People don't want to return because they are afraid. Chechen people are prepared to live in holes in the ground rather than go back."

The catalogue of crimes of the state are as bloody as they are endless. The fight back and resistance is inevitable - merely to survive becomes a revolutionary act.

Venezuela

The August 2004 elections legitimized Hugo Chávez's presidency, approved by the multinational powers-that-be, despite the opposition's claims of electoral fraud. However, the Venezuelan anarchists' perspective is not exactly embracing of the Chávez Presidency. The Comision de Relaciones Anarquistas' (CRA's) reaction was: "From the viewpoint of the leaders of the two opposing camps (the officialist, under Hugo Chávez, and the so-called Coordinadora Democrática), people's participation and bottom-up democracy are mere slogans without any basis in reality. These leaders prove once and again that, in order to remain in charge and accumulate more power, they are willing to do any kind of behind-closed-doors deal, as well as performing any political juggling necessary to channel the citizens' anger towards their own benefit. Autonomy means everybody being capable of self-determination, able to establish their own dynamics and



pursuing their own concrete goals. The self-proclaimed leaders know perfectly well that their living depends upon turning their own affairs into general interest issues. They present themselves before their constituencies as guarantors of their aspirations, which will be realised in an hypothetical future if, and only if, they are appointed as their bosses. But they never deliver, no matter their colors. For these politicians, the only thing that really matters is to perpetuate their own positions of power."

In November, the CRA published issue #40 of El Libertario, celebrating the 9th anniversary of the CRA and the newspaper. At the same time, the Centro de Estudios Sociales Libertarios (CESL) has opened in Caracas, a library and space for libertarian action and thought. **Continued support and solidarity is appreciated. For more information, see the regularly updated El Libertario website www.nodo50.org/ellibertario which includes a large section in English.**

This international news could not have been brought to you without the following excellent WebSources:
A-Infos News Service; www.ainfos.ca/
IWA (International Workers' Association); www.iwa-ait.org
SchNEWS; www.schnews.org.uk
Labourstart; http://www.labourstart.org/
ASeed - Roots; http://antenna.nl/aseed/
Earth First – Action Update; http://host.envirolink.org/ef/
Corporate Watch; www.corpwatch.org, www.corporatewatch.org
No Sweat; http://www.nosweat.org.uk

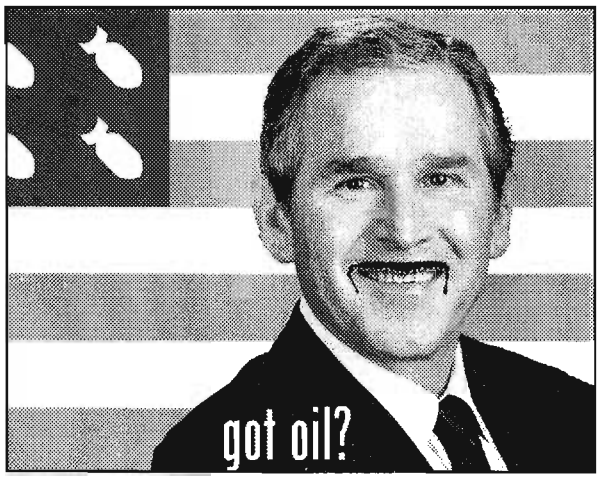
Poland

About 50 people participated in a picket at the Israeli embassy in Warsaw in protest against the construction of the wall. The picket was held on Friday 22 October, the day of solidarity with Palestinian people. After speeches, slogans and songs, the demo ended "without incident". Later, a documentary about children of the first Intifada was shown in one of the anarchist centres. A discussion was held about the possibility of organising the Polish section of the tour "Marhaba Europe", an Arab-Israeli group opposing war and racism. This was an occasion to meet some people who just came back from London and were disappointed with the official organizers of ESF and positively surprised by the activities of anarchists.

Honduras

Montreal-based T-shirt manufacturer Gildan Activewear has closed its El Progreso factory in Honduras, leaving 1,800 workers unemployed. Gildan sell their shirts over here to loads of companies, colleges including Oxford University, and even to some less reputable campaigns! Tell them not to cut and run at: **www.unionvoice.org/campaign/gildan**

Oil Strikes



Iraq

The Southern Oil Company (SOC) trade union is the biggest and most powerful union in the south of Iraq and, since the almost total paralysation of the Northern Oil fields, SOC is the only company regularly exporting oil.

The SOC Union is prominent in the newly established Basra Oil Union, which has stressed its autonomy and independence from any political parties and agendas. It represents over 30,000 oil sector workers in the British-occupied south.

Due to the profits and privatisation motives of the Occupation and neo-Baathi government, the Union is on the front line of the struggle to keep Iraqi resources and reconstruction in the hands of Iraq workers and communities.

The SOC Union comprises:
1. Southern oil company- 15,000 workers
2. Southern gas company - 4,000 workers
3. Southern refinery company - 5,000 workers
4. Iraqi excavation company- 3,000 workers
5. The Oil carrier company - 1,750 workers
6. The Gas packing company - 750 workers
7. The oil production company - 2,500 workers
8. The oil projects company- 2,000 workers
9. The oil pipe lines company - 2,000 workers

SOC workers have achieved the following since the fall of the regime:

- They have collectively physically expelled a number of their Baathist managers.
- They have thrown out Kellogg Brown and Root employees (some have since been re-admitted but their presence 'is very limited').
- They have carried out autonomous reconstruction of their workplaces, initially using spare parts from the local market and black market.
- They have succeeded in raising their own wages.

After the Occupation's Order Number 30 decreed wage table set the minimum wage at 69,000ID per month (£35), the Union drew up its own wage table in accordance with rent, water, fuel and market prices, and demanded that 155,000ID be the minimum wage. In the face of strike action the Occupation agreed to 102,000 ID per month plus 30% total wage risk and location payments.

Southern Oil Company workers and Basra Pipeline workers also shut down all exports for a period during the siege and attack on Najaf in August, in resistance to the Occupation forces' devastation of the holy city and in solidarity with the people of Najaf.

The Basra Oil Union (which comprises the SOC Union) needs your help and solidarity. Written collective messages or statements of solidarity make trade unionists in Iraq make feel much less isolated and vulnerable, and also show employers and occupation administration officials that there are people watching the backs of workers in struggle. From official Union donations to bucket-shakes, benefit gigs or jumble-sales - funds will go towards further autonomous reconstruction, strike support funds, publicity and out-reach for the Union.

The repression against the Basra Oil workers could be murderous if their struggle is not supported and widely publicised. This has the potential to undermine not just the Occupation's free-market project in Iraq and the Middle East, but the very occupation itself.

www.uslaboragainstwar.org

Colombia

Colombian army personnel have executed three leading trade union members without trial, ignoring both national and international law, bringing the official total to 33 this year. Hector Martinez, Jorge Chamusero and Leonel Goyeneche, all from the embattled region of Arauca, had an arrest warrant outstanding for involvement with left wing guerrilla organisation ELN.

The first two were regional presidents of a local farm worker's union (ADUC), and hospital worker's union ANTHOC, while Leonel was regional treasurer of CUT, Columbia's largest general union. Both Martinez and Chamusero were supposedly under the protection of the Interamerican Commission of Human Rights.

Three other unionists were also detained, one of whom was observed being taken away by helicopter, despite governmental claims she is not being held.

Swiss human rights group The Observatory for the Protection of the Defenders of Human Rights, citing sources from the local CUT, said: "On the 5th of August 2004, members of the Mechanised Battalion No 18 Gabriel Reveiz Pizarro of the Columbian army carried out a military operation in the track 'Cano seco' of the municipality of Saravena, and in circumstances which as yet are not totally clear, killed the unionists."

A formal complaint has been delivered by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to the International Labour Office over alleged systemic army and police co-operation with right-wing terror group the AUC. Their report details arbitrary detentions, physical attacks, severe injuries and disappearances of leading unionists, including the massacre of 17 civilians last year, which implicated the AUC, yet led to no arrests.

ICFTU research has established a close correlation between AUC outrages, unlawful army persecution, and the timing of legitimate union bargaining or strikes against employers. Increasingly, international organisations themselves have also been targeted, with the Colombian government releasing accusations of pro-terror stances among human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and the International Peace Brigade.

Nigeria

A four-day general strike brought Nigeria to a halt in mid-October, in protest at a 25% increase in fuel prices, which have now more than doubled in 12 months. Across the country, shops, banks, schools, hospitals, factories, universities, filling stations and government offices were shut down. In many places, armed police tried to intimidate the strikers by violence, arrests of strike leaders, or simply standing aside while armed gangs attacked strikers. At least two people were murdered by the police. Suspending the strike after four days, the NLC threatened a second, indefinite, phase of strike action, unless the government starts to reduce fuel prices.

Although some oil industry workers were called out, NLC (Nigerian Labour Congress) leaders stopped short of major disruption to production. Seriously affecting the flow of oil would be the Nigerian labour movement's most potent weapon.

This was the sixth general strike since President Obasanjo began to phase out fuel subsidies three years ago. Perhaps the NLC, already legally prohibited from calling strike action that is not related to working conditions, has at least one eye on legislation currently passing through the Nigerian parliament. This would allow the labour minister to outlaw union federations if they are felt to pose a threat to national security.

Despite Nigeria's position as the world's sixth largest oil producer, almost 80% of Nigerians' wages are under US$1 a day. Hundreds of billions of dollars in oil revenue since 1956 have gone, not to develop the country, but to line the pockets of a corrupt pro-western ruling class and shareholders of the western banks that hold Nigeria's external debt of $30 billion. Cheap fuel has been the only benefit the Nigerian working class has had to show from the country's oil wealth. Now, Obasanjo's policy of eliminating subsidies, dictated by the IMF and western governments, is clawing even that back.

As this is being written (early Nov.), the government refuses to reverse the price rise, bringing the 'second phase' of the general strike closer. If this brings out more oil workers, not only is the demand for a fuel price reduction more likely to be met, but global oil prices are likely to rise even higher than the current record levels.

Bangladesh

On paper, Bangladesh's 1.8 million garment workers, 85% women, are entitled to three months' maternity leave with full pay. In practice, 95 percent of factories have been continually cheating women workers in an industry that brings in three quarters of the country's export earnings. Some companies harass and pressure pregnant women to force them into leaving the job. Others give the leave, but only take the women back as new employees.

This is now changing thanks to a campaign waged throughout 2004 by the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), together with the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity (BCWS), and other organisations. The campaign involved marching and demonstrating; distributing posters and education brochures; getting media coverage and holding a conference; and contacting all 3,700+ garment factories, demanding compliance with the maternity leave laws. It also involved pressure by US activists on the clothing multinationals based there. As a result, the Bangladesh government, along with eighteen of the world's largest clothing companies, have signed a pledge to respect women workers' full maternity rights.

www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/maternity/

Indonesia

In September, 200 police attacked the striking workers of PT Shamrock in Medan, Indonesia. Several workers were injured. This was the most brutal attempt so far to suppress the building of an alternative union here.

Let the bosses know what you think write to the factory and the head office: PT Shamrock Manufacturing Corporation, Jalan Pemuda No.11, Medan – 20151 Sumatra Utara, Indonesia. Phone: +62-61-455-8888, Fax: +62-61-452-0588. Globe Shamrock, Inc, 4930 Campbell Road, Houston, TX 77041. Phone: +01 (713) 462-2676, Fax: +01 (713) 462-6368. Email: mikem@globe-shamrock.com

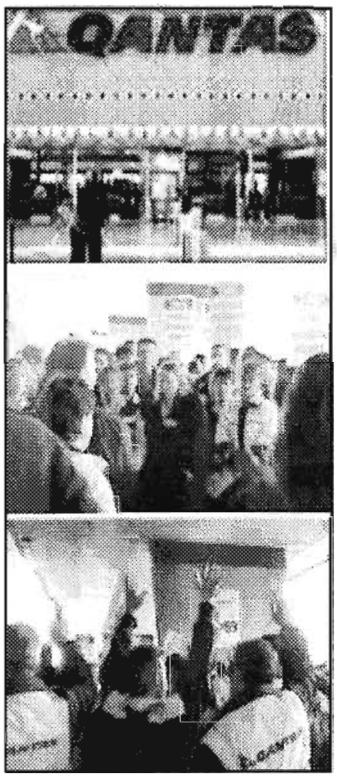
http://www.nosweat.org.uk/article.php?sid=1041&mode=thread&order=0

Australia

In hard times, companies expect workers to make sacrifices. When those companies return to profitability, workers deserve their fair share.

Workers in the airline industry have suffered during the downturn since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, making sacrifices, while the airline companies continue to operate — and to make profits.

Qantas workers agreed to a wage freeze in 2001. Now that the company has improved productivity and made record profits, you'd think they would want to share some of the benefits with the workers. Well, at their annual general meeting they voted to increase the money paid to corporate directors by a whopping 66%. Executive salaries have skyrocketed. But when the company sat down to talk to the union, all they could offer the workers was 3%.



Qantas has also admitted to training strikebreakers in advance of possible industrial action by unions. Meanwhile, the re-elected anti-union Howard government is threatening to "reform" industrial relations in Australia, which basically boils down to reducing union power and curtailing the right to strike.

The Australian Services Union (ASU), which represents many Qantas workers, has asked for protest messages to be sent to the company's CEO, Geoff Dixon. For more info. please visit

http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/

Zhong Guo Rising

A recent history of Zhong Guo
(China to you and me)

- turn of 19th-20th century – strategic territory occupied by western forces;
- 1931-1945 – Japanese invasion and occupation;
- 1949 – the Communists under Mao Zedong take power after civil war;
- 1978 – new Communist leader Deng Xiaoping; market-oriented reforms and decentralised economic decision-making introduced;
- 2000 – joins World Trade Organisation; economic development accelerates.

Past issues of DA have discussed the possibility, with an increasing European challenge to the economic dominance of the US, that trade disputes and squabbles over access to resources might spill over into military conflict. Here we look at the role of China as a third actor on the 21st century global stage.

From military defeat and occupation; through Maoist isolation and the nightmare of 'cultural revolution'; China in the 21st century has come full circle to re-engage with capitalism. After two and half decades of Deng Xiaoping's 'socialist modernisation' initiative, the world's most populous country (with 1.3 billion people) and the fourth largest (after Russia, Canada, and the US), is now – by some measures, at least – the world's second largest economy. The leap forward between 1978 and entrance into the World Trade Organisation in 2000 quadrupled Chinese output.

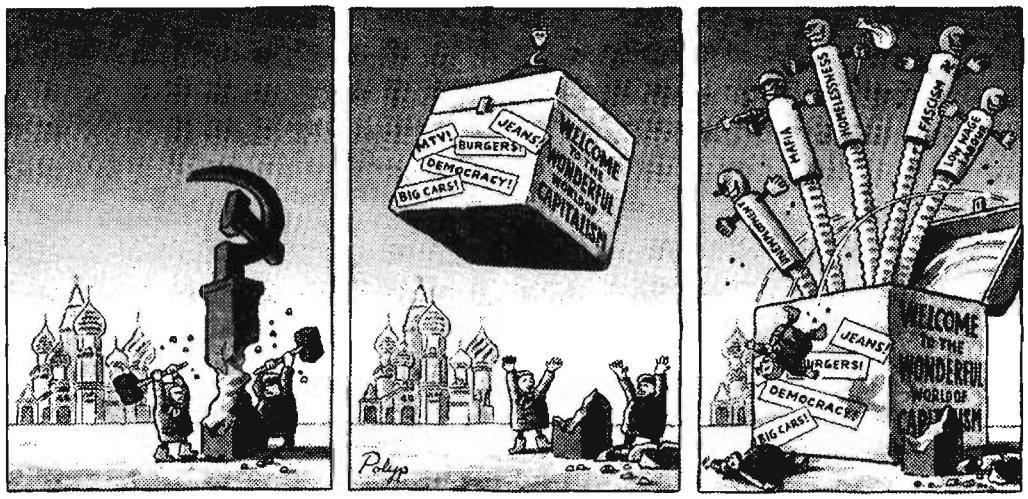
Since then, economic expansion has carried on. Foreign investment continues to gush in; exports continue to flood out; and that barometer of economic 'progress', GDP (gross domestic product), continues to soar. Furthermore, the forseeable future will feature more of the same, with the World Bank recently estimating that Chinese manufacturing output will more than double in the next three years. China now stands second only to Canada in terms of its share of the US market. In the process, it has pushed past Mexico, almost doubled its year 2000 volume of exports to the US, and set off all sorts of alarms there over the 'negative implications' for US long-term economic and security interests. These include rising US jobless figures; what the US perceives as Chinese dodgy practices and poor compliance with WTO regulations; and a growing trade deficit whereby the US imports five times as much from China than vice versa.

Many factors threaten to derail China's economy – from corruption, to the estimated figure of 100 million surplus rural workers; from air pollution to the weakening of the population control programme; fand rom loss of agricultural land to growing shortages of electric power and raw materials. But these are insignificant beside the threats emanating from Washington. In its most recent report to the US Congress, the US/China Trade Commission found that 'a number of the current trends in US/China relations have negative implications for our long-term economic and national security interests'. Recommendations seek to remedy current failings, and develop the relationship 'so as to provide broad-based benefits to both sides'. With a whopping 35% of Chinese exports ending up in the US, the effect of potential US economic action against China are clear.

Senior Chinese leaders increasingly question the notion that China faces a 'benign security environment' in the post-Cold War era, and Chinese military development concentrates on acquiring the capability to fight a high-technology war.

Alongside this economic situation, military matters must also be taken into account. China has the potential to challenge US military dominance, at least in Asia. Chinese strategic planning has two goals – the achievement of 'great power' status in a global political, economic, and military terms; and becoming the foremost power in Asia so other global actors, i.e. the US, will not take major action in the region without first considering Chinese interests. The Beijing regime expects, if present trends continue, to be well on the way to these goals by the middle of the century.

The key to China's development strategy is rapid and sustained economic growth, which in turn depends on technological progress, access to global resources, and the exploration and exploitation of natural resources. This requires a stable and peaceful security environment within China, along its many borders, and on the international scene in general. To this end, Beijing also prioritises development in terms of its military capacity and internal control apparatus, in an environment where economic reforms have created/exacerbated ethnic, labour and



political unrest.

Internationally, the Chinese government is concerned by US efforts to maintain its dominance in 'Eurasia', for instance by strengthening its alliance with Japan and expanding NATO beyond Western Europe. Beijing also fears US efforts to develop missile systems to challenge China's nuclear capability. It especially worries that these will eventually be extended to protect Taiwan. More generally, it foresees increasing US meddling in its internal affairs, such as in the disputes with ethnic Tibetan or Muslim minorities in western China. A US role in potential military conflict, for instance in the Korean peninsula, the Taiwan Strait or the South China Sea, also plays a part in the calculations of Chinese leaders.

For the time being, however, China continues to prioritise economic growth over military modernisation, since being goaded into a lopsided arms race with the US could derail economic modernisation. So, it currently limits itself to criticism of US security policies and the idea that Washington aims to 'encircle' China, undermine regional security, and hamper Chinese efforts to become the preeminent power in Asia.

Senior Chinese leaders increasingly question the notion that China faces a 'benign security environment' in the post-Cold War era, and Chinese military development concentrates on acquiring the capability to fight a high-technology war. China's fundamental military objectives are to deter aggression by regional opponents, maintain the credibility of its territorial claims, protect national interests, and maintain internal security. A key aim is to deter any moves by Taiwan towards independence. Currently, Beijing is restructuring its armed forces into three components: a modest nuclear deterrent, a small number of flexible high-technology forces capable of acting in regional conflicts, and a larger number of low-to-medium technology forces to be used for internal security. While ground force modernisation has a low priority, the focus is on building a more mobile, combat-ready, high-tech core within this.

Chinese military planning is dominated by expectations of conflict with a more technologically advanced foe, particularly in the scenario of war with Taiwan, which would also involve the US. If such a war breaks out, Chinese strategists believe there are two means of achieving victory. Firstly, it can use sufficient force rapidly enough to bring Taiwan to the negotiating table under Beijing's terms, before the US can intervene. Secondly, it can launch a pre-emptive strike during the window of opportunity, while technologically superior forces are being deployed in the build-up to the launch of a massive air campaign. To achieve either objective requires a smaller, more mobile, and more technologically advanced military force than China currently has available. This is why gaining such a capability is at the centre of China's training, acquisition and research and development programmes.

Despite conflicting economic and military interests, and despite Taiwan's role as a means for the US to provoke China into a conflict for which it isn't ready, war may not be an inevitability. A further factor that may yet alter China's course is its own working class. Terrible poverty and economic injustice are still rife. Expectations of a better life, raised on the back of the economic 'miracle', are being submerged by corruption, unpaid wages and a rapidly widening gap between rich and poor. Such conditions are increasingly leading people to question the role of the Communist Party apparatus in supporting, protecting and, indeed, being a part of, the exploiter class. Industrial unrest is now an increasingly common feature of the Chinese economic landscape. Moreover, in a system based on tight state control of news and information, it cannot be doubted that what we do hear about is only a fraction of what is really going on.

Recent industrial action in China

Details of strikes and wage rates are "highly secret" in China. So, while a glance at the China Labour Bulletin website shows various actions by workers over recent months, like those outlined briefly below, these are merely the tip of the iceberg.

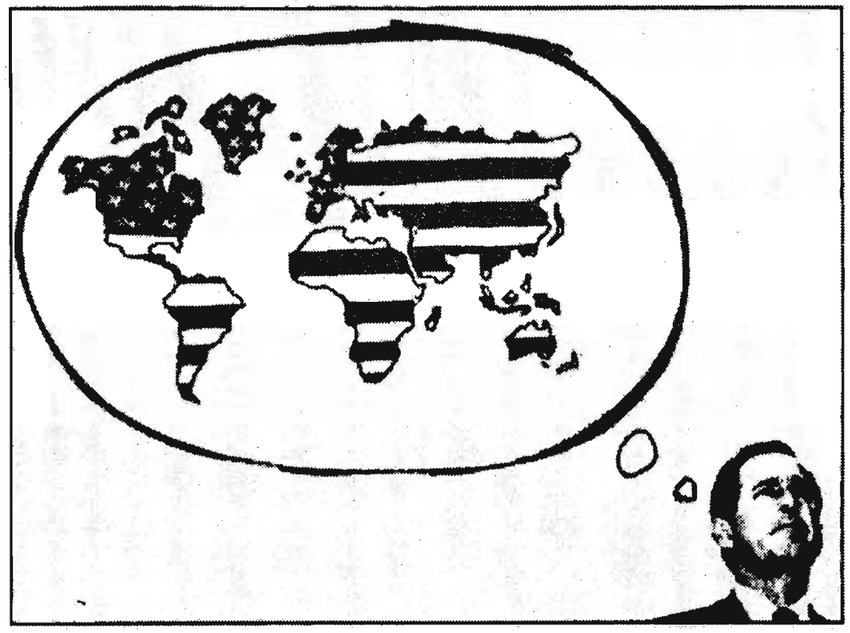
- Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province: over 6,000 workers, mostly women, have been on strike at the newly (corruptly) privatised Tianwang Textile Factory since September 14th against attempts by the factory's owner to slash wages, make redundancies and cancel pension and insurance payments; [Photo – see www.china-labour.org.hk/iso/article.adp?article_id=5832]
- Huaxi, Chongqing Municipality: strike and occupation between August 18th and 30th against privatisation of Chongqing Shanhua Special Vehicle Factory ended forcibly by 1,000 armed police;
- Dongguan, Guangdong Province: at two shoe plants owned by Stella International of Taiwan, unpaid wages and changes to overtime arrangements led to strikes and one and a half day's of riots by more than 5,000 workers in April;
- Gujing, Anhui Province: in March, more than 1,000 workers from the China Anhui Gujing Distillery Company Ltd, blocked the Beijing-Kowloon railway, in protest at company restructuring, widespread layoffs and broken pledges by management;
- Xiangfan, Hubei Province: in November 2003, about 10,000 workers from the Xiangyang Automobile Bearing Company, paralysed roads and railways for two days, and violently confronted the police, in an effort to pressurise the government to guarantee workers' rights during the privatisation of the former state-owned company.

For China Labour Bulletin, see www.china-labour.org.hk/iso/

smallworld: the new rulers of the world

Globalisation: Neither Left nor Right

The state does not hinder the working of capitalism as the free market right would have it, nor does it restrict or limit it, as the left would have it: The state works only in the interest of capitalism.



The current classic left-wing critique of globalisation is deeply flawed. Basically, it goes something like this: Technological change has freed powerful multinational companies from the control of national governments. Under globalisation, governments have been reduced "to playing the servile role of lackeys to big business" to quote Noreena Hertz, one of the media-appointed theorists of the anti-globalisation movement.

Powerless in the face of the global corporates, governments are no longer able to intervene (through Keynesian demand management) to stimulate economic activity and alleviate unemployment. Nor are they able to provide welfare provision or legislation aimed at protecting workers from the worst of capitalist exploitation. Such state interventionist measures impose costs that multinationals are no longer willing to bear and, rather than pay up, they simply relocate to countries where costs are lower.

Meanwhile, this same globalisation argument is used by the free market right to promote polices aimed at a 'rush to the bottom'; reducing taxes, privatising state provision, cutting public spending and labour market deregulation, as the best means of attracting capitalist investment. They argue that in the long run this will boost economic activity and lead to a more enriched society. The model for this 'government is best when it is less' approach is the United States, where it is argued that free market polices means the US economy has consistently outperformed its more state interventionist European rivals.

The right argue that, however well-intentioned, the state intervention of the post war era interfered with the working of the market, leading to economic inefficiency, which manifested itself in the high inflation and mass unemployment that dominated the developed world economies for much of the latter half of the 20th Century. They see the globalisation process as freeing the markets from the dead hand of state control, expunging high inflation from the world economy, and eradicating mass unemployment - apart from in those economies (such as the European Union) which have been slow to embrace the free market mantra.

Of course, this right wing view of globalisation is a recipe for misery for the masses and riches for the few. But what is wrong with the left anti-globalists arguing that the power of transnational companies has enslaved governments, forcing them to adopt free market polices which boost profits, but causing increasing world inequality and poverty? Surely, it is true that globalisation has undermined big governments' abilities to promote more just societies, and the 'proof' is all around us, in inequality both within countries and between the rich north and poor south? Surely, the post war era of benign big government, which saw state intervention as the best way of promoting a more just society, is something we should be going back to? Er, no.... So where is George Monbiot going wrong when he argues that in the long run, the only answer is the establishment of a world government capable of bringing rampant capitalism back under the benign control of the state?

fundamental flaw

The fundamental flaw of this globalisation thesis is that it fails to understand the nature of the state. The state does not hinder the working of capitalism as the free market right would have it, nor does it restrict or limit it, as the left would have it. The state works only in the interest of capitalism. It helps to stabilise and regulate it; through its economic power it subsidies and promotes it; through its laws it protects it; and through its military might it smashes those who would stand in the way of it. This has been the case since the dawn of capitalism; nothing has changed.

As Adam Smith, that much misquoted captive of the loony right, noted over 200 years ago; the "merchants and manufacturers were the principle architects" of a state policy designed to ensure that their interest would be "most peculiarly attended to" however "grievous" the impact on others, including the general population of their own societies. Smith saw the early wars of conquest in terms of bringing "dreadful misfortunes" to the victims of "the savage injustice of the Europeans." What he was recording in these early stages of capitalism was the new capitalist class taking control of the state as a political instrument of power through which they could maintain their new privileges.

Since then, the state has always served the interests of capitalism for, ultimately, it is the capitalists who control it. The detail of way the in which the state goes about protecting and promoting the interests of capitalism changes according to prevailing conditions. For example, in the face of strong working class organisation, the capitalist class may seek to absorb working class organisations as a means of neutralising them. Thus, the state may promote collective bargaining as a means of neutralising effective strike action. This however, is not a sign that the state is somehow acting in the interests of workers, but merely a change of tactics to meet prevailing conditions. Should circumstances change, then capitalist interests dictate that the state will revert to an instrument of repression, as the unions have found out to their cost in Britain over the past 2-3 decades.

The problem with the anti-globalist view of the world is that it takes the tactics employed by the state in the immediate post-war period, and projects them into a theory of how the state works in general. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War (as after the First World War), fear of revolution was perceived as a real threat by capitalism, to the extent that some capitulation to workers' wishes was seen by many, Winston Churchill among them, as inevitable. In order to win workers over to capitalism, state control was used to prevent the return of mass unemployment, taxes were used to redistribute wealth, and the welfare state was expanded to ensure health and social security. Abroad, the communist block was engaged militarily in the less developed world in order to maintain cheap sources of raw materials, while in the first world the Soviet threat was demonised to both lessen the attraction of communism and provide an ongoing justification for military expenditure.

The fact is, the nature of the state had not changed; it was simply protecting and supporting capitalism in the best way it could, as always. Hence, by the 1990s, with the war against communism 'won' and the world economy in deep recession, it was time to change tactics with the changing circumstances. The state has therefore reverted to its traditional role as a means of repressing workers both at home and abroad. Supporters of the anti-globalisation thesis have mistaken this change in the tactics of the state as a sign of the demise in state power. As dissident Russian economist Boris Kagarlitsky points out; "Globalisation does not mean the impotence of the state, but the rejection by the state of its social functions, in favour of repressive ones, and the ending of democratic freedoms".

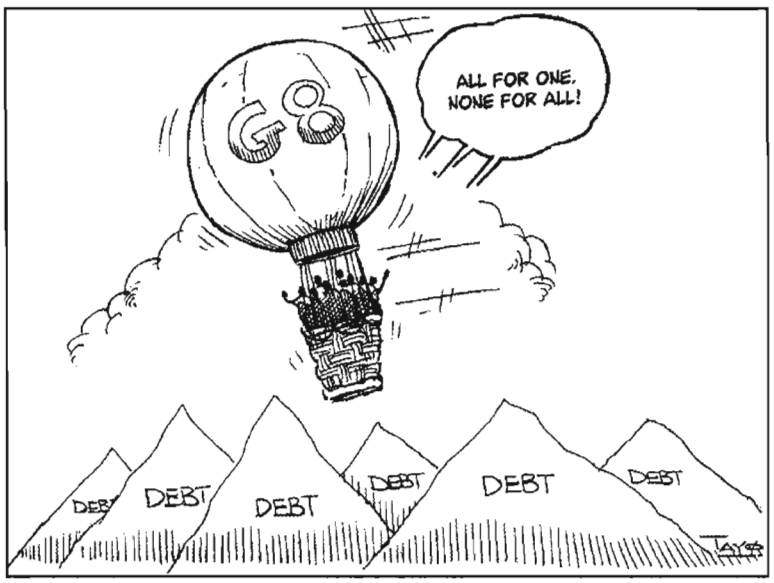
reality check - USA

The weakness of the anti-globalisation argument is reflected in the fact that its explanation of how the world works bears little resemblance to reality. According to the theory, as a result of globalisation, the nation state should be in a state of terminal decline. Yet, so far, the 21st century has been dominated by the actions of the US - the most powerful state in history, the sole and indeed first truly global superpower. This is hardly an indication of declining state power.

Far from fleeing the constraints of the US superstate, capitalism remains firmly located within it, nurtured, enriched and protected by massive state power. While it is true that US capitalism has relocated much of its production to the developing world, in reality, this represents little more than an extension of the US borders into third world countries. The US multinationals (like their European counterparts), generally operate in enclaves totally divorced from the national economy within which they operate, and under the direct protection of the US state, which steps in to ensure they remain free of any control by domestic governments. The production process barely benefits the host economy, as much of the products and profits are shipped straight back to the US.

Far from wanting to flee state control, multinationals are dependent upon it. Through US-dominated state bodies

So far, the 21st century has been dominated by the actions of the US - the most powerful state in history, the sole and indeed first truly global superpower. This is hardly an indication of declining state power.



such as the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organisation, the US, along with its junior European and Japanese partners, can impose its will on the developing world, ensuring that their economies function not according to some mythical market mechanism, but to their dictats. The only other option is made very obvious in the constant diet of bullying and threats dished out to the lackeys running third world countries - if you don't obey you will get financial sanctions imposed, underpinned if necessary by the might of the US military, which can be dispatched whenever the interests of US capitalism are deemed threatened.

the global truth

So, having checked out globalisation, it is time to check in on reality. It is not that we are witnessing the withering away of the state, but rather we are seeing massive state power at the disposal of the capitalist class that is being used at the dawn of the 21st century to impose its will and drive down costs in the interests of profit. Within Britain and the US (and with Europe now increasingly falling into line), this has resulted in the use of ever more draconian laws aimed at crushing any form of effective working class organisation.

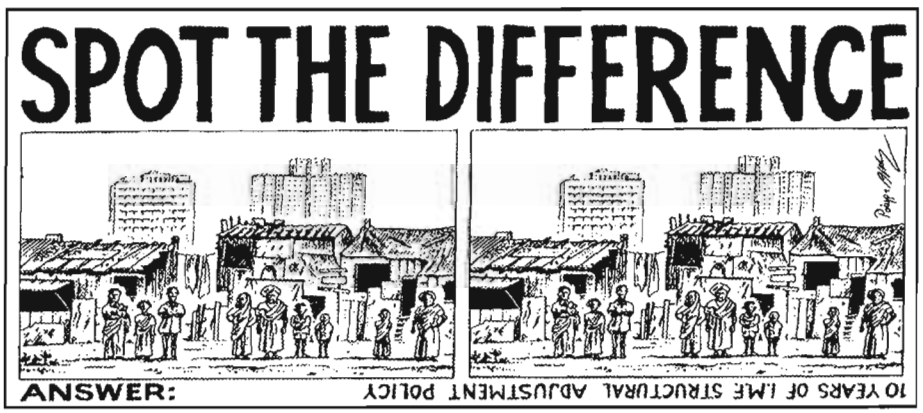
Meanwhile, unskilled jobs continue to be exported abroad, leaving a large section of the domestic working class semi-unemployed, retained impoverished on state benefits in order that they can be readily forced into work should the needs of capitalism require it. Within the core workforce, the state sponsors training and team working, increasingly aided by trade unions, as a way of promoting consensus, based the idea that workers' and capitalists' interests are the same. Alongside such attempts at manipulation, the state employs labour market deregulation, backed by the threat of jobs being transferred abroad, thus creating job insecurity as a means of disciplining workers. The current role of the state is to drive down costs in order to boost profits, while maintaining the social democratic facade. That is why we have New Labour.

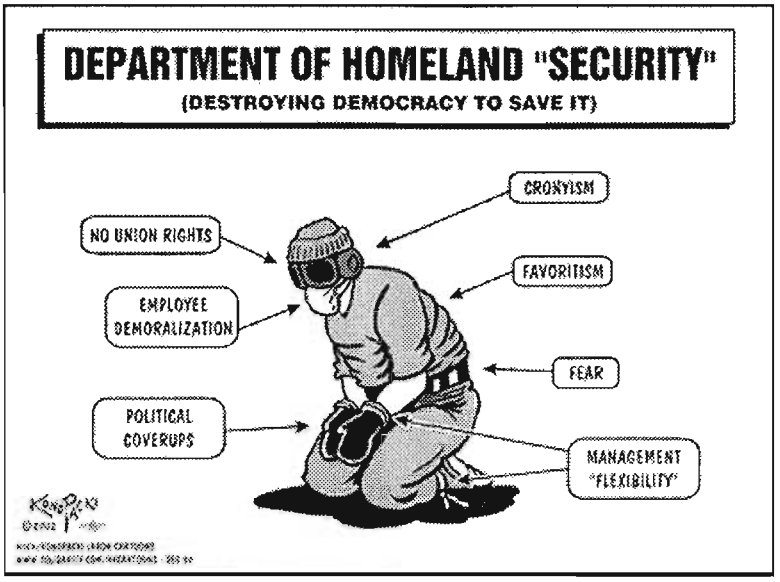
In the developing world, the primary goal of western capitalism has never altered; it remains that of ensuring that the less developed world remains as such. Otherwise, third world companies could take advantage of lower costs and eventually challenge the hegemony of first world companies. Also, prices of raw materials would rise, and it is essential to western capitalism that the south remains the main source of cheap raw materials. Without development, the third world does not posses the economic infrastructure to process its raw materials into much more profitable finished goods for export. This leaves third world companies with little choice but to sell raw materials to the first world companies in order to earn income.

new world orders

Since the collapse of communism, with no ideological challenger, first world repression of the less developed world has become increasingly brutal. The US-sponsored wars in Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan have been aimed at making sure secure oil supplies are under the control of the US. Meanwhile, in South America in particular, billions of dollars of military hardware have been poured in to brutally suppress any remnants of resistance in countries such as Colombia, Argentina and Venezuela.

Across the southern hemisphere, economic polices have been imposed that have taken away what little control national governments have over their economies. Basic provision, often subsidised by the state, such as energy, water and welfare, have been taken over by western companies, with dire consequences for the population. Such has been the havoc wrought by western companies over the last 20 years that in many developing countries, social and economic structures have collapsed, and they hardly pass for nation states





...the greatest exponent of new imperialism is Tony Blair, whose favourite word is "moral" - used especially liberally whenever British forces are employed to bomb and slaughter the innocent at the behest of our US masters.

anymore.

The US, as the principal architect of the new world order, uses the globalisation arguments of the free market right, both as a means of justifying its world dominance and as a cover for what Chomsky has called its "codified international piracy". Thomas Friedman of the New York Times has articulated how the US sees its role in the new order, arguing that the "American victory in the cold war was...a victory for a set of political and economic principles; democracy and the free market". At last, the world is coming to understand that "the free market is the way of the future, for which America is both the gatekeeper and model".

In recent years, the US has sought to add a moral dimension to its free market arguments to try to justify its brutality. The basic tenet of this new 'liberal imperialism' is that the US is the one true keeper and defender of the civilised world, whose superior way of life must be protected from dark, ungodly forces. US intervention is therefore largely undertaken against the forces of 'evil' in defence of 'freedom' and American values. Perhaps the greatest exponent of this new imperialism is Tony Blair, whose favourite word is "moral" - used especially liberally whenever British forces are employed to bomb and slaughter the innocent at the behest of our US masters.

Basically, the line of thinking is that US dominance is the only means of keeping the barbarians from the door. With all its undertones of racial and cultural superiority, this is a return to the days of a world divided up into western (Christian) civilisation and the ungodly, uncivilised 'rest'. There is only a very small step from this to a world where non-whites are somehow inferior human beings, to be slaughtered and/or tortured at will - and all in the defence of 'civilisation'.

This new US imperialist view is well articulated by political analyst Zbigniew Brezezinski. No political lightweight this; Brezezinski's ideas have influenced Carter, Bush senior, Clinton, and now the Bush administration. He states "the only real alternative to American global leadership in the foreseeable future is international anarchy". In that respect, America has apparently become, as President Clinton put it, the world's "indispensable nation" as "without sustained and directed American involvement, before long the forces of global disorder could come to dominate the world scene".

While arguing that, in the short term, the US should maintain its dominance and prevent any challengers to its world rule, Brzezinski recognises that, in the medium term, US economic power will decline. He argues that the US will be the world's first and last sole superpower. He sees the current US primacy as a "window of opportunity" within which the US can arrange the world order to ensure that American values and influence become the dominant force in the world's most powerful countries who will, in the future, come together with bankers and corporations to jointly manage the world.

your worst nightmares

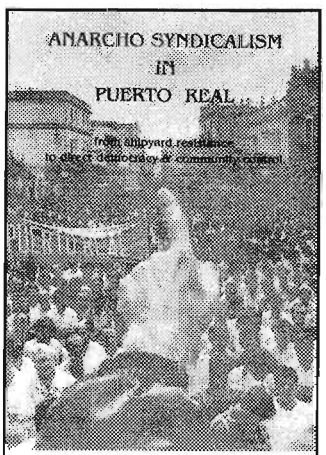
Of course, this is a nightmarish vision of a world policed by a capitalist superstate (as opposed to the nightmarish vision of the socialist superstate envisaged by left anti-globalists). However, these are not the only visions. Since its birth, capitalism has been dominated by wars between capitalist nation states vying for power. The Soviet threat united the capitalist states, who were willing to accept US leadership in return for military protection. With this now gone, there is every likelihood that a competing capitalist power (e.g. China or Europe) will at some point in the future challenge the US directly. The hope of Brzezinski and others is that the US, rather than attempt to defend its leadership against all comers, will seek to absorb them. On current form, this has to be seriously questioned, which leaves us with a rather bleak outlook.

in your dreams

To end on a more positive note, clearly, there is a real alternative to the globalisation theories of the left and right. The left anti-globalists recognise that governments will no longer protect the interests of workers, and so argue for direct action as the best means of fighting big business directly. They have the wrong reasons for arriving at this (i.e. they think it is because the state is withering), but their conclusion is fortunately valid; for the state will always back capitalism, and direct action is the only means of avoiding the dangers of state capitulation. The end-point is not a superstate to 'protect' us against capitalist (which is like putting a wolf in charge of the sheep), but a stateless world organised on the basis of human solidarity and mutual aid. This, of course, is not a new idea - people have been thinking about it and working for it for at least 140 years (see *closerlook,* p.30).

Rediscovering Global Solidarity

The 1922 IWA founding conference marked a watershed in the development of anarcho-syndicalism. Ideas and tactics developed through practical direct action and self-organisation across the world were brought together and distilled...



For this pamphlet on '90s struggles in Spanish shipyards, send £1 to the SF Contact Point (see p.34)

In December 2004, the International Workers' Association (IWA), the international to which the Solidarity Federation is the British section, will be holding its 22nd Congress in Granada. It has been around for over 80 years and has seen many upheavals. Despite repeated attempts by others to destroy it, the IWA has re-emerged as a fully functioning international that is once again growing rapidly.

After the Russian revolution the Bolsheviks did their best to persuade anarcho-syndicalists and revolutionary syndicalists to join their Third International. There were immediate doubts on the part of the syndicalists, and these grew over time. The final breach between revolutionary syndicalism and Bolshevism occurred at the October 1921 FAUD (German anarcho-syndicalist union) Congress. Syndicalist delegates from Germany, Sweden, Holland, Czechoslovakia and the US section of the IWW met and decided to hold a new international congress in Berlin in 1922, with the aim of forming a new International of revolutionary syndicalists.

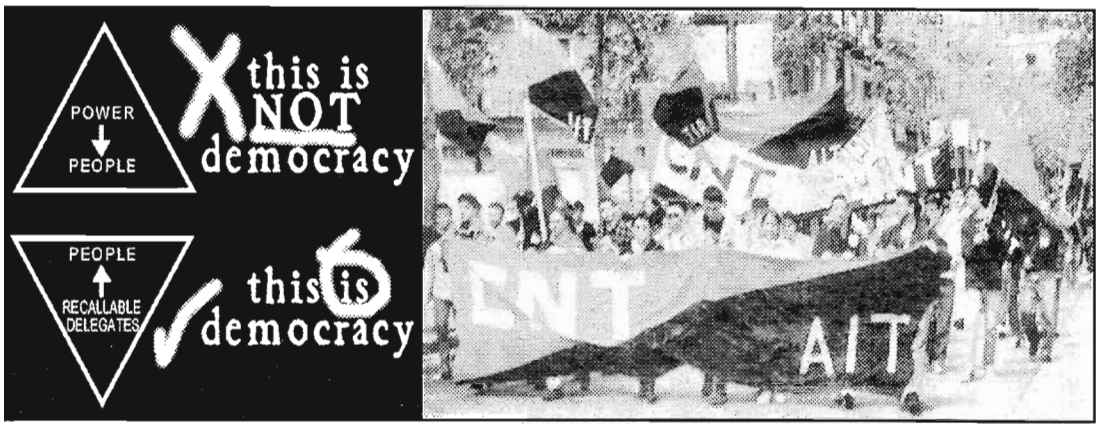
In December 1922, the International Congress of Syndicalists met in Berlin, with delegates from the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina (FORA), the Chilean IWW, the Danish Union for Syndicalist Propaganda, the German FAUD, the Dutch NAS, the Italian Unione Sindicale Italiana (USI), the Mexican Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT), the Norwegian Norsk Syndikalistik Federation (NSF), the Portuguese Confederacao General do Trabalho (CGT), and the Swedish Sverige Arbtares Centralorganisation (SAC).

The Spanish CNT, engaged in a bitter struggle with the Spanish state, sent messages of support to the Congress after their delegation was arrested on the way to the conference. Though many of the organisations represented had already endured bitter state repression, they still totalled several millions of workers. The Congress adopted the name of the First International, the International Working Men's Association, which was later changed to the International Workers' Association (IWA). It also adopted a programme which, for the first time, described anarcho-syndicalism in basic principles.

The conference still recognised the social general strike as the highest expression of direct action, but they now saw it as merely the prelude to social revolution, which would probably have to be defended by violent means. While recognising that violence may be necessary, they stipulated that defence of the revolution should be completely in the hands of the workers themselves, organised in workers' militias, accountable and controlled by the wider workers' movement.

Centralism, political parties, parliamentarianism and the state, including the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, were all emphatically rejected. The Congress also rejected the Marxist concept that liberation would, as one delegate put it, come about; "by virtue of some inevitable fatalism of rigid natural laws which admit no deviation; its realisation will depend above all upon the conscious will and the force of revolutionary action of the workers and will be determined by them".

The programme also made clear that syndicalism opposed not only economic inequality, but also all forms of inequality and dominance. It stated its total opposition to war and militarism. In terms of post-capitalist organisation, the programme envisages a system of economic communes and administrative organs, based within a system of free councils federated locally, regionally and up to the global level. These would form the basis of a self-managed society, in which workers in every branch of industry and at every level would co-ordinate the production and distribution process according to the needs and interests of the community, by mutual agreement, according to a pre-determined plan. The revolutionary aim was stipulated as seeking to replace the government of people by the management of things.



The 1922 IWA founding conference marked a watershed in the development of anarcho-syndicalism. Ideas and tactics developed through practical direct action and self-organisation across the world were brought together and distilled into a clear set of aims and principles. What is more, workers from different parts of the world, facing widely varying problems and conditions, agreed upon these aims and principles. They described the fundamental core of anarcho-syndicalism, and they remain fundamentally in place and just as relevant today. In 1922, for the first time, anarcho-syndicalism was defined as an international movement.

In the years following the founding Congress, unions and propaganda groups from France, Austria, Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania affiliated to the new anarcho-syndicalist International. Later the Asociación Continental Americana de los Trabajadores (ACAT - American Continental Association of Workers) affiliated *en bloc*, including unions and propaganda groups from Chile, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, Cuba, Costa Rica and El Salvador. At one time or another in the period 1923-39, the IWA had affiliates in 15 countries in Europe, 14 in Latin America and one in Japan, while maintaining sympathetic contact with labour organisations in India.

However, despite the size and early growth of the IWA, it had formed against a background of mounting repression. Even at the 1922 founding Congress, the delegates from USI warned of the rising danger of fascism and reported that, already, a number of USI members had been murdered by marauding groups of fascists. In the 1920s, the USI was an astoundingly large organisation of some 600,000 members but, within a few years of Mussolini coming to power, the fascists had annihilated it. This was soon followed by the merciless destruction of the German FAUD by the Nazis. The CNT in Spain, which became the biggest affiliate to IWA in the 1930s, was executed out of existence by the Franco regime during and following the tragedy of the 1936-9 Spanish revolution. By the 1950s, repression by fascists and communists had wiped out much of the pre-war anarcho-syndicalist movement, leaving only a handful of much smaller organisations struggling to keep the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism alive.

Moves by the largest section, the Swedish SAC, tried to take the IWA towards social-democratic reformism. This was resisted and resulted in them leaving the IWA. This was a massive blow at the time in the 1950's, as by then they were the only remaining functioning union.

The fortunes of the IWA began to revive in the 1970s with the re-emergence of the Spanish CNT after the death of Franco. Despite the best attempts of the state and an internal conspiracy, the CNT remained true to anarcho-syndicalist principles and inspired the current growth in IWA sections throughout the world.

The present IWA Secretariat is based in Norway. Delegates to the 22nd Congress come from all over the world and there are applications to join the IWA from union federations in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Serbia. Although the main strength of the international lies in Europe and South America, it has sections and contacts on every continent with its links growing.

Of course, as with any living organisation, there emerge tensions and differences of opinion. These will be dealt with within the principles of revolutionary syndicalism that all the affiliates adhere to. Others may attempt to build alternative internationals but, since they are based on flawed principles and opportunism, they are either still-born or inevitably wither into an inert paper organisation held together only by what the organisations in it are against, rather what they are for.

Anarcho-syndicalism is a modern political idea with deep roots. It will continue to develop and not be stuck in an ideological morass that exemplifies so many other political currents. At the same time, it stays true to the principles first developed over eighty years ago in Berlin.

Despite the best attempts of the state and an internal conspiracy, the CNT remained true to anarcho-syndicalist principles and inspired the current growth in IWA sections throughout the world.

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.

Dear DA Collective,

Thank you for sending us the back issues of DA magazine for our library project in Kosovo and putting us on your mailing list.

In April we sent a couple of letters to various publishers (AK, Verso, Zed magazine, a few other anarchist magazines) worldwide, but we didn't receive any kind of response. Having here in Kosovo no reliable post connections and without any access to the internet we are not in a position to obtain any relevant information up to date, and any books, videos, etc. Because our monthly salary is not enough for ordering any kind of materials from abroad we are trying to find someone able to help us with even quite damaged/second hand copies of books, etc.

If you have some idea or address/ contact persons in a position to help us be so kind to write us.

In solidarity,

Roman A. Dejan, librarian, RL Project

PS. Videos would be very useful for our work, also posters and other propaganda materials.

Donors: Send your stuff to DA or write to us for contact details (DA Collective, PO Box 1095 Sheffield S2 4YR)

Dear DA

If you don't think it worthwhile correcting mainstream ignorance of anarchism and anarchists, there is not much point in reading this. If you do think it is occasionally worthwhile, do read on...

We have recently come across a ridiculous comment about anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, in the magazine TV and Satellite Week. Profiling a documentary on Thursday 21st October on the biography channel, the listings magazine comments:

11pm "Great Crimes and Trials - Profile of mass murderers Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti".

A curious interpretation of history to put it mildly. Those who object to this sort of nonsense can e mail the magazine at: TV&Satweek@ipcmedia.com

Dear Direct Action,

Hello. You have a wonderful publication. Thank you for all the work that your publication does for social justice and to fight oppression. We are a small group of independent individuals trying to help network the movement to make the world a better place. We are greatly in need of many, many volunteers to help us to achieve many of the multilingual, multi-alliance building goals that we have.

In July 2005, Portland, Oregon will host the 'A World Beyond Capitalism' (AWBC) conference. This conference is not guided by any political organization or government institution. I am writing to you on behalf of the organizers of that conference. This conference will create alliances in a manner which transcends the boundaries of the English Language, Race, Class, Gender, Age, Ability, Sexual Orientation and Endless Theory. Volunteers of all backgrounds worldwide, including work-from-home or bilingual volunteers, are greatly needed. Through love, solidarity and international outreach ...the unreachable is achievable ...A World Beyond Capitalism!

Website accessible in over 23 languages: www.awbc.lfhniivaaaa.info To join our email list and volunteer bulletin board please email awbcbbupdates@lfhniivaaaa.info

Dear Friends,

I thought that you might be interested to receive my catalogue of videos and DVDs which are for hire. Many of them would stimulate a good discussion after a viewing and I think would be useful for local groups or branches.

Ones which particularly relate to issues of interest to your members are:

THE BALLAD OF JOE HILL (Trade Union section)
BLUE COLLAR (Trade Union section)
COUNTRY (Social Issues section)
ERIN BROCKOVICH (Unclassified section)
HIDDEN WARS OF DESERT STORM (In supplement)
IN WHOSE INTEREST? (In supplement)
M.I.5's OFFICIAL SECRETS (Civil Rights section)
THE NAVIGATORS (Trade Union section)
THE NEW PATRIOTS (In supplement)
NORMA RAE (Trade Union section)
THE SECRET SOCIETY (Civil Rights section)
UNCOVERED: THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT THE IRAQ WAR (Iraq section)

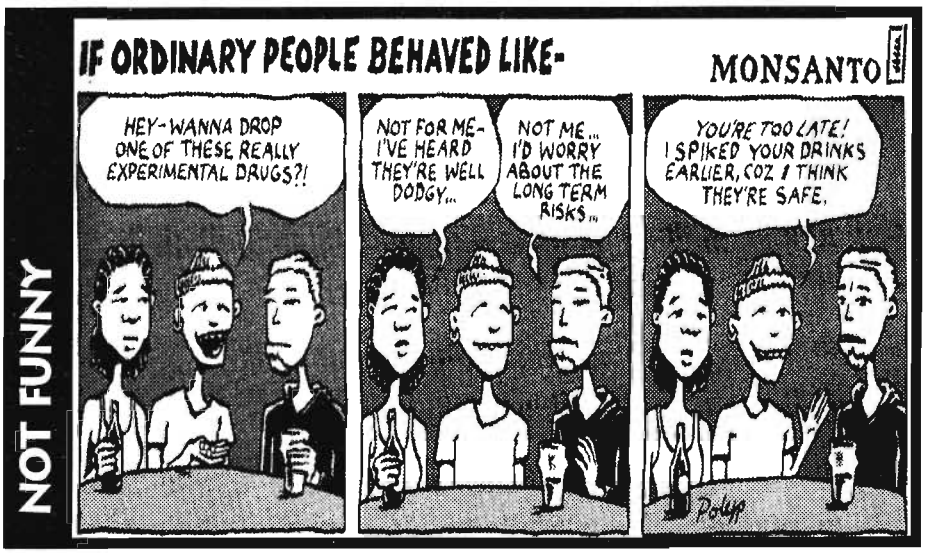
There are many others in the enclosed catalogue which I am sure that you would find of value. The hire fee is £7.00 which includes postage both ways.

If you have an queries please come back to me. I am always adding new films which would be of use to organisations like yours and so please let me know if you would like me to add you to my mailing list so that you are kept informed.

Yours sincerely,

EW

Of Public Concern, Nacton, Ipswich, IP10 0LA. Tel – 01473 717088. Fax – 01473 274531.



Pension off pensions

One of the great modern injustices in Britain, is the way retired people are treated. Justice will only come when the system which values pensioners as zero is abolished.

"...or, alternatively, you become a Buddhist, and totally renounce all wealth and possessions"

Labour Party MPs talk of a concern for "fairness" and "justice" in relation to the pensions system and in defence of their continuance of the means-tested approach. The fact that means testing hits the most vulnerable hardest cuts no ice with them. They are, after all, very unlikely to be in that situation themselves, having voted to guarantee their gross incomes on retirement. They assume, like the good socialists they are, that capitalism will still be around to provide for their privileged old age.

It is claimed that "targeting" benefits ensures that those elderly who need such help get it, but this isn't true. The plethora of forms to be completed (there are some 23 benefits of which 16 are interlocked), and the humiliation of admitting poverty and baring your financial all to the bureaucrats militates against take-up. It's laughable to hear politicians say, "Our aim is 100% take-up". State actuaries work out how many will die before reaching the required age or submitting to such practices and this saves the Treasury millions. When the welfare system was devised by Beveridge, it was expected that retirement would average 14 years for women and 12 for men. It is now half as long again. The current system is "a system of survival" for the many who receive one sixth of average pay: one in three get less than the full pension and most of these are women who have, understandably, been unable to make the necessary 40 years' contributions.

Pensions Credit was introduced with gusto in October 2003. It costs more to administer than is paid out, £10 for every £1 paid (Pensions Policy Institute). There are 6,000 people devising the amount due, costing £120 million per year, and another 18,000 paying out and sorting the mess created by the first lot, costing millions more. Pensions experts from across the concerned agencies (e.g. TUC, the pensions industry, Help the Aged and even the CBI and the Tories) now agree that it would be better to halt the expanding bureaucratic means testing and pay a decent level of pension to all as a right, a "citizen pension".

This could be afforded within current government spending levels. At present, a single person is guaranteed an income of £105 per week with the added means-tested benefit (at 80 you can claim a pension of £46 per week if you've resided here for 10 years) and it is proposed that this £105 be cast as the basic pension. This in turn would cut bureaucracy, and so overall would cost no more than the present system.

Apparently, the New Zealand state has taken the "citizen pension" approach (with a ten-year residence proviso), and it has been a success, with pensioners allegedly becoming "a remarkably contented lot". Even Bliar is said to be "concerned" at the growth of the bureaucratic means-tested system. The door to the pensions ministry swings repeatedly as bureaucrats reluctantly shuffle into the job then out again. Politically it is a poisoned chalice; *"Wow, I'm a Minister. Oh f**k, better appear to be doing something or my career's up the spout. Raise taxes on the middle class and the rich? No, mustn't upset Middle England. Get me out of here!..."*

Meanwhile, billions are wasted by the state on "defence" and other socially and environmentally destructive projects, not to mention private bureaucracies and huge IT and private finance initiatives that repeatedly fail. Such publicly-funded largesse is not corrupt, it is merely the legalised piracy that follows naturally from such an unaccountable system. Paying to secure the lives of the elderly isn't in the same league of priorities.

Age is only a 'problem' because capitalism is about exploitation of labour, and if you're not available to be exploited in the production process, or require services that are limited, you aren't really of interest. You are surplus to requirements, a drain on the capitalist economy; you become "a problem".

Imagine a situation where you don't wake up on a workday thinking, *"Oh, shit! I thought it was Sunday."* There will always be mundane tasks (who knows how future technology will change these), but when all such tasks are shared among the *whole* workforce and there is no employer or manager able to scuttle around giving pointless orders, we won't feel isolated, exploited and longing to get out or retire. Work will become a more sociable and balanced activity and we won't want to give it up.

We might then supersede the idea of people being regarded disparagingly as "pensioners", by eliminating pensions as such. Humans are sociable creatures, and when the daily grind is made more tolerable and wage-slavery is abolished, we will have a different attitude towards it. Friendships and solidarity will be extended. Older workers will be recognised as a continuing asset, and as we will be working fewer hours, the rigours of work will be reduced. People will most likely prefer to remain within the workplace community for as long as possible.

Instead of feeling at a loss on retirement (the forced isolation even kills some), within a self-managed society, older workers who cannot or do not continue working will be provided with full services and credit in recognition of their contribution to the community. They will not become a problem by simply living beyond their working lives, and will only be vulnerable in terms of health.

Capitalism is an incredibly wasteful system; if allowed to continue it can only produce continuing misery and create more economic scapegoats, such as the vulnerable elderly, amid hypocritical concern from the controlling practitioners. Its elimination in the interests of a just society is long overdue.

The Chomsky Tapes

Three audio tapes produced by What's Left.

John Dewey once remarked that "democracy begins in conversation." As What's Left puts it, these tapes are an attempt to broaden the dialogue so crucial to democracy.

'Noam Chomsky speaking on Anarchism'

Running time; 45 minutes, recorded March 4, 1997

During this gathering of journalists, Noam Chomsky fields questions about anarchism and authority in his usual, almost casual, style, as he eloquently gets to the point, time after time. Asked "What is anarchism?", Chomsky muses that its basic principle comes out of classic Liberalism and the Enlightenment; that any form of domination, authority or coercion has to demonstrate that it is legitimate, be it in the family or the global economy.

Asked what is legitimate authority? Chomsky says 'that's the task of those who have the authority to demonstrate'. As an example, he says, 'if my grandchild runs out into the road and I grab her, pull her back, well that's authority, and it's my task to demonstrate that it's legitimate and I think that in this case, if anyone challenged me, I could make an argument that this is legitimate authority. But the burden of proof is always on those who exercise it, and that's true be it men and women, parents and children, owners and people they rent, the state and people who serve it, the IMF and the people who follow its orders, wherever it is... So there is no general definition of what legitimate authority is, it's the task of those who exercise authority to demonstrate their legitimacy; they're the one's who hold the burden of proof. If they can't meet that burden by explaining why what they do is legitimate then they have no right to exercise that authority and anarchists are just people who try to do something about it'.

Asked if responsibility was down to individuals, Chomsky says people must make the challenge, underlining the point by saying that it is the responsibility of, 'say, women to challenge a framework in which they are supposed to wash the dishes and put the children to sleep...(and) it's the responsibility of men in a patriarchal family to answer that challenge... It would be nice if the challenge could be raised by those in positions of authority but that's pretty rare; when you're in a position of authority you kind of internalise the values that say that it's right and just'. His reasoning here is that most people are 'sort of decent human beings' and, as he puts it; 'it's very hard to look in the mirror and say, "I'm a bastard"'.

Asked if the State is legitimate, in his soft matter-of-fact way he points out that 'most slave societies were accepted by the slaves as legitimate and in fact necessary'. The same could be said of people who have jobs today, 'almost without exception, they consider it legitimate for them to be in a position where they have to rent themselves in order to survive ... by now enough indoctrination and propaganda has taken place so people do regard that form of subordination as legitimate, whether they should is another question, the fact is they do'.

Asked if the State is legitimate, in his soft matter-of-fact way he points out that 'most slave societies were accepted by the slaves as legitimate and in fact necessary'.

This straight-talking linguist has developed an almost media-speak approach to explaining libertarian ideas and ways of seeing the world. Issues range from The Spanish Civil War and The American Civil War to pointing out that 'when Libya wants to carry out terrorism they hire a couple of car loads of people, when the US wants to carry out terrorism they hire terrorist states, the big guys'. He thinks responsibility of rationalising the challenge is typically in the hands of those who recognise that they have a subordinate status, but it is very hard to make the recognition in the first place. Chomsky has a well-rehearsed feel and a matter-of-fact manner as he strips away the facades and we get the naked state at work; refreshing to hear, yet chilling.

'Noam Chomsky debates Richard Perle'

Running Time: 1h 40min, two tapes, recorded 1999

In this lively debate, Noam Chomsky and Richard Perle exchange radically different perspectives on the history and motivations of US Foreign policy. Richard Perle was the Assistant Secretary of Defense from 1981 to 1987, and was, at the time of this recording, with the American Enterprise Institute.

Chomsky sets off at his usual pace, casually reeling off the facts on what was supposed to be a pre-set debate (each speaker making an opening statement and the other replying). Chomsky bases his piece on published records, reports and quotes from Richard Perle and his colleagues, and outlines how the US has set about 'ordering' the world. In a rare moment of straying from using direct quotes from those involved, Chomsky offers a personal opinion when he notes that the 'Reagan administration is responsible for atrocities that

What's Left,
PO Box 18070, Denver,
Colorado 80218 USA.
publicmind@msn.com

merit comparison to Poll Pot'.

Richard Perle roams off in reply, saying that he hasn't seen any of these documents or reports, but then again you can't believe everything you read in government documents (which brings the house down). Perle rambles about how Chomsky can't have any understanding of how government works because he's never been in government. Perle spends most of his time off-topic and manages to say very little of substance, often evoking much amusement as he begins to realise this isn't his home crowd.

Questions are asked, leading to debate over who exactly makes US foreign policy decisions. In defining 'terrorism' and the US's use of 'proxy forces', to undertake state sponsored terrorism, Perle provides several one-word answers as it becomes plain that everyone present can now see his nakedness. The embarrassment becomes even clearer as Perle tries to defend Israel's actions, only to have Chomsky quote from the Israeli Government's own minutes, published in Hebrew, which directly contradict Perle's assertions.

The first question on my mind is why did Richard Perle take part? Perhaps it's the criminal in him that he can't stop talking. Either way, it is a real pleasure to hear Perle squirm.

'Noam Chomsky - peering into the Abyss'

Running Time: 2h 16min, two tapes, recorded March 22, 2002

This talk was a fundraiser for the Peninsula Peace and Justice Centre in Palo Alto, California.

Noam Chomsky gets into his stride by remembering when the Reagan Administration came to office 20 years ago, declaring that the war against international terrorism was going to be the focus of US foreign policy, and that it would concentrate on Central America and the Middle East. This was redeclared on Sept 11th, same war, same rhetoric, same people - and carried out in much the same way. But nothing has been said about this not very ancient history, although in places like central America and the Middle East they haven't forgotten that the 'defenders of civilisation' launched terrorist campaigns of unprecedented scale and violence which has overwhelmed any 'real' terrorism that might be taking place there by several orders of magnitude. The example is provided of the Turkish state against the Kurds; organised, paid for, supported and encouraged in Washington, primarily by Clinton, who provided 80% of the arms to Turkey as they became one of the leading recipients of US aid. The repression of the Kurds in SE Turkey is now a 'US 'model' for how to conduct the war on terrorism.

By 1999 the focus had switched to Colombia, and the next major war against terrorism, very much like the others. As Chomsky reminds his audience, US policy is that '..terrorism is carried out by others against the US; if we carry out acts against them, that's not terrorism. In the US, this 'truth' is universal, there is no exception in the literature or anywhere'.

Chomsky notes that today is the 40th anniversary of the day Kennedy announced that the US Air Force was going to bomb South Vietnam, thus initiating the use of chemical warfare to destroy food crops through the 'authorized' use of Napalm.

'The US and its coalition partners are leading terrorist states', he says, at which a large portion of the audience cheer and clap, but he continues talking regardless. 'Russia is delighted to join the war on terrorism, to have authorization for its atrocities in Chechnya ... same in China, Israel ... Turkey has stepped up repression and is now honored for its efforts'.

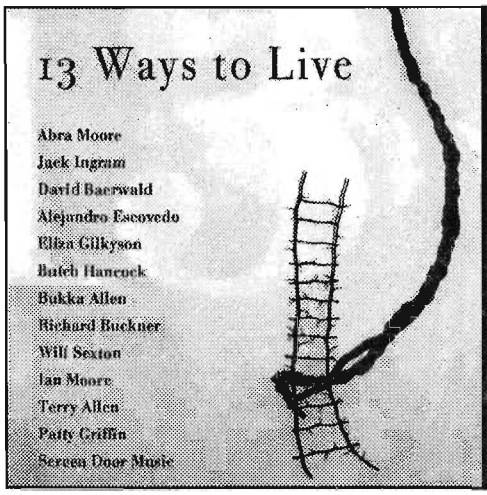
After 9/11, and after Bush's plaintive question 'why do they hate us when we treat them so well? (laughter breaks out), some of the US press started to ask around the moneyed Moslems, bankers, lawyers, managers, etc. in the Middle East. They naturally despise Bin Laden because they are his main targets, but it turns out, says Chomsky, that they're most critical of the US, as it consistently opposes democracy and independent development, and is supporting corrupt brutal regimes, like Israel's military occupation, now in its 35th year.

Thus, Chomsky seamlessly slips from the CIA to the Cold War to US terrorism, and before you know it finishes with a question and answer session. So why is he so endlessly listenable? He has an endless stream of facts, figures and quotes that just keep coming, sometimes astonishing his audience, such as, '..the US is run by certified lunatics'. It is not often any of us can listen such to a potted history of events that have devastated areas of our world and its people, swept clean as it is of politics-speak, and noting the victims' point of view. The sound quality on the tapes is sometimes difficult and there are repetitions of points between tapes, nevertheless, it's a superb resource to have around. Well done, What's Left.

'The US and its coalition partners are leading terrorist states', he says... 'Russia is delighted to join the war on terrorism, to have authorization for its atrocities in Chechnya ... same in China, Israel ... Turkey has stepped up repression and is now honored for its efforts'.

Various Artists: 13 Ways to Live

Red House Records 2004 - CD
www.redhouserecords.com



From Texas with compassion - not a phrase that springs to mind when thinking of the lone star state, but just to prove prejudices are just that, here comes a CD of 13 tracks of music from Dubyas power base. Actually it is from Austin, which I think is just down the road a little. The proceeds from this CD will go to 'benefit the people of Iraq whose land has been ravaged by war' via the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF) www.vvaf.org.

The music is in the continuum of singer songwriter Americana country folk rock, underpinned by Screen Door Music, who seem to have put it together, play on all the tracks, and contribute the beautiful instrumental 'Cycles'. Most of the artists on here aren't familiar (at least to me), with the exception of the always outstanding Alejandro Escovedo (see tribute review in the last issue of DA). Patty Griffin's slow, evocative 'Dear old friend' is reminiscent of current Emmylou Harris (a very, very good thing). None of the other tracks are weak, and there are some excellent vocalists and song writing on display, though not in every case in the same track; Butch Hancock's finely written 'The damage done' is sung in a Bob Dylan circa early 1960's pastiche, but with a nice Gallic touch on the accordion.

Politically, we're not talking raving revolutionaries here; none of the lyrics are Crass-style diatribes. Many are directly related to the horror of war and western (white European and offshoots) control freakery, although some are slightly opaque. The politics of the whole thing is basically a reaction to the horrors of war. The VVAF - from a quick look at its website - seems to concentrate on opposition to landmines and helping victims of them, and opposing conflict in general. (As an aside, one of the links on their website leads to a whole debate about the re-introduction of the draft, as the US runs out of 'willing volunteers'.)

As a whole, it's a worthy rather than radical contribution to the opposition to the 'war on terror'™. As a way of getting to know some unfamiliar names from the great state of Texas, it's a fine and welcome release that warrants and rewards repeated playing.

Diana Mosley

Anne de Courcy. Vintage, £8.99, 432pp.

De Courcy's book, by focusing on Diana Mosley, gives us an original perspective on the far right in Britain before the Second World War. Diana Mitford was the daughter of the second Baron Redesdale, and became the wife of Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists.

She was immensely flattered when Hitler became deeply 'fond' of her, however, she lived to tell the tale, unlike her sister, Unity Valkyre, who committed suicide for her unrequited love of Hitler.

In his early pamphlets, Mosley talks of 'revolution', as well as 'loyalty to king and country'. The mind boggles at how anyone could have seen any socialism within 'national socialism', but unfortunately they did. De Courcy does not offer any explanation. Her claim is that Diana's life 'dazzled, charmed, shocked, beguiled and appalled'. Actually, the only beguiling I can recognise is of the Daily Mail reader authoring this. We are left with the possibility that fascism, after all, is based on a number of murderous platitudes, spectacles and parades with banners.

When Oswald died, she said to her son, Nicholas, that 'I sometimes feel that the day that ruined my life was the day I met Hitler'. If Britain had had a de-Nazification court, then she and Oswald would have been shot. Diana Mosley was beautiful and batty, like many fascists. Her downfall was that her husband didn't rule in Britain.

Sick56/Higgins++
Out of a black pool e.p.

JSNTGM Records, 2004 7" single £3.00. P.O. Box 1025, Blackpool FY3 0FA, www.jsntgm.com e-mil: andy@jstgm.com

Well, they know the way to touch up this reviewers ageing aesthetic sensibilities – a 7" single on shocking pink vinyl, marvellous stuff for starts, and the contents - two Fylde coast punk bands - are no bad shakes either.

Sick56's two tracks are straight out angry punk/hardcore - angry lyrics and angry music - they may be angry people. On the other side is Higgins++'s track 'Cool Britannia uber alles', a cover/reworking of the old Dead Kennedys' 'California Uber Alles'. Lyrically, it is an attack on Blair, his love of war, being in bed with Dubya and all those cuddlable corporations who make money from the war on the Iraqi people and, of course, the whole cool Britannia debacle, where New Labour sucked up to dumb nuts pop stars who were too coked up to notice how shit it all was.

The Dead Kennedys themselves already did a cover of 'We've got a bigger problem now' about dear ole departed Ronnie Reagan - and I am sure there are numerous others, not least the Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, so it's a familiar tune with new lyrics.

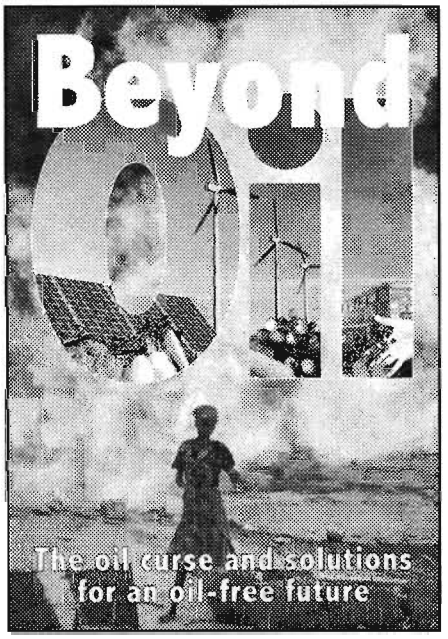
It's a limited edition of 500, so there may not be any left by the time you get to read this, but check out the website where at the time of writing the tracks were available as MP3s and you never know, they might even have some left on lovely chunky pink vinyl.

Contained in the packaging came a flyer for 'A history of Blackpool punk/alternative music', so if you want any information about this then contact them at the address or e-mail above. Just goes to show how much this reviewer knows, I thought Blackpool punk was The Membranes – ignorance is not always bliss.

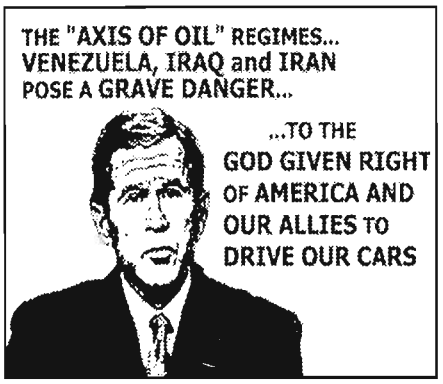
Beyond Oil

Beyond Oil: the oil curse and solutions for an oil-free future

Download as pdf from www.nonewoil.org or order a copy (£1 incl p&p cheque payable to 'No New Oil') from No New Oil, 16b Cherwell St, Oxford, OX4 1BG. Rising Tide, Tel 01865 241 097



This new 32-page A5 booklet brings together background info on oil and conflict, repressive regimes, development, oil industry workers, and climate change. As the blurb says, "together with info on the revolving doors and mutual support between the oil industry, government and the International Financial Institutions which fund new oil projects, it lays out the UK's involvement in the oil curse, and the action we can take to challenge it."



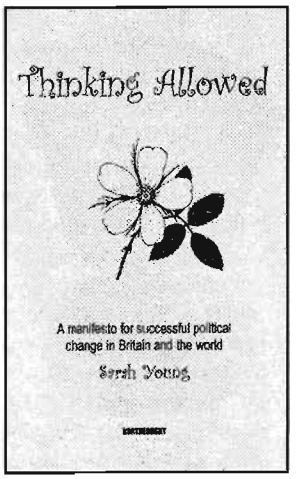
So, if you are after a freely downloadable, quick-to-read, accessible, and uncompromisingly anti-commercial perspective on the oil industry, its practises and impacts, plus some ideas for the future, then this is it. Do not expect in-depth analysis - this is a 30-page leaflet with lots of spaces and pictures. Perhaps because oil and global climate change are my hobbies, I was left feeling that, while the language used is clear and anti-oil, its arguments could have been constructed better. The main suggestion seems to be that big oil companies are the main culprits - which for me rather misses the point... which is that the US state is the main culprit.

The US scientist Hubbard predicted in 1956 that US oil production would peak in the early 1970s (and it did), and that prices would go up and there would be wars over the resource. This may seem obvious now, but the fact is, this was predicted, and has happened not because of voracious companies, but because of the US state facilitating capitalists' access to oil.

Having said this, it has to be said that we need much more accessible, alternative and methodical research, and this pamphlet is an essential addition to our ammunition. In particular, it attempts to draw the strands of peace, environmental concern and social justice together, and tackle both the problem and the potential solutions (albeit in a rather generalised and technical way) and for that it deserves praise. There are also some useful quotes, references, resources and one-liners for you to memorise and take with you, so you can be equipped with the necessaries should you come across Bush/Blair-supporters or pro-war types on your travels.

Thinking Allowed: a manifesto for successful political change in Britain and the world

Sarah Young. Publ. NorthernSky Press. ISBN: 0-9548067-0-0. £2. PO Box 21548, Stirling, Scotland, FK8 1YY (northernsky@hush.com; 07981 173819).



This 32-page pamphlet proposes a way out of what its writer, Sarah Young, refers to as the 'new dark age'. In a decent critique of what's wrong with the world, she describes an age of war and environmental destruction; of poverty and the prostitution of human creativity; of insecurity and the drive towards low wages and long hours...and more.

On the issue of change and how to achieve it, Young throws up several points. Some of these – for instance, the notion that 'capitalism...will not go quietly'; or the role of the so-called revolutionary party as 'part of the problem' – will strike a chord among anarchists and anarchosyndicalists. Others are a bit more contentious.

For one, the pamphlet has much to say on both the nature of revolutionary organisation and on the character of existing revolutionary organisations. Perhaps the writer is unaware of organisations outside of the 'marxist' party-builder umbrella, whether anarchist or otherwise. In any case, this is implied by stating that 'the organisations that we need for bringing about real change in Britain don't exist yet', and by painting any 'organisation that claims to support revolutionary change' with the same brush as the left parties as 'organisations where most members can't participate'.

For another, this manifesto puts a lot of faith in people who do vocational work, voluntary activities and single issue campaigning as the basis for the 'successful political change' in the title. True, we must reach out to these groups and other elements of what might be termed the 'humanitarian left'. However, Young doesn't deal with the fact that much of this constituency is largely wedded to social democracy – to ideas of capitalism with a more humane face; of representatives like politicians and union officials acting on our behalf; of society gradually improving, a notion rightly rejected as unlikely.

That said, *Thinking Allowed* does pose an important question for organisations like ours – just how are we to break the hold of social democracy over people who are otherwise in agreement with us about what is wrong in the world? Like us all, Sarah Young is groping for answers to this question.

140 Years of Difference

A 21st Century perspective on the First International

The First International was founded in London in 1864. Within eight years, it attracted over a million members and was becoming a true force for revolutionary change. However, it was deeply divided. Although after some debate it unanimously endorsed the principle of collective ownership, disagreement as to how this would be achieved soon became evident. The division was between those who advocated the Marxists' state-communist, centralist programme, and those who favoured the anarchist approach and argued for federalism, based on workers' direct control.

Its founding is of crucial importance in the development of anarcho-syndicalism, for two reasons. Firstly, the divide in the First International (or 'International Working Men's Association' as it was then called), was not merely about abstract political argument unconnected with everyday reality; it was about two very different visions of a future socialist society. Secondly, the ideas formulated by the anarchist wing of the First International laid down some of the basic concepts of anarcho-syndicalism.

At the heart of the divide was Marx's idea that "the conquest of political power is the first task of the proletariat". He argued that this would lead to workers taking control of the state, through which capitalism would be abolished. The Marxists' main aim, therefore, was the formation of political groups whose goal was to capture state power through the establishment of a workers' government. Once in control of government, the workers would use the power of the state to expropriate land and industry from the capitalists and landowners. The economy would then be administered by the state for the benefit of the working class. If the workers could not win control through the electoral process, then there must be a political revolution to seize state power, establishing a government based on the "dictatorship of the proletariat". The concept at the centre of Marxist thinking was that social revolution could only occur after the political revolution, based on winning control of the state.

The idea that social revolution could come about through state control relied heavily on the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism. This is based on the premise that the nature of an economic system determines the nature of society as a whole. As such, political and social conditions are determined by the economy. To change the latter one has only to change the former and so the very act of the workers abolishing capitalism and taking control of the economy would automatically end exploitation and bring about social and political equality.

Determinism also extended to Marxist theories of the state. The state was seen as the agent of the dominant economic class, administering society on its behalf. Once capitalism was abolished, and the economy was under collective ownership, the state would become the tool of the workers, and could begin to administer the economy on their behalf. A further argument used by Marxists was that the economy would have to come under state control initially, as workers did not have the expertise to run society. They saw this 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as purely a 'transitional period', during which workers would be trained to take over the running of society directly. The state under socialism would eventually become redundant and 'wither away'.

The anarchist wing of the First International, although seeking the same end-point of an egalitarian society, proposed a very different method for achieving it. They opposed a purely political programme aimed at capturing state power and rejected outright the idea that workers should support parliamentary candidates and campaign for political reform. They also rejected the notion of political revolutions aimed at establishing workers' government.

The anarchists held that political rights, such as freedom of association, should not be isolated from the economic struggle: these rights, they argued, could only be guaranteed through economic struggle. Therefore, they rejected purely political struggle such as the formation of workers' political parties. Instead, they advocated workers' self-organisation into economic organisations (unions), which would use direct action to fight for economic and social change to collective ownership.

The aim of these unions was to constantly link the day-to-day struggle for improvements, to the wider struggle against capitalism. In the short term, they would organise strikes and other direct actions against capitalism. In the longer term, this constant struggle would lead to the social general strike, during which capitalism would be overthrown and replaced with a society in which workers would control their industries and people would control their own communities.

The notion of freedom lay at the centre of anarchist thinking. It was also what distinguished anarchism from Marxism. Although anarchists within the International accepted Marxist economic arguments, they argued that not all inequality is rooted in economic inequality. It could also stem from unequal power relations under which an individual, or groups, could coerce others. They argued that to prevent this, society must be organised democratically, based on free association.

The anarchists argued that any new society, rather than being administered from the top down, must be administered directly by the workers from the bottom up. In other words, people must come

How anarchists are different

	NO to:	YES to:
What anarchists say:	Party politics Governments and rulers Leaders Exploiters Inequality	Workers and community direct democracy Mutual aid and equality for all Co-operation not competition
What everyone else says:	Workers and community direct democracy Mutual aid and equality for all Co-operation not competition	Party politics Governments and rulers Leaders Exploiters Inequality

...the anarchists predicted over half a century in advance, that the Marxist state would not be based on the dictatorship of the proletariat, but on the dictatorship of a new privileged political-scientific class of 'learned' socialists.

together on equal terms to decide their collective needs and how best to meet them. If this process was not followed, and power remained in the hands of a few, then social inequality would persist.

In arguing that not all inequality originated from the economic system, the anarchists challenged Marxist economic determinism. They also rejected the idea that the state could be used as a tool for workers' emancipation. For the anarchists, the fact that a capitalist parliament would have been eliminated was not enough to guarantee that the state would act in the interests of workers. They argued that state control, by its very nature, was based on the rule of the minority over the majority.

Moreover, the anarchists scorned Marx's view that under the 'people's state' following the take-over he envisaged, 'the proletariat would be elevated to the status of the governing class'. If the working class (the overwhelming majority of the population) were to become the governing class, then who, the anarchists asked, would they be ruling over?

For the anarchists, the prospect of the state abolishing market capitalism and private ownership did not mean the state would act any differently towards bringing about social equality. They dismissed as naïve and patronising the Marxist idea that, under the new workers' state, 'learned socialists' would administer society on the workers' behalf. Instead, they suggested, the 'learned socialists' would be more likely to use their power to form a new ruling elite. Hence, the anarchists predicted over half a century in advance, that the Marxist state would not be based on the dictatorship of the proletariat, but on the dictatorship of a new privileged political-scientific class of 'learned' socialists. According to the anarchists, while the current state exercised power over the majority based on their ownership of the economy, the new socialist dictators would also base their power over the majority on their ultimate control of the economy. The result would be that social equality would remain a workers dream.

The anarchists believed that state power, whether based on a constitutional assembly or a revolutionary dictatorship, was the rule of a minority over a majority, and was therefore undemocratic. No matter what form the state took, those appointed to run and administer it would function as a ruling class, assuming in the process the power and the privilege of a ruling class. As such, the state would not be merely the agent of the particular class that happens to own the means of production. Rather, the state was viewed as a class in itself, acting on its own behalf. Furthermore, a ruling class, based on state control, would have the means to become one of the most powerful elites in history, for the Marxist state would not only control the economy, but the whole state apparatus, including the army and police.

Anarchist Organisation

Instead of a centralised political party, the anarchists argued for organisation at street, area, regional, national and international level. Each would retain the maximum degree of local autonomy, ensuring democracy and equality. Decisions affecting only those at street level would be made at street level; decisions affecting regional level would be made at regional level, and so on, from the bottom up. The basic democratic building block would be the meeting, with people coming together to decide their wants and needs.

As well as organisation by locality, anarchists also called for organisation based on industry and interest groups. Workers, for example in the rail industry, would meet in their immediate workplace to decide how best to run that workplace. They would meet with passenger groups to decide the level of service needed. They would meet with railway workers in the immediate area to co-ordinate local services, and railway workers at regional, national and international levels to co-ordinate a national and international service. They would also meet with other workers and passengers to co-ordinate an integrated local, regional, national and international transport system. The society envisaged by the anarchists was highly pluralistic. People would organise themselves in a myriad of different organisations to cater for emotional, physical and intellectual needs.

While their view of the free society was far-reaching, they were not so naïve as to think it would emerge overnight. True equality based on free and equal association would not come easily. Their argument was threefold; that the fight for a new society would have to start immediately; that it must be built within the existing society; that the form and methods of workers' organisations must

The unions and local organisations advocated by the anarchists were therefore much more than mere organs of struggle. They were the means by which workers would educate themselves and develop democratic structures and methods.

How unions are different...

Trade unions	Anarcho-syndicalist unions
Respect union laws	...ignore union laws as pro-boss
Use only tactics 'approved' by bosses and the state	...use direct action, such as strikes, occupations or sabotage as they see fit
Protect their privileges (rights to sit on committees, etc.)	...have nor seek any priviledges
Have bosses, bureaucrats and (in Britain) politicians to represent the interests of the workers	...use only direct democracy; all decisions are made in workplace mass meetings. No-one else can represent workers' interests
Organise by trade – type of job	...organise by workplace, including everyone there except the bosses (cleaners, technical staff, administrators, etc.)
Traditionally supports closed shop (forced union membership)	...use no force - participation is entirely voluntary
Traditionally supports national ownership	...fight private enterprise and state control alike – their aim is to abolish both
Condones different pay for different trades and levels of workers (and bosses)	...reject any pay or conditions split, because they only end up pitching workers against workers
Uses and practices leadership and authority	...reject leadership and authority in all forms, both for organising now and in the future
Final aim is to keep improving members conditions as much as can be negotiated with the bosses.	Final aim is to bring about revolution, ending capitalism and the state, and replacing it with democratically-run communities and workplaces.

reflect the society they hoped to build after the revolution. By constructing organisations on anarchist principles, workers would create, within the shell of the old society, the structure of a new social order. The unions and local organisations advocated by the anarchists were therefore much more than mere organs of struggle. They were the means by which workers would educate themselves and develop democratic structures and methods.

The anarchists therefore argued that the First International should be made up of economic organisations (unions) and run in a way that reflected the form of the future society they hoped to build. The International would then be in a position to bring together and organise the mass of the people, and to educate workers through linking the day-to-day struggle to the wider revolutionary struggle.

Death Throes

The decisive split in the First International thus occurred over the confrontation between the anarchists who maintained it should be made up of unions in economic struggle, and the Marxists, who advocated political groups united by a political programme. The anarchists argued bitterly that the Marxist approach would turn the International into a mere talking shop, limiting activity to campaigning. Even more unacceptably to them, instead of a unified workers' movement it would create a party of elite workers, led by socialist intellectuals, separated from the workers' day-to-day struggles. They pointed out that these more 'advanced' workers would form the new elite in the future state system.

The central tenets of anarchism had been established - that the means must reflect the ends, and that theory and practice are interdependent and must be combined. The anarchists argued that only a democratically organised mass movement could lead to a democratic revolutionary society and predicted that the Marxist form of organising, in which advanced workers came together in a purely political organisation, was hierarchical and could only result in a future hierarchical society. On theory and practice, they maintained that anarchist ideas depend on, and can only be developed by, organisations whose day-to-day practice reflects anarchist principles. Within the dying International, the administration of the Marxist and anarchist wings reflected their conceptual approaches.

The split within the First International came to a head in 1872. A conference at The Hague, amid various manoeuvres by the Marxists, expelled a number of anarchists. The events surrounding the Hague conference typify the differences. The defeat of the Paris Commune had prevented the congress taking place in Paris in 1870 as planned. In 1871 the General Council of the International met in London. Bakunin and the anarchists of the Jura Federation were not invited and in the absence of opposition, Marx was able to get the General Council of the International to accept appropriation of state power as an integral part of the programme of the International. The congress was moved to The Hague, where Marx attended in person for the first time. Bakunin and many anarchists were unable to attend because of the dangers of crossing French and German territory. At least five of the delegates forming the Marxist majority, as the labour historian G.D.H. Cole observed, "represented non-existent movements or nearly so".

Marx and Engels accused Bakunin of being a Russian spy and unscrupulous with money. They also accused him of organizing a secret society to seize control of the International. Paul Lafargue, who happened to be Marx's son-in-law, was the principal source of this information, none of which was ever proven. Lack of proof in relation to Lafargue's claims, and his relationship to Marx engendered deep suspicion on the part of the anarchists.

The Congress endorsed the principle of political action through socialist parties. It also extended the powers of the General Council, controlled by Marx, and finally agreed to Marx's proposal that the headquarters of the International be moved from London to New York to, as Marx stated, "guard the International against elements of disintegration". There was opposition, not only from the anarchists present, but also from British trade unionists who, while they supported the anarchists in little else, were worried by the centralisation of power. Bakunin and a close associate James Guillaume were expelled.

The anarchists were effectively barred from the International. The General Council removed itself to New York, where it was largely isolated from

During the short life of the First International, anarchism continued to develop into an increasingly coherent set of ideas. After its demise, the anarchists set about putting these into practice.

European worker activities. This split, and the removal of the General Council, proved fatal to the International and, without the anarchists' support, it collapsed. The Hague debacle of 1872 was to prove the last Congress of the First International.

Conclusion

The split between anarchism and Marxism was inevitable. They provided two fundamentally different ways forward for the working class, which in turn led to the historical split in the workers' movement between Marxists, who favoured centralism and state control, and anarchists, who argued for federalism and direct workers' control. At first, the conflict between the two currents remained submerged as they fought together to establish acceptance for the idea of collective ownership. However, within the First International, the differences broke out into a bitter argument, leading to its collapse.

During the short life of the First International, anarchism continued to develop into an increasingly coherent set of ideas. After its demise, the anarchists set about putting these into practice. The immediate result was the rapid growth of an anarchist-influenced workers' movement that was eventually to number millions and extend to most parts of the world. Not surprisingly, it was confronted by both the state and the Marxists, and a pattern of workers' direct action and state brutal repression developed, starting in France in the last years of the 19th Century.

Further Reading

P. Kropotkin. Memoirs of a Revolutionist. Black Rose. ISBN 0921 689187. £11.99. Excellent, eye witness accounts of the debate within the First International. Peter Kropotkin arrived from Russia a Marxist, visited the two sides of the split, and converted to join the anarchists. Detailed accounts of the debates and issues. Older prints may be found in libraries (eg. Constable and Co. 1971. ISBN 0486 224856).

S. Dolgoff (ed). Bakunin on Anarchism. Black Rose Books, 1972. ISBN 0919 619059. £12.99. Contains most of Bakunin's writing, with a commentary and introduction by Dolgoff. While Bakunin by no means a 'pure' anarcho-syndicalist (if they exist), he did nevertheless help formulate and record some of the key fundamentals, as contained here. Centres on the key arguments between the Marxist and anarchist tendencies within the First International.

D. Guerin (ed). No Gods No Masters Book One, AK Press. ISBN 873176643. £11.95. Excellent anthology which collects contemporary material from the period, including lots of previously unpublished works from the period by Bakunin, Proudhon etc. For example: Bakunin's writings 'On Co-operation', 'Worker Association and Collective Ownership', 'The Excommunication of The Hague' and 'Statism and Anarchy' and James Guillame's 'Ideas on Social Organisation', written in 1876.

B. Morris. Bakunin: The Philosophy of Freedom. Black Rose Books. ISBN 1895 431662. £10.99. Historical biography of Bakunin, with short extracts of his work and ideas. Well written, accessible, and rare as a modern account written by a historian and thinker with a libertarian perspective.

K. Marx. Political Writings Vol. 3: First International & After. Penguin Classics. ISBN 0140 445730. Marx on Marx - what more is there to say? The original, anti-anarchist perspective from the period of the First International.

R. M. Cutler. The Basic Bakunin: Writings 1869-1871. Prometheus Books. ISBN 0879 757450. A special collection of Bakunin's writing's from the years of the First International. Unfortunately hard to find as it is printed in the US, but may be worth a search.

K. J. Kenafick (ed). Marxism, Freedom and the State. Freedom Press, 1984. £1.95. Good vfm for a flimsy (but spined) volume with selections of Bakunin's writings and commentary, concentrating on the arguments between Marxists and anarchists in the First International.

G. Woodcock (ed). The Anarchist Reader. Fontana. ISBN 0006 340113. While Woodcock's brand of anarchism may not be sparkling, this book is generally available in libraries and even second hand shops. You can always ignore his commentary, and turn to the extract of Bakunin 'Perils of the Marxist State'.

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Answerphone 07984 675 281
Email; solfed@solfed.org.uk

www.solfed.org.uk

Networks - make contact with others in your type of work-

Education Workers' Network, PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8XF.
Public Service Workers' Network, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB.

Locals - get involved locally in regular meetings and action-

North & East London SF, PO Box 1681, London N8 7LE. nelsfsolfed@fsmail.net
Red & Black Club, PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX. Tel. 0207 3581854.
South West Solidarity and Solidarity Bristol, Box 43, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB. www.solwest.org.uk
South Herts SF, PO Box 493, St Albans AL1 5TW. Tel. 01727 862814.
Northampton SF, c/o Black Current, 4 Allen Road, Northampton NN1 4NE. northamptonsolfed@hotmail.com.
Preston SF, PO Box 469, Preston PR1 8XF. Tel/Fax 01772 734130 prestonsolfed@boltblue.com http://prestonsolfed.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/index.jhtml
Manchester SF, PO Box 29, SW PDO, Manchester M15 5HW. Tel. 07984 675281. www.manchestersf.org.uk
Sheffield SF, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR. da@direct-action.org.uk
West Yorks Solidarity Federation, PO Box 77, Leeds LS8 3XX.

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

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About Solidarity Federation...

Formed in 1994, SolFed is a federation of groups and individuals across England, Scotland and 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

Locals put solidarity into practice, organising and joining local campaigns in communities and 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

Direct action is what locals do. 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,it also 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

SolFed members who work in the same sector have formed Networks, to promote solidarity and use direct action where possible to fight for better pay and conditions. They form a basis for a completely new labour movement, nothing like the weakened and hierarchical Trade Unions.

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. SolFed opposes these in favour of a movement built on global solidarity. It is the British section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers' Association (IWA), which provides global solidarity and experience from much larger sections, such as the CNT (Spain) and USI (Italy). The IWA has a long history of solidarity in action. Today, there are sections ranging from a few dozen to thousands of members, and growth is rapid. At the last IWA Congress in Granada, Spain, three new groups were welcomed into the IWA, to add to the seven new sections welcomed at the previous Congress.

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. No experience or background in politics/activism is necessary. SolFed groups are open and egalitarian. Do not expect to be patronised; do expect to be made welcome. Fill in the form below to meet your local SolFed.

Solidarity Federation Membership Application

I wish to join the Solidarity Federation
I have enclosed a cheque for £5.00 (made out to "Solidarity Federation" to cover my initial three months membership. I understand that my details will be passed on to the nearest SF Local who will contact me shortly.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel. No..... Email.....

Occupation (If any).....

Fill in as much as you like and return to the SF Contact Point address (above left)

Events/Campaigns/Gatherings...

Solidarity Federation

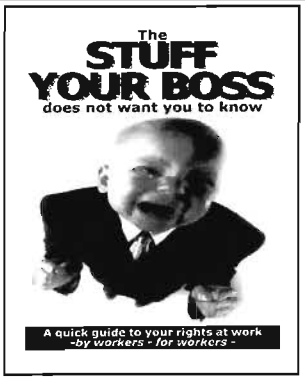
North & East London SolFed
Free Solidarity Bulletin. Socials: Last Thursday of the month, 8pm, near Camden Tube. Also for people SE of London and along the S. Coast. Contact details p.34.

SelfEd Collective
Self-education - developing and sharing ideas and skills. Download pamphlets FREE in FULL VERSIONS from the SelfEd website. SelfEd, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR. www.selfed.org.uk

Northampton SolFed
New SolFed group in the Northampton area - looking for more members and contacts -

c/o Black Current, 4 Allen Road, Northampton NN1 4NE

northamptonsolfed@hotmail.com



The 2004 "stuff your boss" leaflet is still available for free/donation from: SolFed, PO Box 1095, Sheffield S2 4YR. solfed@solfed.org.uk Write to the same address for info on stickers and other stuff.

Manchester SolFed
Discussion - info. - solidarity - support

December 1st - Workplace strategies
January - no public meeting
February 3rd - A State of Prejudice

Open free meetings first Wednesday of the month, 8.30pm at; Hare & Hounds, Shude Hill, Manchester. Any queries, contact Manchester SF (address in contacts, p.34). www.manchestersf.org.uk

Refusing to kill
Matan Kaminer and Adam Maor - Israeli refuseniks who, after spending two years in jail for refusing to serve in the Israeli army and to serve the occupation, won their complete release from military service. *For information or to arrange interviews:* Ben Martin 0207 209 4751 or 07957 733 106. Email payday@paydaynet.org Website www.refusingtokill.net

Clean Clothes Campaign
2 new reports; 1. Garment Industry Subcontracting and Workers Rights - Report of Women Working Worldwide action research in Asia and Europe 2003; 2. East and Southeast Asia Regional Labour Research Report. Read more and find links to the CCC website to read in full at www.nosweat.org.uk

Anarcha project
The Anarcha Project is a people's history project covering interviews with anarchist women; http://www.anarcha.org

STOP G8
The Dissent Network is organising against the next G8 Summit at Gleneagles hotel, Perthshire, Scotland from 6th-8th July 2005. Watch out for the Festival of Dissent in April 2005, meanwhile, there are bimonthly meetings; g8gathering@yahoo.co.uk www.dissent.org.uk

NO COMMENT
The defendant's guide to arrest - an invaluable guide for anyone at risk of arrest (i.e. all but the rich and powerful!). Available free from www.ldmg.org.uk or for 21p postage from: NO COMMENT, c/o/ BM Automatic, London WC1N 3XX.

How to Win Online
In the wake of some recent online campaign victories involving strikes in New Zealand and Cambodia, Labourstart have published a short article. Comments are invited. You can read it at: http://www.ericlee.me.uk/archive/000094.html

Friends and Neighbours

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

Kate Sharpley Library
Dedicated to recording and revealing the history of Anarchism - send SAE ; KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1 N 3XX. www.katesharpleylibrary.net

Cultureshop
Online shop for independent/radical/ political issue-based videos. www.cultureshop.org

Networking Newsletter
Networking in Greater Manchester working for positive social change. Tel: 0161 226 9321. www.networkingnewsletter.org.uk

Toxcat
Essential exposures of polluters, pollution and cover-ups. £2 or sub £12 from ToxCat, PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 3TX.

Resistance
Freesheet of the Anarchist Federation. Anarcho news, views and comment from: AF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 7QX. www.afed.org.uk

Eroding Empire
Monthly listing of gigs, events, actions and classifieds for London. Punk, anarcho, squatting, etc. info. from: Eroding Empire, c/o 56A Crampton St, London SE17 3AE, Tel. 07890 350448, eroding@eroding.org.uk

Office Temps Co-op
A new discussion list for people interested in creating a workers co-op for office temps has been created; join by emailing blackstarcoop-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Bradford Anarchist Group
Local anarchist group for the Bradford/Wakefield area, contact; BAG, c/o 17-21 Chapel St, Bradford BD1 5DT.

Norwich Anarchists
£1 for newspaper 'Now or Never'; PO Box 487, Norwich NR2 3AL. norwichanarchists@hotmail.com. Web - http://twotins.tripod.com

AK Distribution
Anarcho books, and merchandise of every description. New Catalogue out - PO Box 12766, Edinburgh, EH89YE. Tel 013155 5265. ak@akedin.demon.co.uk www.akuk.com

Air America
America's new progressive radio network - Stream it, email it and call in - Americans need to hear voices from other countries! www.airamericaradio.com

56a Infoshop
Bookshop, records, library, archive, social and meeting space. Anarchist, eco-activist, queer, feminist, DIY, squatting, class struggle. Open Thur 2-8, Fri 3-7, Sat 2-6. Near Elephant and Castle/ Kennington tube: 56 Crampton St, London SE17 3AE

Freedom
Freedom - anarchist fortnightly paper, www.freedompress.org.uk. Email subs@freedompress.org.uk for free sample copy. Also; enrager.net - anarchism and anti-authoritarianism listings, ideas, news, history and discussion forums.

Projectile
A festival of anarchist film and culture hosted by the Side Cinema in Newcastle upon Tyne (UK) on December 10, 11 and 12. Mixing movies with talks, workshops, gigs, and socialising. Email info@projectile.org.uk Website: www.projectile.org.uk

Variant
Free, independent, arts magazine. In-depth coverage in the context of broader social, political & cultural issues. www.variant.org.uk/20texts/issue20.html

Corporate Watch
Three new reports:
- A Rough Guide to the UK Farming Crisis
- What's Wrong with Supermarkets? (Updated and reprinted)
- Corporate profile of food service company, Sodhexo

All available online at www.corporatewatch.org.uk/

Use Your Loaf
Squatted Centre for Social Solidarity, all welcome, or you can hire the venue (see letter on page 24). 227 Deptford High St, London SE8. 07984 588807 Email - useyourloaf@btinternet.com

Roundhouse Appeal
The Low Impact Roundhouse in Pembrokeshire National Park is once again under threat of demolition. Get on the phone tree to defend it 01460 249204 chapter7@tlio.demon.co.uk

SchNEWS
New book 'SchNEWS At Ten' out now £9 inc p&p.
'Peace de Resistance' £7 inc p&p with a free multimedia CD!
'SchNEWS Of The World' issues 301-350 for £5 inc p&p. Cheques to 'Justice?' SchNEWS, PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 0EF. Phone: 01273 685913 (NO FAX) Email: schnews@brighton.co.uk Web: www.schnews.org.uk

Organise!
Working Class Resisitance is back on the streets of Ireland - freesheets and info. from PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ

JOIN THE NWO

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