

RADICALENDAR

WEEK 9

wednesday 28th of November

workshop: on migration and asylum
Penny Walker of coventry peace house
(6:00pm at Lib2)

thursday 29th November

Free Software drop-in workshop (bring your laptops and questions)
(5:15pm-6:15pm at S2.73)

thursday 29th november

talk: race equality in the police service David Michael, retired detective chief inspector
as part of rise against racism week. (4:00pm at S0.21)

friday 30th november

debate: the value of tolerance and what limits, if any, there should be on it, and also on the current 'no platform' union policy against racists and fascists
(6:00pm at S0.21)
as part of rise against racism week

friday 30th of November

Funky and political hip-hop, DJs and guest MC's
Benefit night to cover printing costs for Dissident Warwick at (Kelseys, upstairs 10pm-3am)
Entry: 2 pounds

WEEK 10

monday 3rd of December

Naomi Klein's *"The Take"* **Documentary** about factory occupations in Argentina. Factories run by workers without bosses, managers or capitalist owners!
(Put on by: Warwick Anarchists at 3pm at S0.13)

ongoing events in both weeks

wednesdays and Thursdays

11am - 3:30pm
Marketplace (Union South)
Greens food co-op stall
Organic wholefoods, Fairtrade goods.



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email: dissidentwarwick@riseup.net
blog: blogs.warwick.ac.uk/dissidentwarwick
facebook group: Radical Zine

special thanks: Sami Wanell, Filip Tanay

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DISSIDENT WARWICK



OUR TRUE FOE

FEMALE CHAUVINIST PIGS

SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

THE FREE SOFTWARE REVOLUTION

MANIFESTO

Unimpressed by the mainstream media, the Careers Fairs pamphlets and the political party manifestos, we have produced a publication for the progressive, anti-neoliberal, independent-minded student. We are not the finance and management interns, nor the to-be career politicians and bureaucrats, but the campaigners, the activists, the artists, the thinkers, the dreamers. We reject the notion of the one dimensional student/customer/consumer and come together as students for social change, representing nobody but ourselves.

From anarchism to socialism, feminism to environmentalism and anywhere in-between and beyond, we aim to be a non-dogmatic forum for progressive thought and debate. While we are overtly political, we are equally non-partisan. Though each contributor may have his or her own affiliations, the aim of their articles is not to convince you to become a devoted affiliate of any particular political party or group, but to encourage us all to engage critically with the social realities that surround us.

In this publication, you will not find editorials spelling out a single collective opinion on any matter. There is no one editor. Decision making and general editing are undertaken in a non-hierarchical and collaborative manner, with each contributor valued equally. All articles published in print, together with all the references and sources to back up their claims, will also be published on Warwick Blogs, and be open for discussion. Our flexibility allows for the content and form of the publication to vary. Each issue will reflect the drive, ideas and perspectives of the students directly involved in the production of that issue. Contributions are welcome, be it theory, analysis of current events, historical articles, interviews, book and film reviews, counter-culture, poetry, cartoons, illustrations, etc. and submissions that might not fit into any pre-determined area.

If you would like to contribute to **Dissident Warwick**: the deadline for submissions for the next issue is Friday Week 2 Term 2

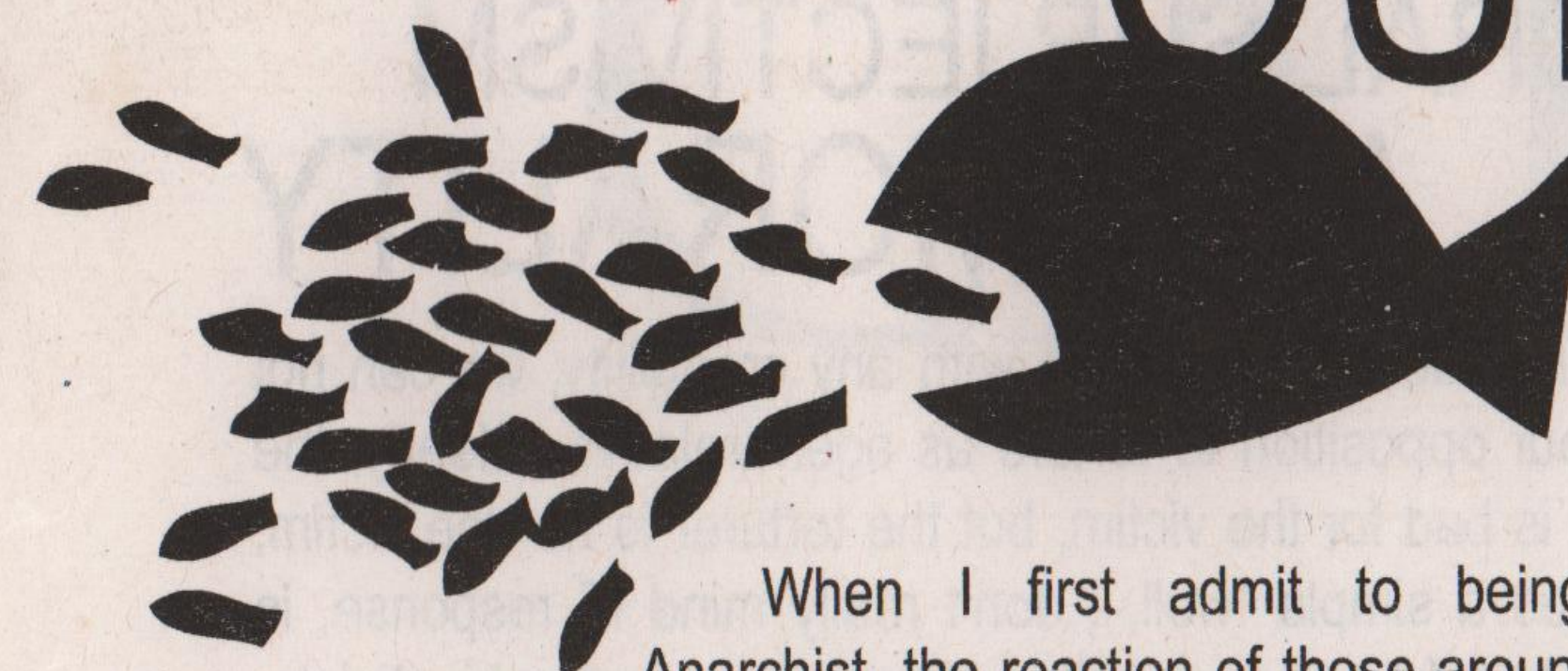
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GUIDE TO DISSIDENCE

- page three: Our True Foe
- page four: The Myth Of Moral Subjectivism As a Morality
- page five: The Compartmentalisation of Ethics
- page six: A Refutation of Capitalism (in three easy steps)
- page seven: Venezuela Behind the Smokescreen
- page nine: Female Chauvinist Pigs
- page eleven: Arguments of the Arms Trade
- page twelve: Surveillance Society
- page thirteen: The Free Software Revolution
- page fourteen: UK alternative media
- page fifteen: arms protest picture collage
- back: RADICALEDAR

Illustration: Edgars Karklins

OUR TRUE FOE



When I first admit to being an Anarchist, the reaction of those around me is fairly predictable, the objections familiar and based on a fundamental misconception of what Anarchist thought intends to achieve. Anarchism is as much about means as it is about ends, a point best presented by Noam Chomsky:

"Anarchism -- at least as I understand it -- is a movement that tries to identify organisations exerting authority and domination, to ask them to justify their actions and, if they are unable to do so, as often happens, to try to supersede them."

This article will show that this basic strand of Anarchism is not some silly radical notion wholly removed from reality, but is (or at least should be) at the heart of any campaigning and resistance group, from the Zapatistas in Mexico to the feminists at Warwick.

An underdog, as commonly understood, is an individual or group which has been subjected to an abuse of power by another. Historically this label and description has been true of just about everyone: women, homosexuals, blacks, Jews, Palestinians, and, most destructively, the working classes and the poor. If you're not in this group (and, this being Warwick, that's hardly unlikely) then the chances are you'll still spend your life doing what your boss tells you and watching the environment die because saving it isn't profitable.

Most resistance groups aim to throw off a specific form of oppression: for feminists it has been the systematic abuse of women by men. Success has been viewed (to a certain extent correctly) in terms of female emancipation and realisation. However such an assessment fails to identify the root of the problem. If a feminist is satisfied because, say, there are as many female directors in the FTSE 100 as there are male (as many would be), they have chosen not to fight the true oppressor, but instead to join him in his tyranny. Satisfaction with this 'equality' would be confusing a mere manifestation of the problem for the problem itself, akin to cutting off one of the Hydra's heads and proclaiming victory.

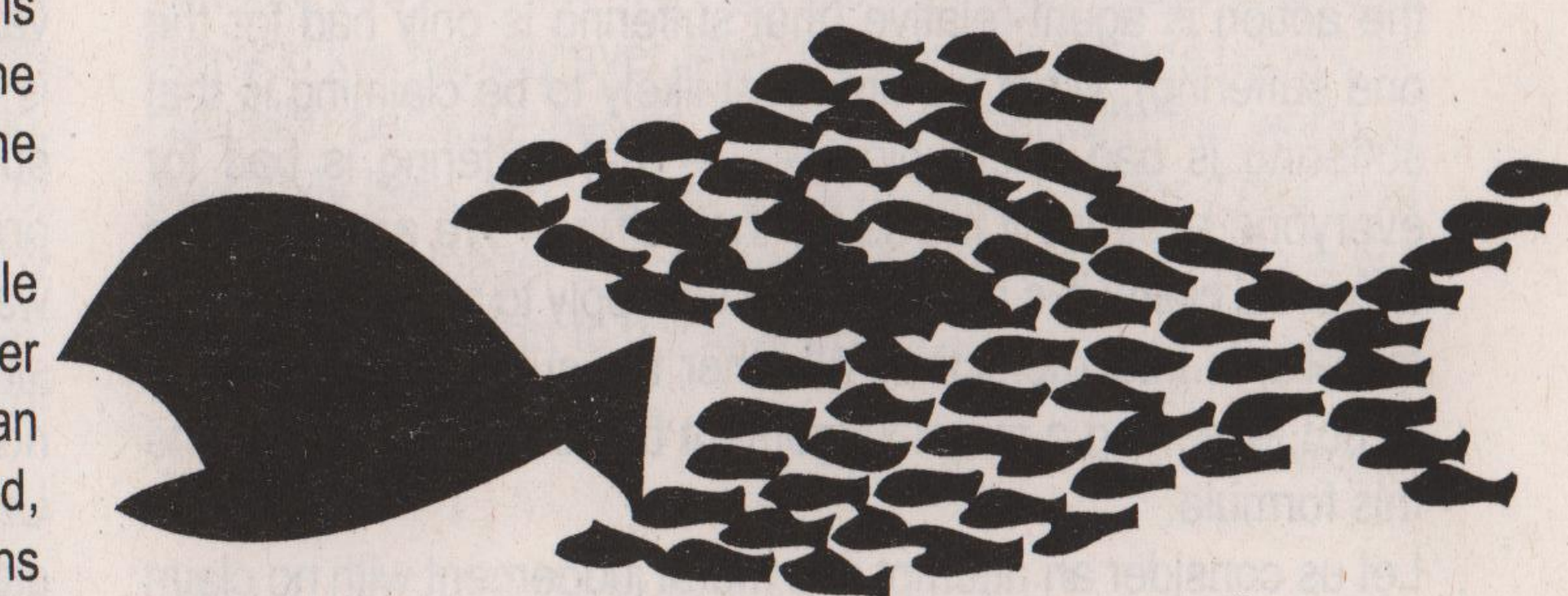
The true face of the enemy is the abuse of power. Female equality is clearly a good thing, but it does not solve the other problems mentioned above. Thatcher showed that women can be as terrible as men - the Hydra's head grows back twofold, seeking fresh meat - our foe is stunned, but by no means defeated, and grows stronger as we ignore its true form and continue to swipe at the edges.

The effect of power on the human psyche has long been a topic of fascination. Plato realised 2400 years ago that his philosopher kings should live a poor and communal life, for fear of being corrupted, and in 1887 Lord Acton pronounced that "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." We see its influence everywhere, as ideals are sacrificed in the pursuit and retention of power, as politicians lie, cheat and backstab their way to the top, and as those at the very top are willing to slaughter millions for personal gain. In the words of Percy Shelley, "Power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whate'er it touches".

The abuse of power seems to be most acute in economic relationships. Right-wing libertarians define freedom in a way I have never quite understood, as existing fully in spite of any inequality. If, in a closed system, there were two people and one field, then the one who owned the field would surely hold extensive power over the other. Not so for 'libertarians'. This is what Bakunin was referring to when he said that "liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice". The abuse of power by the rich over the poor has characterised humanity since the dawn of history, interjected more recently by the occasional attempts by the underclass to assert its rights, usually violently suppressed. The sweatshops in East Asia are full of the working classes working long and dangerous shifts to provide the rich with cheap tracksuits and improved profits. By one definition these people are free, able to choose between working for Nike, or Gap, or starvation, but by a more realistic definition, the abuse of power has rendered them slaves.

This is why it cannot be enough to fight exclusively for equal rights for blacks or gays. It is wrong to support the Palestinians but forget about the Kurds. The opponent is not racism, homophobia, oppression by Israel or Turkey, but is the abuse of power. When single issue campaigns fail to unite under this common conception and fight the Hydra as a whole, then our real and common goal cannot succeed. The philosophy of Anarchism, the fight against power and its abuses, is not an unworkable fantasy, but a necessary facet of any struggle.

written by: Chris Rossdale



THE MYTH OF MORAL SUBJECTIVISM AS A MORALITY

It is not uncommon to hear one of the "progressive" ilk at once affirm the immorality of an agent's actions and also that "morals are subjective". This contradiction poses a significant problem in terms of credibility.

Many readers will see no contradiction in making claim to both a moral code and the subjectivity of morals. In this view, the moral code is simply an expression of the subject's belief which they know to be subjective in the sense that not every-one else holds this same belief. This is to miss the point. The diversity of moral beliefs is obvious, but none of this is to say that a moral system can assert moral subjectivism – in fact, any meaningful claim we make contrary to the moral codes I mentioned must not concede that their moral code is good for them, for at that point it is unclear what should recommend our code to others. My contention here is that asserting moral subjectivity is equal to asserting one's amorism, and that a moral judgement is by necessity a universal judgement. If young progressives wish to be taken seriously, they must understand this.

The distinction here is whether the moral values we impart in actions are agent-relative or agent-neutral. This is not an "objective morality vs. subjective morality" issue, as it is often portrayed. Since we can not seriously make claim to morals existing objective (independent) of the agents of morality, in this narrow discussion, we are forced to concede that moral beliefs are subjective. That stands to reason, but is not a significant point.

Thinking the two statements are not in contradiction represents a lack of understanding of what it means to make a moral judgement. When we form a moral code we need not make a claim to a moral code which is in actuality recognised or followed by all, nor do we claim that moral codes are objective. We do not claim that suffering is bad in itself (independent of agents – suffering is bad with no need for suffering being attributed to an agent for it to be bad), but neither are we asserting the subjectivist position that the value we impart in the action is agent-relative (that suffering is only bad for the one suffering). What we are most likely to be claiming is that suffering is bad intersubjectively – that suffering is bad for everyone because it is bad for the sufferer. We are making a universal claim; it is a code which we apply to all, and thus, the moralist is intersubjective. Whether the subject recognises it or not, asserting a moral judgement by necessity conforms to this formula.

Let us consider an attempt at a moral judgement with no claim to universalism. This is to claim that something is good or bad for the agent only. Suppose we claim we oppose torture, and we are aware of it happening. We naturally appeal to the

torturer to desist. To do this with any credibility, we can not state our opposition to torture as agent-relative. Clearly, the torture is bad for the victim, but the torturer is not the victim, and thus a simple "well, I don't really mind it" response, is suffice to refute our opposition. If we are moral subjectivists, we have little business convincing him that torture is wrong. And we can generalise from there.

We are now able to compare the amoralist and the moral subjectivist. The amoralist believes that there is no such thing as right and wrong, that any judgement on action is merely a preference, with no extra value attributed to this judgement because it invokes the terms of right and wrong. If one is a moral subjectivist, one believes that all moral codes are borne out of cultural and environmental influence, and therefore do not represent a legitimate, reasoned claim to universal action-guiding principles, but are all equally formulaic, equally worthwhile, results of their origins. In both cases, as far as I can see, the claim is reduced to the same.

Suppose the amoralist and moral subjectivist hold the same view on torture in that neither commits it himself – the moral subjectivist because he thinks it is wrong for himself, and the amoralist because he prefers not to do it (it is not the best course of action for himself). Unless there is a further claim from the moralist, i.e. universalism, there seems nothing to recommend his view as a more moral stance than the amoralist's. What recommends one's moral code is its specific nature, that it is not a mere preference in the same way that what jeans I (for myself) wear today is. To assert a belief which is a moral belief then, that belief has to be a belief that the amoralist can not also hold. And a belief that the amoralist can not hold is any one which makes a claim to the universality of the morality which is asserted in the belief.

From the brief discussion above, we can see that it is necessary to remove all talk of objective morality from our vocabulary, but equally we must make sure that we do not commit to the "each to their own" school of subjectivism, in which the value we place on actions are agent-relative, something which is good is good for someone not good absolutely. Moral subjectivity is a product of the liberal society in which we live, and one which it is essential we root out from our thinking if we want to appear credible at all. Combating moral subjectivity is simple: any moral judgement is universal by definition – if it is not universal, it expresses an amoral preference.

Understanding what form our moral convictions is the first step; the second is to make sure we can back up each individual judgement properly. That's when it gets really difficult.

written by: Vincent Carroll-Battaglino

CAREERS *diservice*

THE COMPARTMENTALISATION OF ETHICS

The Careers Service at our university argues that its policy of inviting all companies legal under UK law represents an "objective stance" that stands in contrast to any "ethical" policies that student activists might propose. Yet this stance is sadly indicative of an orientation towards ethics which permeates all areas of our culture and is central to many of the justifications of immorality that far too many propound. I'd call this the compartmentalization of ethics. Ethics is seen to be an autonomous domain within which people can choose to stand; it's something divorced from the 'realities' of everyday life. Yet these assertions of an 'objectivity' that transcends ethics represent power plays and attempts to shutdown rational debate: in the case of the careers service, their 'objective' policy to only invite legal UK companies is an ethical decision to place range of choice and UK law above any other considerations when inviting companies onto the campus. Its subsequent claim of neutrality serves to preclude rational discussion about the relative merits of the excluded considerations.

Likewise on a national level, the claimed neutrality of the law when dealing with citizens serves as a cipher, obscuring the fact that laws are the products of the power-structures that exist within society. Much of British law was passed at a time when its politics were profoundly anti-democratic yet we are said to be "equal before the law". In liberal democracy we have an equality that is merely formal. This formal equality is presented as curtailing unjustified interference by the state into the ends which citizens choose to pursue. Yet this pretension towards neutrality, this willingness to abstain from action, is itself an ethical choice in that it promotes the good of 'neutrality' over the various goods which could be enacted by taking action. It is impossible to come to a judgement and yet not take any sort of ethical stance. To act out of concern for

'neutrality' it is itself an ethical stance and often it's not a particularly good one.

This compartmentalization of ethics extends into the thinking and practice of activists and campaigners. Many people do their jobs or go to university and then at the weekend go to a protest. This marginalises political activity in a way that effectively neutralises it as a critical activity. Capitalism can readily withstand people going on a demonstration every few months. It cannot however withstand people politicising their daily lives with all that entails in terms of changed and confrontational relationships to subordination, privilege and authority. I'm not advocating that people make politics their life. The all too common spectacle of anarcho-punks living in a squat, claiming benefits and taking ketamine while congratulating themselves for so successfully resisting 'assimilation' into the 'system' is in itself an effective means by which resistance to capitalism is neutralised. People shouldn't 'drop out' but neither should politics be an 'activity'. It shouldn't be something people do. It should be a way they orientate themselves to the world. Political analysis should inform our way we conduct ourselves in our daily lives.

Capitalism is not something that stands over and above us oppressing us. It's a product of the social relationships that exists between us and on the micro-political level of our everyday lives it perpetually reproduces itself. Capitalism isn't going to end because we organise ourselves, have a revolution and live happily ever after. It's going to change (slowly or radically) because people critically interact with the world in their daily lives and work to try and make it better. Only then will ethics no longer be compartmentalised and only then will radical change start to come about.

written by: Mark Carrigan

A REFUTATION OF CAPITALISM (IN THREE EASY STEPS)

This article is intended, not as a scientific or economic account of the failures of capitalism: Merely, it is a portrayal of largely rhetorical, loud-mouthed, acutely individual distaste. The purpose of this article is not to present a lengthy relation of academic facts and analysis, but to present personal arguments; arguments which will hopefully provoke retaliation, which will theoretically lead to an interesting discussion. It is not by any means a full account, nor does it pretend to be. It is a very brief rundown of very succinct forms of arguments.

Buy low, sell high.

Success in a capitalist economy, beyond a certain level inevitably involves a successful employment of this strategy in the marketplace. Thus the aim of a businessperson is to find an exclusive source of undervalued goods or services, buy as much as possible for as little as possible, and then sell as much as is feasible for as much as the consumer will tolerate. This is successful business and implicates a system wherein 'success' is the triumph of the economic man over his business adversaries, gaining the surplus value from their lack of skill or misfortune.

The successful businessperson will initially exploit his source of goods and labour (thus source of business) and then his source of resell (thus source of business); it is a system wherein the aim is to take as much as possible from others whilst giving back as little as possible in return. This inspired the common practise of slavery before the emancipation proclamation; but more recently has led to epidemics such as that in Ivory Coast (the world's largest cocoa bean producing country, accounting for roughly 38% of the world's cocoa at 1.3 million tonnes) where slave labour runs rampant - cited as accounting for up to 90% of its cocoa production. The average consumer does not know this, and thus cannot make an informed decision to avoid such unethical practices; the point is however, that the duty of responsibility should not be with the consumer to investigate products; the onus should be on traders to disengage with the practice of exploitation.

Counterproductive competition

In economic terms, everyone is a threat to me; everyone is my business enemy: other businesses, my boss, my coworkers, even my friends! Everyone out there has the potential to gain goods which I could be gaining and as such it is in my interest to make sure that does not happen, and I instead gain those goods or else I lose out. I compete with other businesses to gain market share and an established name, I compete with co-workers for raises, promotions and bonuses, I compete with my friends because I want to have the best paid job, the biggest bonus etc. Further to this, rewards for working are then distributed as such that individuals compete in terms of how much they have gained even after they have competed to gain their earnings in the first place, "Does my neighbour have a better car than me? Has he got a bigger television and a more luxurious sofa?" There is an endless cycle of individuals who have the capacity for gregarious and sociable existence competing at every level of their working lives.

Peter Kropotkin once proposed a theory of Darwinian evolution which suggested that the reason humans have become such a dominant species has been through our capacity to cooperate and work together for common goals. This cooperation has strengthened us a social unit, which can achieve much more than the sum of its individual parts. As such, the theory that a competitive economy will produce the best goods, the fastest production and the best result is highly contestable as it runs counterproductive to the principles of teamwork and mutual aid. For instance, if a collection of skilled individuals are all competing to complete the same project ahead of each other, then their efforts as single workers are not going to as productive as they would be if they were to cooperate and tackle the project together. In the first scenario, there is a collection of people working on their own accounting solely for their own expertise and weaknesses, whereas in the second there is a group who can accommodate one individual's lack of expertise with another's specialist knowledge, resulting in a team who have a combined knowledge and productivity far greater than any individual worker.

continued on next page

Enforced avarice

Businesses want your money. They need it to survive. Unfortunately, there are a lot of instances where you don't really have any need, or even any want to hand it over. In 2000 General Motors spent a staggering \$3 billion on advertising, that's just below the GDP of Barbados. If a company really needs to spend the approximate wealth of a small Caribbean country to generate interest in its product, you have to question at what point it is necessary for the marketplace to have such an expensive, constant flux of new goods for Joe Public to piddle his expendable income on. Not only does this inspire a constant desire for new goods, it also has far reaching environmental and societal implications; endless production leads to massive wastes and the discarding of older goods before they have fulfilled their lifespan,

great minds are set to the task of creating this excessive desire when they could be contributing something much more fulfilling and worthwhile, our society is left in a position where individuals are constantly wasting their energies on pursuing such fruitless goals and economic sustainability is rendered reliant on such futile goods. That is not to say that consumers are idiots, but that there seems to be a commitment to wanting and buying pervading every aspect of our society; shop windows, magazine adverts and all manner of other things scream "buy!" at you at every opportunity, suggesting that this is the 'normal' way to live. What would happen to the world economy if advertising were to disappear? How long would things like celebrity fitness DVDs last? Take away the marketing generating desire, take away the desire; take away the superfluous and useless products.

written by: Douglas Linssen

VENEZUELA

BEHIND THE SMOKE SCREEN

Demonised on the one side by Western governments and corporate media, uncritically acclaimed on the other by certain left-wing organizations, an adequate account of Chavez and Venezuela's current political situation is difficult to find. Accusations alleging a "Communist dictatorship" should simply be dismissed as misinformed, sensationalist and ideological devices. Chavez's claims of leading a democratic and progressive transition towards an egalitarian society however, are deceptive. Using a few examples, I will try to illustrate the intricate Venezuelan map, a combination of some positive social reforms and worrying tendencies of centralization of power, cult to personality and corruption.

Social reforms and the economy

Venezuela has historically been an extremely unequal society and the social programmes initiated by the Bolivarian Revolution (named after the anti-Spanish liberator Simon Bolivar) have been better news for the poor. These include literacy programmes for millions of children and adults, the creation of thousands of primary medical units in the poorest neighbourhoods, subsidies for basic foodstuffs, programmes of substituting slum huts for houses, the widespread availability of micro-credits... As a result of these and many others, between 1999 and 2005 severe poverty was reduced from 42,8% to 33,9%.

These programmes are largely financed through oil money, which has finally started to slowly trickle down to the poor especially after the "nationalisation" of the oil industry. I say "nationalisation" but in reality I am talking about mixed business ventures with multinationals, of which the government has a slightly larger cut. Both parties are satisfied with the deal. The multinationals are guaranteed profits, albeit smaller than before, whilst Chavez can claim that now the oil belongs to the people. These manoeuvres are just one example illustrating the centrality of populism above real results. After all, as Business Week points out, Chavez is "not so bad for business."



Redistributing the profits from Venezuela's vast natural resources and taking advantage of the latest boom in oil prices has a great potential. Under Chavez however, despite all the grandiloquent speeches, this potential is not being fully realized. Why? Mismanagement and corruption are rampant at all levels. Venezuela is one of the poorest performers in Latin America in all corruption indices and is way down at #138 in the 2006 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index together with Niger, one point under Ethiopia and one point above Sierra Leone. I find it hard to believe that corruption is revolutionary. With 500 billion dollars of petrol income, general public hospitals are in a precarious state whilst military spending has skyrocketed. Even though Chavez has displaced the traditional crooked elites from power, a new class is starting to settle in at the top, what some people are already starting to call the Boli-bourgeoisie.

The issue of democracy

Despite leading a failed coup in 1992, Chavez has won a succession of democratic elections since 1998. Attempting to close the divide between the rich and the poor is also a democratic plus (a notion that is unfortunately being forgotten in the West). In spite of the international media distortions, no TV channel has been closed. RCTV, a TV station linked to the 2002 coup, has not had its license renewed to broadcast through the limited number of public wavelengths, it is however fully functional through cable TV (the complexity of the issue deserves a separate article). Much of Venezuela's media; newspapers, radios and TV channels (only 1 channel on free, public wavelengths though) continue to have a critical stance against Chavez.

The government has also embarked on various projects to increase citizen's participation in state decisions. For example, the Communal Councils, which are democratic neighbourhood community organizations that can administer public funds to improve services, infrastructure and cultural spaces in their local areas. Also, by collecting the signatures of 20% of the number of people who voted in the last election you can trigger a referendum on whether or not to recall the president.

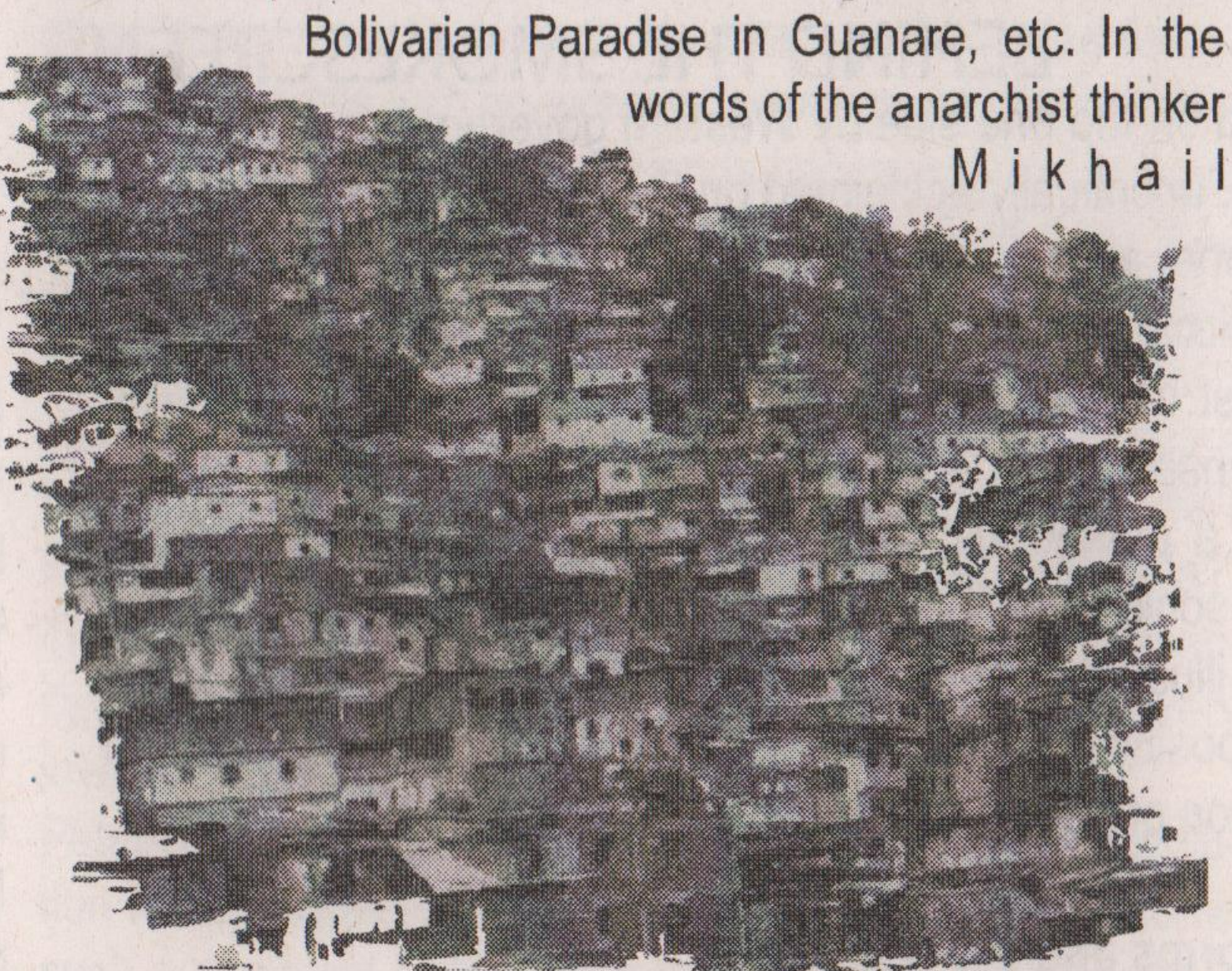
These policies however, are often contradicted by contravening policy tendencies. The increased strength and importance of the presidency undermines the idea of the participatory policies. For example, the Communal Councils funds are handed out from government institutions whose directors are handpicked by Chavez. Consequently, these Councils, which are meant to be part of civil society, become dependent on and conditioned by a paternal state. Chavez often uses the ideas of the iconic Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci to explain his policies. Conversely though, Gramsci's ideas about civil society absorbing the state seem to have been inverted by Chavez to be about civil society being absorbed by the state! The idea of the recall referendum has also suffered a blow. It so happens that one of Chavez's ministers got a hold of the list of people that had signed for the recall referendum that took place in 2004. What are the now the famous "Tascón Lists", were placed on a website for all to see, violating the right of secrecy. Moreover, the list has been used, amongst other things, to obstruct the signatories from accessing jobs as civil servants.

The lack of pluralism on the left

The "you are either with me or against me" paradigm has been imposed. What started as a coalition of progressive military men and left-wing parties is now being united in a single party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, under the nascent personality cult of Chavez. Dissidence and criticism from other sectors of the left has been discredited and dismissed as treason or sell-out to the oligarchs. For example, the Anarchist and Libertarian Socialist groups in Venezuela have been accused of complicity with the C.I.A! Consequently, healthy debate and the circulation of different ideas and opinions has been severely damaged. This phenomenon is largely a result of the polarization in the Venezuelan political scene. It is a reaction to the intense criticism and attack by the Venezuelan elites and multinational companies that culminated in economic sabotage and an attempted coup in 2002. However, there is no justification

for this persistent, closed and authoritarian stance.

Although most of Chavez's supporters come from the poor, by no means is he the "leader" of the working classes. The purpose of the state in the last instance is to protect a status-quo accorded in the upper echelons of the political pyramid. It will always be a step behind grassroots social and working-class movements, no matter what its representatives claim. For example, sticking to the available statistics, from the 1st of July to the 30th of November of 2006, 26 demonstrations were obstructed and repressed. 71 cases of injuries from beatings, asphyxiation, rubber bullets or live ammunition were consequently reported. These included demonstrations of miners of El Callao against the Chinese multinational company Jin Yan, citizens protesting because of the lack of drinkable water in a neighbourhood of the city of Barinas, the eviction of a hundred poor peasant families that had squatted land in a new neighbourhood called



Bolivarian Paradise in Guanare, etc. In the words of the anarchist thinker Mikhail

Bakunin, "when the people are being beaten with a stick, they are not much happier if it is called "the People's Stick."

"Although most of Chavez's supporters come from the poor, by no means is he the "leader" of the working classes"

What then?

Despite the issues raised above, current events in Venezuela should not be dismissed or ignored. For the first time, Venezuelan peasants and working-classes are becoming actively involved in the public and political life they were traditionally apathetic towards and marginalized from. Consciousness about the illegitimacy of capitalism's unequal property relations and class system is growing and being acted upon. However, going around shouting "Viva La Revolución!" without knowing the facts, is a mistake. History has taught us that when politicians claim to be in favour of

For a decent alternative coverage of Venezuela (in English):

www.nodo50.org/ellibertario/

El Libertario – a local newsletter presenting a libertarian critique of Venezuela's current events. Mostly in Spanish but has an English section.

www.venezuelanalysis.com

A website giving a favourable view of the Bolivarian process, albeit not blinded by ideological rhetoric.

FEMALE CHAUVINIST PIGS

"Show them your tits," one yelled at the two girls splayed out on towels next to him. "What's your problem? Just show them your tits." Puck set up the shot and waited with his camera poised for the female response. "No way!" the girl in the black bikini said pouting...

...People started to circle around, like seagulls sensing a family about to abandon their lunch... a few more dozen dudes joined the massive amoeba of people hollering...

...The second girl rose up off her towel, listened to the cheers for a moment, and then spanked her friend to the rhythm of the hooting." Beth Smith

The ability for women to publicly display their sexuality is touted by many as liberation. Here we have women, proud of their sexuality, showing it off to get the reaction they want. At last women are powerful. An examination of a situation like the one described above; women surrounded by baying men, desperately hanging on their every movement (if unfortunately not their every word), may lead to the conclusion that as far as power is concerned, here the

socialism it does not mean they are necessarily pursuing socialist policies. Instead, we should stay informed and keep a critical outlook. We should be against US imperialist involvement and the Venezuelan elites undemocratic tendencies. We should applaud positive social reforms and support those that are attempting to democratise the participatory mechanisms that have been put in place. We should also show solidarity to left wing and democratic dissidents that are challenging the revolution's greatest enemy within. That is no-more than the bureaucratic and autocratic instincts of the Bolivarian political class and Chavez himself.

written by: Lorenzo Vidal-Folch



Illustration: Lala Muntaner Moya

women are on top. However, as an actor seeks a standing ovation or a flattering review, here power is not with the woman but with the beholder, the one who grants her validation, telling her that she has been successful in her attempts to be sexy. In addition to this it is only one 'kind' of woman who gets this sought after reaction. She is a woman who performs, appearing sexually available in the way she dresses and behaves. Emancipation can never be true if it can only take one form. Because of this emphasis on performance, the beholder has even more power than if sexuality was seen to be manifested in a different way. Here the beholder isn't one person, with his or her own tastes and desires, but society as a whole. Therefore the form this expression of sexuality takes will necessarily tend towards generalisations and stereotypes, impeding the development of a diverse sexual emancipation. but if it becomes conformist performance then this behaviour actually creates a division, within each woman, between how she acts and her actual sexual desires and fantasies. Pressure to act this way will alienate those women not interested in performance from their own sexuality.

The fact that this expression of women's sexuality takes one form is proof in itself that this is not sexual emancipation. It seems highly improbable that all women and all men get turned on by exactly the same thing. What is perceived to be emancipation, is in fact simply pressure to conform to something new. On the flip-side is the idea that if you are a woman and do not behave in this way then you are sexless, a prude. Any criticism of raunch culture is seen as reactionary and conservative. Because of this, women are keen to be seen to 'get it', to be seen to understand that it's just a laugh. They achieve equality by identifying with men, including their attitudes to sexual behaviour. This is the ultimate coup. To criticise what is seen as sexy is to sacrifice it for yourself in the eyes of others. By fighting for a true sexiness you are judged to have none and as such, discredited.

Sexual desires and preferences are deeply rooted and, as can be seen by fetishists of different varieties, range widely. This suggests that, if sexual diversity was celebrated, only some women would desire the constant publicity and performance that is deemed appropriate for all women today. Perhaps the women throwing themselves at the 'Girls Gone Wild' camera crew are seeking something other than sexual gratification when they do so. It seems likely that many of the women involved are seeking something else; attention from men as validation of their sexiness, to behave as other women do, or even straight forward fun. Showing off for fun is not a new phenomenon but it is qualitatively different from becoming sexually excited by showing off. There is a gap here. 'Sexy' behaviour is seen as the incarnation of the sexuality of women

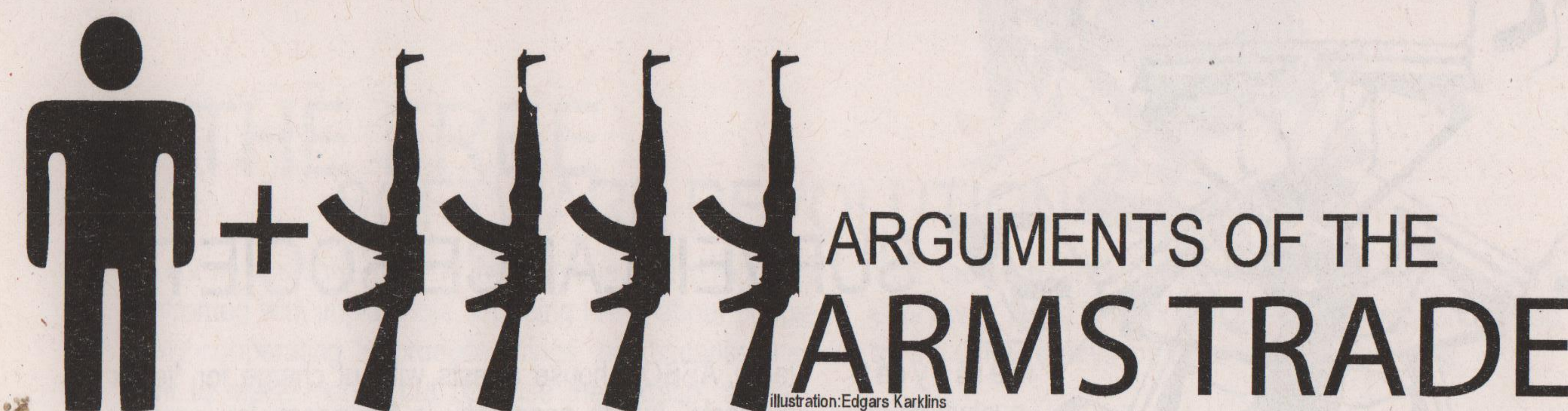
In fact this divisive and alienating process begins early on in life. Young girls come into contact with an image of what girls and women should be, this pressure to act in a certain way, before they develop sexual feelings of their own. Girls learn to seem sexually available before they desire sex at all. Young girls are

surrounded by images of women as sex objects. With Hello Kitty thongs on sale and the appeal of the sexy school girl outfit, behaviour that is sexual in appearance is very much tied up with conceptions of youth. If girls feel they have to perform or have sex to fit in then this can only alienate and distance them from their true sexual desires.

Sexual emancipation is a challenge for our appearance centred culture. It is tempting to see an increase in the prominence of 'sexy' women as evidence for an increase in sexual emancipation, but because of the pressure to fit physical and behavioural stereotypes, appearance can tell us nothing of how sexually emancipated a individual woman is. It is a mistake to think that the length of someone's skirt matches how in control they are in bed. This is not a reactionary argument, but is instead looking forward to a realisation of sexual choice and diversity. A solely performance-based view of sexuality will therefore never adequately represent or satisfy the sexual desires of all women or men.

For more information about anti-sexism on campus contact the Warwick Anti-Sexism Society on wass@sunion.warwick.ac.uk

written by: Beth Smith



The very first thing to remember about the arms trade is that they make things for the purpose of killing, maiming and incapacitating other human beings. All the people that design, manufacture or assemble these weapons have in some way contributed to the death of the person on the opposite side of that weapon.

Arms companies are treated as being above the law, one of the best recent examples of this was the government terminating the Serious Fraud Office inquiry in December 2006 that was looking into corruption allegations against BAE Systems' dealings in Saudi Arabia, by shutting down the SFO inquiry the government is in breach of the OECD agreements on tackling corruption that the UK is a signatory of. The government has set forward the classic three arguments for the arms trade. Those three arguments are; National security and defence needs, the economy and "If we didn't do it somebody else would".

National security was quoted as a major reason for ending the BAE system's- Saudi Arabia SFO inquiry, the government contended that Saudi Arabia was a valuable ally in the "War on Terror" and threatened to stop sharing intelligence should the SFO inquiry be allowed to continue. However the Saudi Intelligence service is at best weak and at worst a bunch of torturers who the UK intelligence services should not cooperate with on principle. The more general case for the national security or "Defence" argument is that the world is a violent place and we need weapons in order to protect ourselves and our allies. Unfortunately "Our boys" do not receive adequate equipment, an MoD internal survey found that "nearly half our soldiers in Iraq had no confidence in their fighting kit"2 and there is a mountain of anecdotal evidence on UK military equipment to support this. The MoD is pressured into buying equipment from UK firms in order to persuade foreign buyers to buy the same equipment; this means that the UK taxpayer is paying more than they should for equipment that is not ideal costing the lives of soldiers and civilians in conflicts. Arms exports are put ahead of UK interests when it comes to the arms industry. BAE systems (strictly speaking a global company, not British except when it suits them) recently agreed to a new contract

known as Salam (roughly translates as peace, BAE lack a sense of irony) with Saudi Arabia selling Eurofighter jets, the first 24 of these jets were intended to go to the RAF but instead are being shipped to Saudi Arabia. The argument of the economy and jobs is one favoured particularly by MPs saying that stopping the arms trade would cause terrible unemployment and damage the national economy, however some statistics need to be considered. Arms exports are subsidised by the government by around £900 million per year. According to the MoD 65,000 jobs are sustained by military exports (approximate 0.2% of the UK workforce), with a bit of simple maths this tells us that each arms export job is subsidised by the UK taxpayer to the tune of £13,000 every year. The MoD estimated that halving the number of military exports over a two year period would lead to a loss of almost 49,000 jobs however within five years 67,400 jobs would be created in non-military sectors and in fact between 1995 and 2002 the number of jobs estimated to be reliant on military exports fell from 145,000 to 65,000 with no major effect on the economy. The fact is that the majority of employees working in the arms industry are highly skilled and could be of incredible value in a worthwhile industry instead of one dedicated to destruction.

"If we didn't do it somebody else would" is often used by arms dealers as a justification for their activities whether legal or illegal, however this argument is fundamentally flawed, you could not use in any other context and expect anybody to agree with you. Were anybody to argue in court that they had to commit a crime because if they did not do it then somebody else would then they would be reprimanded for wasting the court's time, just because somebody else is willing to do something morally wrong, it does make it right for you to do it.

Only through understanding the reasons that are put across by the arms industry can the debate be won and these companies whose purpose is to cause destruction can be defeated.

written by: Barnaby Pace

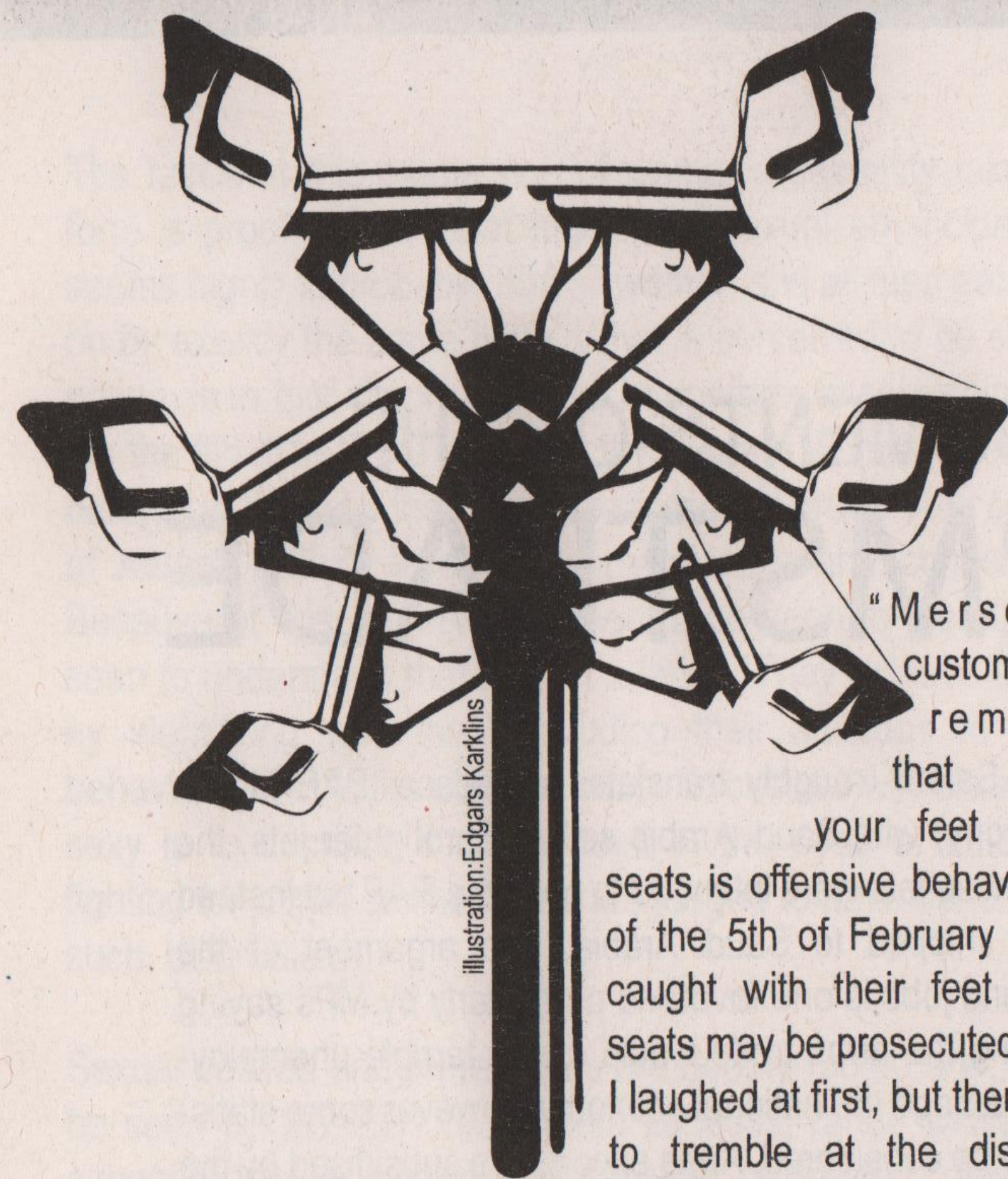


Illustration: Edgars Karklins

SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

"Merseyrail customers are reminded that putting your feet on the seats is offensive behaviour. As of the 5th of February anyone caught with their feet on the seats may be prosecuted"

I laughed at first, but then began to tremble at the disastrous implications of this message. Its straight from the dictionary of totalitarianism;

1. The use of the passive voice; no one is reminding me, I just am reminded. Well, gee, thanks...who the fuck are you?
2. "is offensive behaviour" So one of society's institutions is telling the country what is and isn't offensive. Frankly, I'd much prefer a world where people can openly make their own minds up about what they find offensive, but obviously that would entail a society with far too much of a genuine commitment to civil liberty.
3. "may be prosecuted"...What!? Since when was it a criminal offence to offend other members of the public. Now, there may be grey areas, but I really can't see it as just that the young man across the seat from me, who'd obviously had a long day on a building site, who was attempting to sleep, and had one of his feet up, could get prosecuted. Presumably the penalty being some kind of hefty fine. Forgive me if I think this is ridiculous.

This all might seem a little petty, and yes, it is. But I use this anecdote as a small example illustrating the dangerous political climate into which we are entering. Our society is becoming more and more comfortable with increasing state power; and more scarily, often in conjunction with private companies which hold monopolies over our public services, as well as the profit hungry private sector in general. From proposed ID schemes, police taking DNA samples from speeding motorists, penalty

fares, ASBOs, house arrests without charge for "terror suspects" (which apparently is Newspeak for innocent Algerian taxi drivers), and omnipresent CCTV and "dataveillance". With 1% of the world's population, and 20% of the world's CCTV cameras, we are the most watched nation on earth. Living in London, an individual is likely to be viewed by CCTV 300 times a day! With statistics like these, I think its fair enough that I'm quaking in my boots.

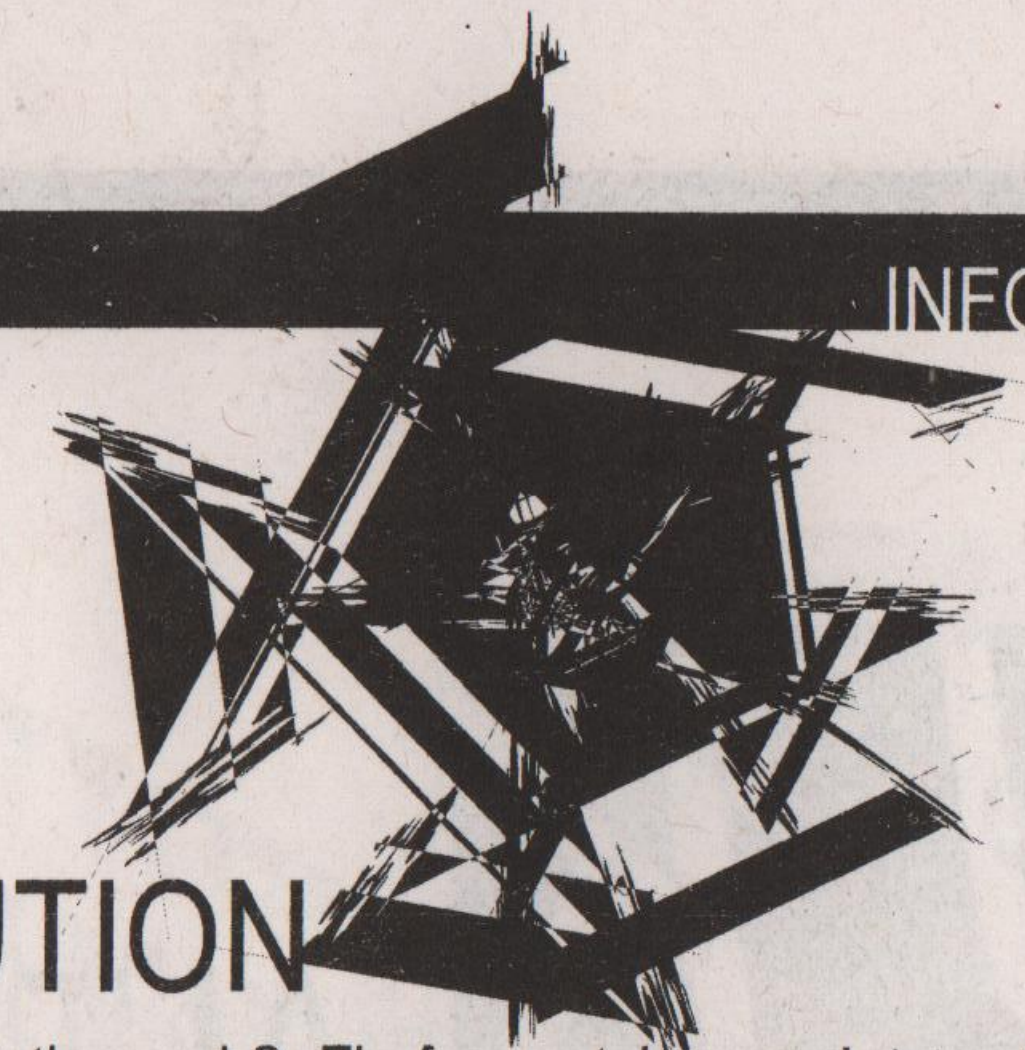
Messages like the one at the train station in my home town are everywhere, and they carry in their content the vision of a world in which individuals cannot interact and behave in their own way, maintaining order through custom, courtesy and community spirit, but one in which we must instead be watched, identified, fined, detained, jailed and whatever else by central authority. And don't give me that nonsense about how if you follow the rules, then you've got nothing to worry about. First, its the principle. No elite group should have that much power. Its just WAY too dangerous. Plus, once the apparatus of social control is in place, then any subsequent more authoritarian or corrupt government inherits it. Finally, with the current state of affairs, there is plenty of reason why you might want to resist the government, even, start breaking the rules.

Think about it...

The NHS, Royal Mail and other public services are being slashed while the public sector coffers are bled dry through private finance initiatives; living costs rise, minimum wage (relative to inflation) falls, the environment is literally on the brink of destruction (and don't forget that this is a class issue, for all this goes on in the interests of the ultra rich, as they enjoy fat bonuses, and a delightfully cosy tax environment). Meanwhile our tax money is spent on weapons that can wipe out populations, and launching and fighting criminal wars.

And you wonder why they want more social control? It's not rocket science.

written by: Steven Forshaw



THE FREE SOFTWARE REVOLUTION

I'm not an anarchist, but I do live with one, so I'm regularly confronted with implausible sounding ideas about people freely cooperating to produce things, not because they want to make money but because they *gasp* actually want to help the community. I've always been sceptical about the idea that people will act out of anything other than self-interest, but there is one case where voluntary, autonomous production actually works: free software.

Free software is free in both senses of the word: in the 'free beer' sense, in that it doesn't cost anything, but also in the 'free speech' sense, in that anyone can freely use, copy, modify, and distribute the software, the only restriction being that these same freedoms must be guaranteed to whoever the software is passed on to.

Free software has now matured to the point where for almost every commercial product, there is a quality, free alternative that can do the same thing. Need to write an essay, or do some spreadsheet work? Try Openoffice.

Ready to take the plunge? Here are some good places to start:

Firefox. The ultimate free web browser.

www.mozilla.com/firefox

OpenOffice. A complete, free alternative to M\$ Office: anything Word, Excel and Powerpoint can do, Openoffice can too.

www.openoffice.org

The GIMP. A powerful image editing tool. Photoshop is better, but the difference isn't worth the £500 price tag.

www.gimp.org

Paint.net. Another image programme, easier to use than the GIMP. Windows only.

www.getpaint.net

SMPlayer. I hate iTunes. I hate it with a passion. Windows media player is equally shit. SMPlayer is a great little media monster that can play ANYTHING you throw at it without the need for any codecs or fannying about.

smplayer.sourceforge.net

Miro. Formerly known as Democracy Player, this is an excellent free video player, that can access hundreds of free internet tv channels, video blogs, and other independent media. Run by the Participatory Culture Foundation.

www.getmiro.com

Pidgin. A good replacement for MSN. Pidgin can handle just about every instant messaging network on the planet.

pidgin.im

Want to go further? Get rid of Windows completely! Linux isn't just for nerds anymore, it's actually quite easy. Here's the deal: first, download one of the many distributions available. As Linux isn't controlled by one company, there are hundreds of different community-built distributions available, some for specialised purposes such as multimedia production or live music performance. For most people, ubuntu (www.ubuntu.com) or PCLinuxOS

Surf the web? Firefox outclasses Internet Explorer in every way. Need to work with images? Forget photoshop, try the GIMP. If anything it's a much cooler name.

So if free software is so powerful, how come everybody at Warwick is still writing essays in Microsoft Word, on a computer with Microsoft Windows, and giving Bill Gates lots of money for the privilege? Surely no rational actor would spend money on a commercial product if there is a free alternative that does the exact same thing? The reason for this is that free software is made by volunteers, who don't have the billions of dollars that Micro\$oft has to spend on maintaining its monopoly. These volunteers can't afford to advertise their work beyond their own online communities, so the word doesn't spread to the average non-geek. So, to publicise the movement, I have selected the cream of the free software crop for you to try. None of these require any computer skills beyond the capability of the average student (I do politics and I could figure them out).



(www.pclinuxos.com) are good choices. And there's no need to worry about anti-virus software, as Linux is inherently much more secure than Windows. Once you've downloaded it, burn it onto a CD, pop it in the drive and restart the computer. You can then try it out without having to install anything. If you don't like it, just take the CD out and reboot, no strings attached.

written by: Omar Khan

U.K ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Not sure whether The Times, The Independent, The Sun, the BBC... and other governmental, corporate or political party media are providing you with the complete picture? Here is a list of some of the autonomous and alternative media, newsletters, publications and magazines produced in the UK. They can be found online and many are available in printed form.

www.indymedia.org.uk

"A network of individuals, independent and alternative media activists and organisations, offering grassroots, non-corporate, non-commercial coverage of important social and political issues." A successful worldwide initiative.

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/>

A news website and producer of a newssheet of information for action.

www.ukwatch.net

A daily review of radical comment and analysis.

<http://www.afed.org.uk/org/>

Organise! The Magazine of the Anarchist Federation.

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

Direct Action Magazine of the Solidarity Federation.

<http://www.freedompress.org.uk/>

Freedom - an Anarchist paper published by the UK's oldest Anarchist publisher.

www.libcom.org

Anti-authoritarian news, resource and community for the UK.

<http://www.corporatewatch.org/>

An information and news website and a bi-monthly newsletter which "provides detailed profiles of some of the world's largest corporations and overviews of each major industry sector, constitutes not just a resource for campaigners and journalists but also aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the reality of our corporate age."

<http://www.theecologist.org/>

The Ecologist - environmental affairs magazine.

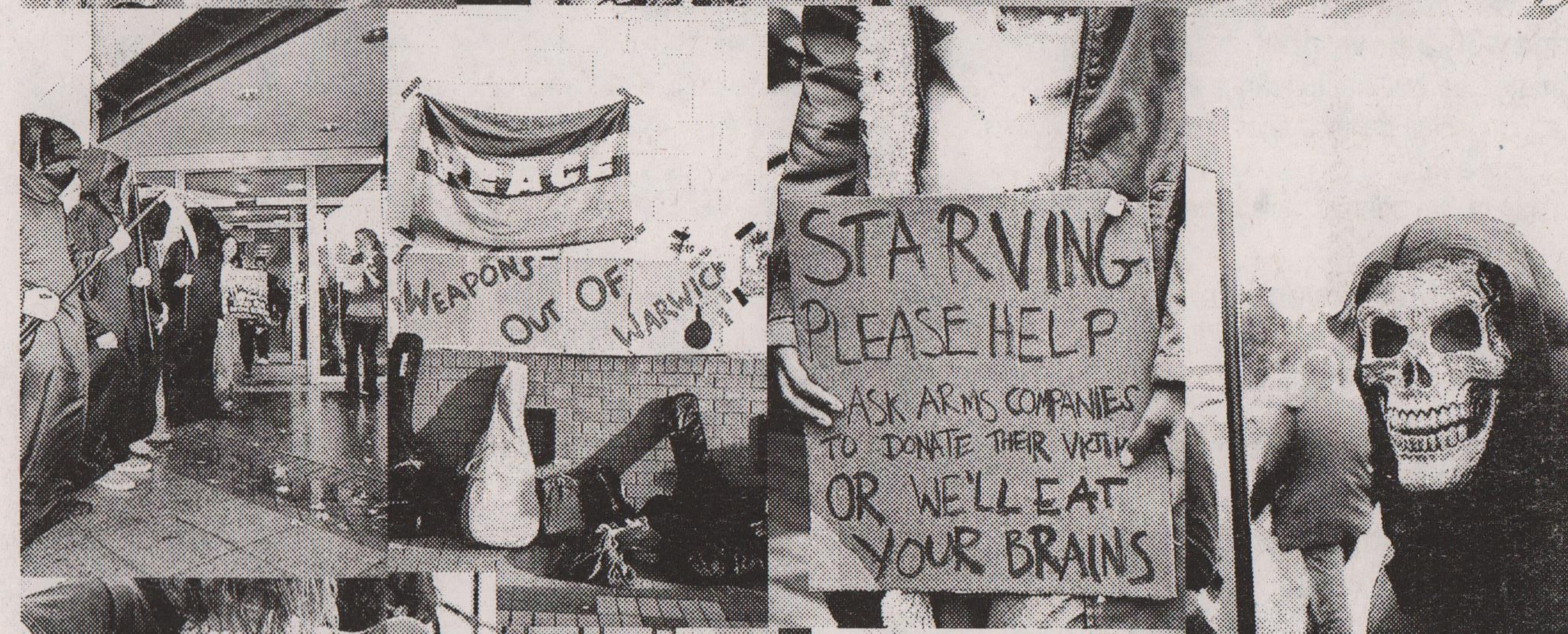
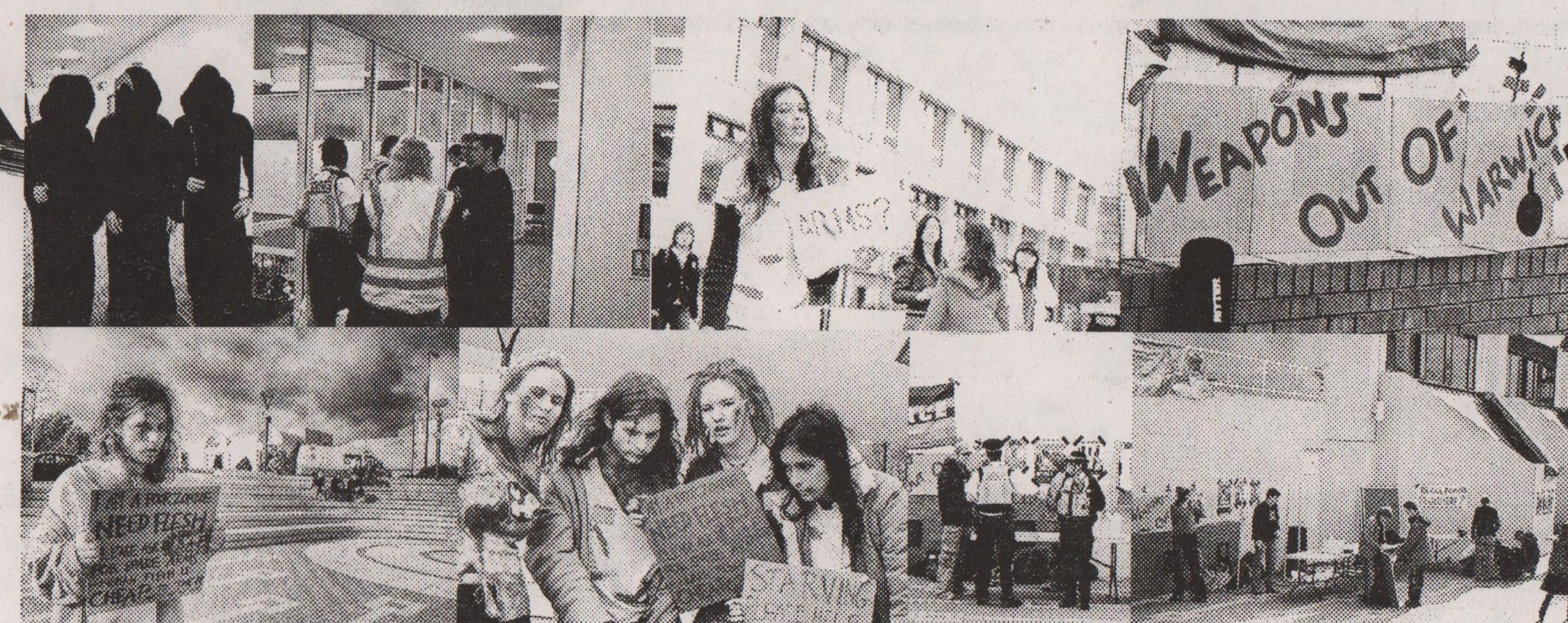
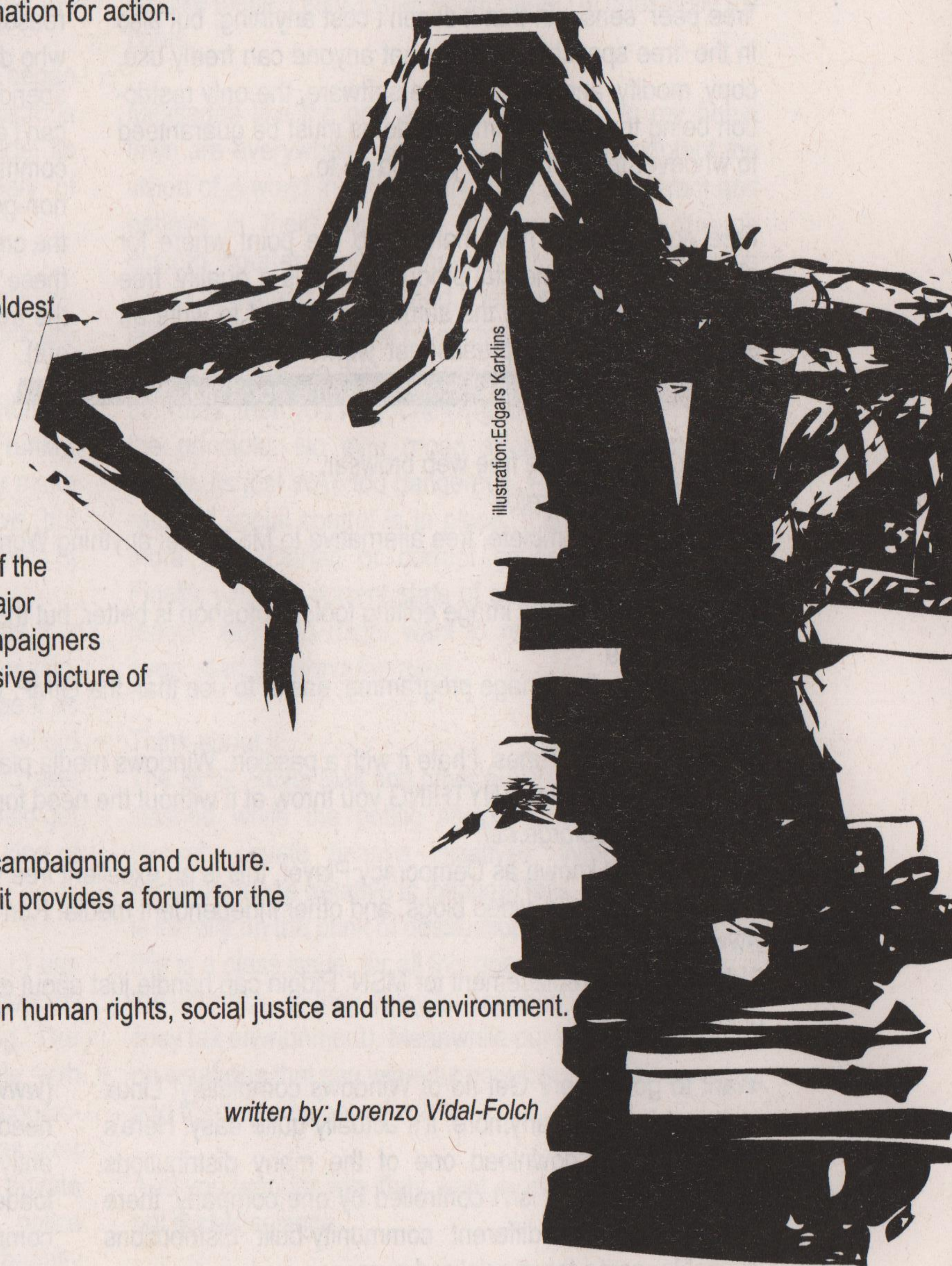
<http://www.redpepper.org.uk/>

Red Pepper - a bi-monthly magazine of information, campaigning and culture. Influenced by socialism, feminism and green politics, it provides a forum for the left to debate ideas and action.

<http://www.newint.org/>

New Internationalist - magazine that tackles issues on human rights, social justice and the environment.

written by: Lorenzo Vidal-Folch



ANTI-ARMS PROTEST

arms companies out of our careers fairs!



8th of November
WARWICK '07

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