

WAR CRY

DISARM CAPITALISM★ARM YOUR DESIRES!

TIME FOR A WEAPON OF MASS DISOBEDIENCE

Technically the war on Iraq is over, at least in the downgrading of the US/UK coalition's military activity, although we nervously await the next round of slaughter. But Iraq does not much resemble peace, and the occupation regime continues to dig an ever deeper hole for itself. Meanwhile the pretext for the war – that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction ready for use – continues to unravel in the way that lies do.

Across the world we showed our anger. Arrests and torture in Egypt, 1,600 arrested in San Francisco, pitched street battles in Greece, more recently mass protests against the G8 in Evian.... In this country some may have thought that the sheer size of our movement would make the government desist, especially without the UN resolution. Now we have mixed feelings: On the one hand, the joy of seeing so many come out against the war, in particular the reaction of school students and the politicising of a new generation; Against that, the frustration that opposition was so carefully contained, the calls for civil disobedience and strikes rarely going beyond mere words. The fault of the leaders? Yes. Of the led? Also. Of the very division between leaders and led? Definitely. Stopping the war could only have been feasible if we'd focussed on

disrupting 'normal life' and the economy. Too many weekend actions ended up just being a way for us to let off a bit of steam.

In a sense though the war *was* stopped. By the refusal of the Iraqis to fight. They knew they had no allegiance to either their regime or the US/UK. Refusal and desertion was their form of resistance – not the foolish martyrdom some within the anti-war movement had assigned them. As a result of both the Iraqis' resistance, and protests elsewhere, the war stopped short of a mass genocide. The only resistance worth making, in any country, is that which is autonomous of all the different advocates of a society based on the rule of money and the division of social classes, whether in it's theocratic, 'Western', or any other version. Despite their differences, the one factor uniting the ruling class across the world is the destruction of revolutionary aspirations. Where they differ, often with murderous results, is on how to achieve this.

In the West, the War on Terror will carry on serving as an excuse to justify cutting back on civil liberties, dividing workers on grounds of nationality and going to war whenever profits need jacking up. But an excuse is all it is. In the Middle East a fluid situation has now emerged in the region, in which movements against *all* forms of domination may start to find their feet and link up with anti capitalist tendencies in the rest of the world.

★WAR★

WEST LONDON ANARCHISTS & RADICALS

THIS WAS WAR CRY!

Welcome to the final issue of **WAR CRY**, our regular newsletter that aimed to irritate, inform and antagonise.

NO MORE WAR!

We formed West London Anarchists & Radicals (WAR) over 5 years ago as there was no revolutionary group existing in West London (in fact many revolutionaries who should have known better simply dismissed west London as 'posh'). As active individuals we also saw the potential benefits of working together collectively. In one of our first statements we declared:

"Do you live or work in west London? If you do, and your politics go something like this: class struggle; anti-hierarchical; anti-capitalist; libertarian; direct action (but open minded about tactics), then we would like to hear from you."

1st WAR leaflet, June 1998

We hoped to make contact with other local revolutionaries, and we also hoped that other local groups would spring up. We never viewed WAR as the sole font of knowledge and we never aspired to recruit anyone we worked with.

We put together a mailing list based on people we knew and those who contacted us and sent out information bimonthly. We held regular discussion meetings that a number of different people attended at different times. WAR also had a fruitful relationship in 1999 with Citizen Smith, a radical group who set up a squatted social centre in NW10. We got involved in

some local campaigns and strikes. We produced numerous leaflets and handed out literally thousands of free newspapers, newsletters, and leaflets.

In November 2001 we began the publication of WAR CRY, which has come out almost monthly since. Although our newsletter is modest, due to lack of resources, we agonised over which articles to include and submitted each other's contributions to vigorous criticism. We printed over 500 each month (photocopied for free at work places), handed them out in high streets, and struggled to find outlets for distribution (in addition to posting out over 50 each month). We reported and commented on issues of local, national and international interest and concern, and publicised forthcoming events and actions. We could have used more graphics, cartoons, and humour, but we always had too much to say and not enough room for it.

WAR was also involved in London wide, national and international activities. We attended and helped put on conferences and anarchist bookfairs and we were instrumental in the first modern anti-capitalist Mayday. Our members were involved in, amongst other things, prisoners support, Critical Mass, asylum seekers campaigns, legal defence and anti-war activity, as well as struggles in our daily lives. WAR members also wrote for, and were involved in, various anarchist and radical publications. We attended international anti-capitalist protests and numerous demonstrations and events.

Indeed WAR may have had a greater impact on the national anarchist and anti-capitalist movements than we had locally. We will never know who or how many have been inspired locally by our

efforts, though we know that local groups elsewhere have been, so we live in hope! In part this was due to the fact that WAR was always more than the sum of its parts, so had lots of ideas, energy, and commitment to contribute to activities beyond its locality. However, this also reflected the lack of local opportunities. Campaigns in west London remain thin on the ground, no other groups came into existence, and even finding places to leave WAR CRY or to hold meetings was a constant struggle. It is fair to say that, although people living locally have worked with us from time to time, few have actually taken the step of becoming actively involved in WAR.

Moving On, Not Splitting

Throughout our activities, which have been intense at times, we have remained on friendly terms, indeed we continue to work and play together. We are not disbanding due to any split, but simply because some of us are moving out of the area and others have changes in their personal lives. No one group is indispensable, most groups have a limited period of effectiveness, the trick is to know when that time has come to an end, and move on to different (and better) things. With the decline in numbers, WAR has reached that point, and to continue now would be both difficult and negative.

We will continue to work together to produce a pamphlet summarising the activities of WAR and attempting to draw out some lessons for the future (it will be available at the Anarchist Book-fair on 25 October). As individuals, we remain committed to revolutionary politics and we will continue our activity wherever we find ourselves.

Those of us remaining in west London would like to contribute to any local group of revolutionaries that arises in the future. To that end we will continue to maintain our postal and email addresses.

Finally we would like to thank the readers of WAR CRY for your support, especially those of you that we had personal contact with. We remain convinced that the struggle for a world beyond capitalism - with its exploitation, wars and alienation - is more relevant than ever.

In solidarity – the WAR Collective



LAST GASP RANT

I've been ranting away for the past 2 years and I thought I'd look and see where it got us, if anywhere. It's by far the least analytical bit of War Cry but that doesn't mean that there wasn't serious intent to damage capitalism by jarring conceptions and opening streams of consciousness.

The rants have flowed over the expulsion of the poor from London, the death of the Welfare State, anarchists colluding with voting, asylum seekers and racism, the conspiracy to keep us smoking, the monarch & Red Ken, national frontiers, banks, work, religion, fireworks and war, and finally, parking controls.

What this lot didn't have was any sense of progression. With hindsight I would have liked it to be more like a cartoon strip or chapter in a penny dreadful, where you couldn't wait for the next installment to see what happened next. In fact, it's quite an eye opener to see that none of the subjects covered have changed for the better, except maybe the decimation of numbers voting.

But this column was always intensely personal and real. My hope is that if I've persuaded just a few people that you don't have to be an academic to hold coherent political ideas, and that anarchist/radical politics can be fun, then the rant has had a purpose. See you in the next reincarnation?

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BRITISH ANARCHIST RESOURCES:

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