

COMMON CAUSE

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Saddam, Thatcher, Bush — Stuff the lot of them!

NO TO THE BOSSES' WAR MACHINE!

WHAT WITH ALL the unrest about the Poll Tax and with working class people being sick to death of what seems like an eternity of Thatcherism, what better way to restore a bit of national unity than a potential or actual war. Let's face it, politicians of all parties are basically over the moon about war being on the cards. Labour and Tory alike, united against the common foe, each trying to outdo the other in patriotic point scoring.

As Anarchists, we were not surprised for one minute, after all that's their job, uniting the nation, covering up and propping up the capitalist tyranny we all live under whether Iraqi, British, American, Russian or whatever.

Saddam is a vicious tyrant, responsible for appalling repression in Iraq, repression that the British and US governments have been quite happy to support as long as Iraq was at war with Iran. The stockpiled chemical weapons used to fight Iran and to annihilate Kurdish people came from Porton Down in England. It's ironic they might be returned in a way unforeseen by our war-mad government.

The media, as usual, is full of crap. For the newspaper barons, a war would mean a massive boost in circulation, they would never have it so good. Their talk of war is also meant to turn our minds from real issues that affect us, like the Poll Tax, poverty, etc. So it's no surprise that all the papers are warmongering like mad and already talking about nuking Iraq.

And what's it supposed to be about? Iraq invading Kuwait? My arse! It's all about profit. One top US adviser has said quite openly, that if Kuwait produced carrots instead of oil, the US government wouldn't give a toss.

no war but the class war!



Then there's all the bleating about dictatorship suppressing democracy. What rubbish! Kuwait was a despotic fiefdom ruled by a bunch of princes with not even the faintest attempt to even appear democratic.

At the end of the day, it's about working class people from Iraq, Britain, the US and elsewhere being sent to kill each other while the bosses rub their hands in the knowledge that they'll make loads of dosh out of it and that Maggie will probably get elected for another five years.

We anarchists have no desire to see the nation united in yet another stupid war. As ever, we are quite open about our desire to see the nation totally divided. Let's face it working class people in Britain have loads more in common with working class Iraqis than with the rich tosser who lives in Yuppieland down the road.

As always, we say NO to the bosses war and YES to the class war, the only war worth fighting. Not till the Saddams, Thatchers and Bushes of this world are strung up from the nearest lamp post alongside all the capitalists, can humanity be happy.

Why the police are pigs

CORRUPTION, fit-ups, organised criminal activity, Masonic infiltration, drunkenness and personality disorders are all characteristic of the police force in this country. Any serious attempt to combat some of these problems have met with almost total failure as "Operation Countryman", for example, shows. Why is it that we have the police force we do and not a body of genuine "crime-fighters" on the Batman model?

Unlike the Marxists who have problems in explaining the characteristics of various sections of the state (since it is supposed to simply be an instrument of capitalist domination), we Anarchists are aware that organisations often take on "a life of their own" independent of their supposed function. And so it is with the police. There exists, as I shall show, a police ethos and morality which pervades all that they do.

The working class of this country has had a long history of hatred of the police. At best the attitude will be that they are an

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unfortunate necessity. Ordinary people will not normally associate with police officers, far from it. Often when a friend joins the force, he or she will automatically be excluded from future involvement with the group. On a mass scale, this means that the police force is almost totally isolated from the working class, the section of society which provides the most recruits. In the face of this isolation the police force has over many years, developed an ideology which, naturally, is self supporting in the face of public indifference and hostility.

What are the features of this value system and how did they arise? Firstly, the police have a general distrust and dislike of the class which spawned most of these pointed headed perverts. They have moved up the social ladder and left their "inferiors" behind. Besides, they know that petty crime is an endemic feature of working class life. Everyone steals from work, even if it's just a telephone call to friends. And of course, working class youths are capable of matching the copper on the beat when the pubs close on a Friday night. So, a combination of superiority, hypocritical inside knowledge and fear fuel the police hatred of the working class.

Not only do the police dislike the working class as an idea, they oppose them as an organised force. As the police are frequently called in to undermine strikes and picketing, they naturally, on occasions, come into physical conflict with workers. Such conflict naturally nurtures a hatred. Also, the police themselves are denied the right to strike, why should others be granted this "luxury"?

The police exist to maintain order in society. This means that they protect the present economic system and its inequalities. It also means that they are conservatives and are necessarily opposed to all forms of radicalism and change.

It flows from this that the police are overwhelmingly politically Conservative Party supporters. Thatcher for her part has increased their earnings in line with their role as Tory government private boot-boys - real life rent-a-mob. Like all conservatives the

police support that bastion of society "the family". Consequently, they are violently anti-gay since homosexuality poses the most radical statement of opposition to the family.

The traditional view of the family grants the wife with the role of obedient servant, loving mother and maintainer of the home. Women who do not fit into this model are either viewed as fair game or whores. The sexism within the police force is notorious. It is not surprising given that the force is overwhelmingly populated with macho males who reinforce each others masculinity and denigrate sensitivity and compassion. Indeed, those officers who do show a preference for community work are reviled by their tough-man-type colleagues.

Naturally, the authoritarian conservative approach which pervades the police force looks back to a supposed golden age when "Bobbies" were loved by the people. The fact that such an age never existed hardly matters. The police believe it did and it existed in the years of the 1930s and 40s and was to be seen in television programmes like Dixon of Dock Green and films from the Ealing studios. Then of course everyone had a white skin. Now, with the existence of large black communities who have learned to distrust the police and occasionally rise up against them, the police have another enemy. The deep seated racism which is to be found throughout society is reflected in the force. It is reinforced by the fear and mutual hostility which exists between the police and black people. In the police mind, black youths in particular are equated with crime and violence.

Now these prejudices against working class people, gays and blacks would not matter too much (though they are to be deplored) if the police individually and collectively didn't have enormous power. The police, isolated as they are, have created stereotypes in which they represent good in the face of evil. On the basis of these stereotypes they act, often picking on perfectly innocent people just because they fit the stereotypa. Con-

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sequently working class people, black youths and gays are subject to constant police harassment.

These stereotypes are never challenged within the force because of its isolation. So we and everyone else who is given a negative stereotype will be on the receiving end of this army of hired thugs. The police are our enemy - and we know how they think!

Class 'Justice'

The popular image of the British court system as shown on television and in books is that of judge and jury. The reality is somewhat different. Although of course the whole paraphernalia of wigs, gowns, barristers and judges are involved in serious trials, in fact, 97% of court cases are in magistrates courts.

Magistrates courts are found in most large towns and dish out their highly selective versions of "justice" for the ordinary person who has run foul of the law. Inflated, self-opinionated Justices of the Peace, from secure middle class backgrounds, inflict punishments as a "public duty". They do it for free.

Magistrates courts used to be known as "police courts", so close is their relationship with police officers who they meet daily in the court room. Acquaintanceships between these two low level law enforcers ensure that the prisoner in the dock has little chance of acquittal in most instances. If it is a defendant's word against a police officer's, naturally it is the latter who is believed.

Magistrates, as the conservative authoritarians that they are, are highly involved in maintaining a ruling class view of justice. Thus, during the miners' strike, they detained, controlled the movement of, fined and imprisoned hundreds of strikers. To get through the massive caseloads, magistrates organised mass trials in which defendants were tried in batches. True as ever to their masters, this highly dangerous system of trial was reintroduced in the Isle of Wight for poll tax defaulters.

Magistrates soon become case hardened and unlike juries who are often prepared to give the benefit of the doubt, magistrates are not. Without the mediating element of a jury, they try and sentence the prisoners. There is such a wide variation in likelihood of conviction and harshness of sentence between different courts that they are a national disgrace. Given that magistrates can impose prison sentences of up to 6 months, it makes them look particularly dangerous. Prison is bad enough, but the subsequent unemployment which usually results is tragic.

Magistrates courts deal with very high case loads. To get through the work, defendants are

shunted in and out of the courtroom in often a matter of minutes. Drunks, vagrants, prostitutes etc. are particularly likely to receive dismissive treatment.

For your information we enclose a selection of the maximum punishments which can be inflicted in magistrates courts. Normally the actual penalty imposed will be much less than the maximum. However, in recent Poll Tax trials, magistrates have tried to set examples and have frequently imposed the maximum.

Abusive words or behaviour	£2000 and 6 months
Actual bodily harm	£2000 and 6 months
Affray	£2000 and 6 months
Article with blade or point	£400
Assault on a police officer	£2000 and 6 months
Bagging	£400 or 1 month
Common assault	£2000 and 6 months
Contempt of court	£1000 and 1 month
Disorderly conduct	£400
Drunk and disorderly	£400
Drunk	£50
Failure to maintain oneself	£400 and 3 months
Failure to maintain oneself	£1000 and 3 months*
False fire alarm	£1000 and 3 months
False statement to obtain social security	£2000 and 6 months
Found on enclosed premises	£400 and 3 months
Gross indecency	£2000 and 6 months
Offensive or threatening message	£1000 and 3 months
Obstructing a police officer	£400 and 1 month
Obstructing the highway	£400
Trading without a license	£400 or 1 month
Fraudulent use of a public phone	£2000 and 6 months
Stealing	£2000 and 6 months
Theft	£2000 and 6 months
Violent disorder	£2000 and 6 months
Wounding	£2000 and 6 months

*Depends on which Act is being applied

Branching Out

At the moment London ACF is currently setting up borough-wide branches. At the moment we are concentrating on Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Camden. If you live in these areas and want to get involved, or live elsewhere and want to set up a branch, then write to our address.

IF you wish to contact the ACF, want to know more about our ideas or want to get involved with our activities, then you can write to:
ACF c/o 84b White-chapel High St.,
London E1.