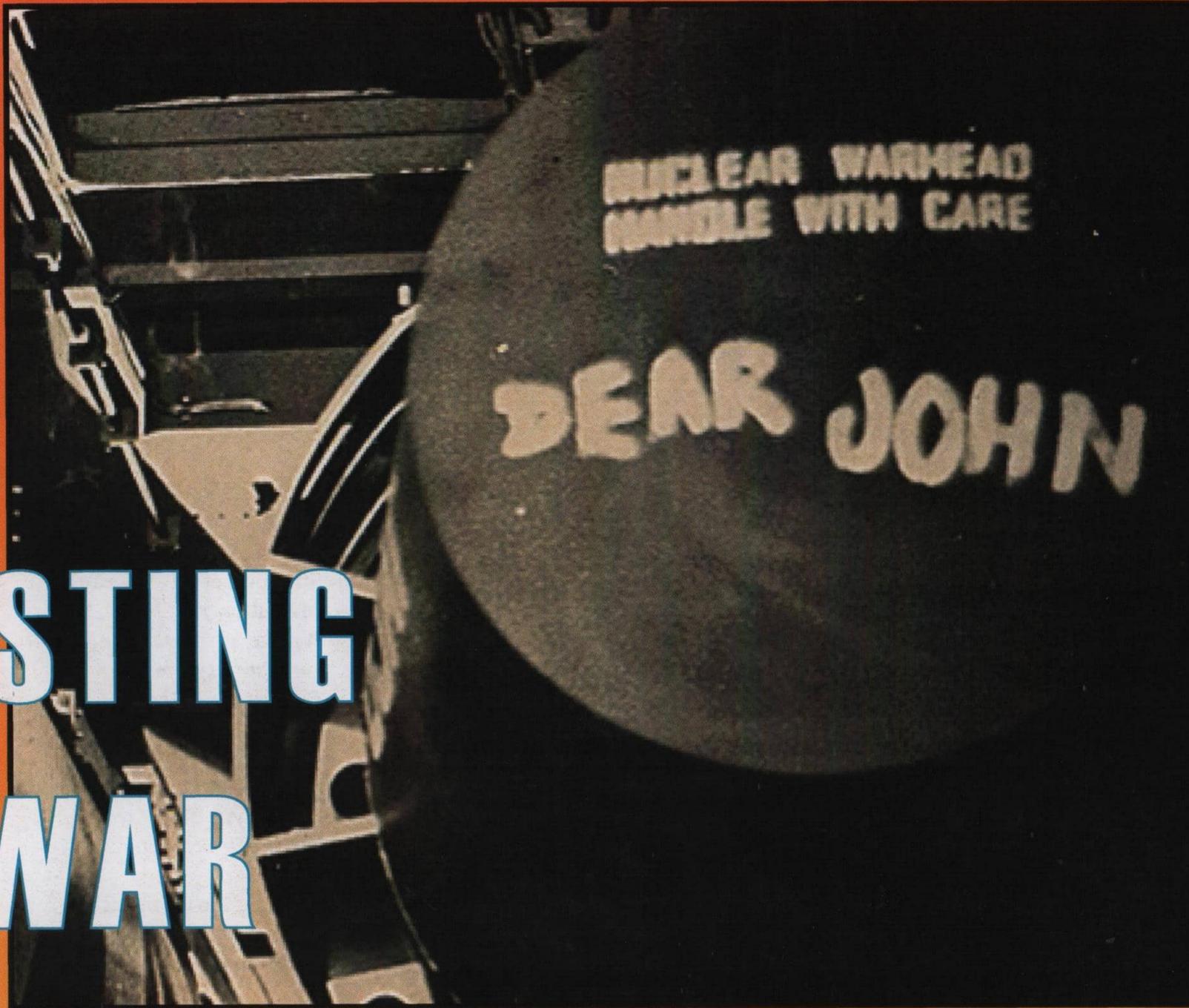


Black Flag

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE



RESISTING
THE WAR
EFFORT

hitting the warmongers where it hurts



For a social system based on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation; against state control and all forms of government and economic repression. To establish a share in the general prosperity for all – the breaking down of racial, religious, national and sex barriers – and to fight for the life of one world.

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editorial

So, once again a year has passed and we've only managed to produce this one issue. Black Flag, unless something truly wonderful happens (like a couple of people decide to get involved), now looks set to be an annual event. So any attempt for us to cover 'news' is pointless. This is not such a disaster now that Freedom are producing a relevant and worthwhile fortnightly paper (see 'Thoughts on Freedom' on page 30). Libertarians with access to the Internet can also keep up to date with news and events using sites such as Indymedia and Urban 75. We hope that any news shorts that are submitted to us can be (with the author's permission) passed on to Freedom. In return, we'll probably pick up some of the longer, more analytical articles submitted to Freedom when space is tight.

We believe that Black Flag is still a worthwhile project. There are few (if any) other non-aligned national anarchist magazines being published in the UK and Black Flag has a wide national and international readership. We believe there is a need for a forum for anarchist and libertarian practice and theory to be debated and for our ideas and the way we put them into practice to be analysed. We hope that Black Flag can be such a forum (but if anyone has ideas for a better way of achieving this, which will make Black Flag redundant, then go for it - the magazine is not and should not be an end in itself).

We also believe we have lots to learn from non anarchists, especially where they are working in areas where we are weak. In the past we have covered the work of anti racist and women's groups working with issues where our movement barely scratches the surface. In this issue we look at the work of the IWCA with communities trying to take back some control in the face of crime, poverty and gentrification.

Talking of communities taking control, the new London bid for the 2012 Olympics prompted us to look back at successful campaigns by citizens of other cities across Europe to ditch their Olympic bids. The autonomist Berlin campaign in the early nineties, which we cover, was, in addition to being spectacularly successful, a lot of fun too. Get inspired.

The deadline for the next issue is 26th of January, 2004.

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The biennial Defence Systems & Equipment International exhibition (DSEI) took place at the ExCel Centre in London's docklands during the second week of September. The week of events against Europe's largest arms fair saw counter-conferences, vigils, film screenings, protests, direct action and blockades. Sept 11th was the penultimate day of the arms fair.

Disarm DSEI

Trafalgar Square became Red Square, as anti-arms trade campaigners filled its famous fountain with fake blood. Sept 11th was also the auspicious date chosen for the DSEi / DMA Gala Dinner at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in central London. Arms dealers dined in luxury while around the world the dead were remembered.

Anti-arms protestors and peace activists showed their disgust outside the hotel throughout the evening with a noise demonstration. Diners arriving were greeted with shouts of "How many children have you killed today?", while the surrounding streets were repeatedly blocked by cyclists and drummers. Hundreds of police, some in riot gear sealed the area off.

There was strong support from passers by, while at least one person infiltrated the hotel dressed in a ball dress. Free food was given out as people

stayed late into the night making as much noise as possible, banging pots and pans.

After their gala dinner, the world's arms industry left the Lancaster Hotel under heavy police guard. They were able to leave the area via Lancaster Gate Tube Station which, closed to members of the public, was commandeered for arms dealer only transport.

The main day of protest against DSEi took place at London's Docklands on Wednesday 10th September. Activists, angry, both about the items on sale, the well-known human rights abusing countries invited, and the devastation caused by weapons, attempted to "Shut DSEi by any means possible". This was the day that bargaining at the DSEi arms fair began in earnest and general press were prohibited from entering.

Early in the morning the Docklands Light Railway

(DLR) was stopped in the first of several actions with activists D-locking themselves onto trains at various stations or climbing onto the roof. This disrupted the DLR (the main means of transport for delegates to the arms fair) for much of the day. Many delegates were forced to walk to the ExCel centre due to the disruption caused by the protests. Also on the DLR, activists posed as arms dealers. On their way to the ExCel centre they announced they had arms for sale and opened their cases revealing the various sets of arms (prosthetic and dolls arms) they had to sell.

At Custom House DLR, activists in suits went to a "Meet the Delegates" action, mingling with the arms dealers on the trains. At 8am a Critical Mass left from the City of London to the Docklands. On their way to the ExCel Centre around a hundred cyclists blocked traffic while comedian Mark Thomas entertained the crowds. Just after 9am the International Solidarity movement visited the Israeli arms company Rafael in an attempted office occupation, later unfurling banners outside.

At 11am affinity groups converged to form mobile groups engaging in various actions.

At Connaught Bridge a car partially blocked the ExCel approach road in a D-lock action while groups moved in a variety of directions, many

up to Connaught roundabout and some down to the underpass, blockading traffic for several hours. Groups remained mobile; some pushing through police lines as other roads nearby were temporarily occupied or blockaded.

Meanwhile at the ExCel centre six activists infiltrated DSEi, occupying two tanks, daubing them in 'Stop Death' banners and locking on, before being removed by security.

At 4pm the Reclaim the Streets party mobilised many of the roaming affinity groups at Rathbone Market where a crowd of around 300 took to the streets soon meeting up with a critical mass bicycle group complete with sound system.

Meanwhile next to Canning Town DLR a second RTS group occupied the roundabout, as the DLR was again stopped, banners hung on top of the flyover ("Disarm DSEi"), arms delegate buses blockaded and riot police deployed. With a samba group playing, there were more arrests and scuffles as police cleared the roads, later blocking in two main groups of protestors for several hours as people tried to push through police lines.

Overall, the week's actions caused a high level of disruption to the arms fair, especially given the relatively small numbers of protestors, and extensive use of anti-terrorist stop and search powers by the police. ■

Terrorist Alert

The DSEi protests served to highlight the police's growing use of 'anti-terrorism' measures (in particular, Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000) to intimidate, disrupt and deter people from taking part in demonstrations in the UK. On the morning of September 10th, there was widespread media coverage of the use of the anti terror legislation against non violent protesters at DSEi the day before.

Initially the chief of police for the London area denied any use whatever of the anti terrorism legislation against protesters, but later was forced to admit that it was being used. Attempts at justifying the use of such tactics were laughable - it was said that real terrorists might use the opportunity (presumably disguised as protesters) to enter the arms fair to carry out their dastardly work...

The UK human rights organisation, Liberty announced

that they were to challenge these police tactics in a high court judicial review on the 2nd of October, 2003.

The pressure became so strong that Blunkett (the home secretary) was forced to order a Scotland Yard investigation into alleged misuse of the anti-terror searches at DSEI. His statements suggested that this was the first time anti-terror search powers may have been misused, but there is substantial documentation of such police tactics being employed against protesters around 'RAF Fairford' airbase during the invasion of Iraq.

The government's use of the all consuming terrorist 'threat' as an excuse for increasing internal repression is rapidly losing credibility and it remains to be seen how long we will let them get away with it. For more details, visit www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

For an example of anti terror law use in Spain, see page 5.

After the fall of Saddam's dictatorship, a wave of looting erupted in towns and cities across Iraq. The media was outraged, often more concerned about stolen property than the civilians wounded and murdered by the US invasion. It was proclaimed that Iraq was falling into "anarchy."

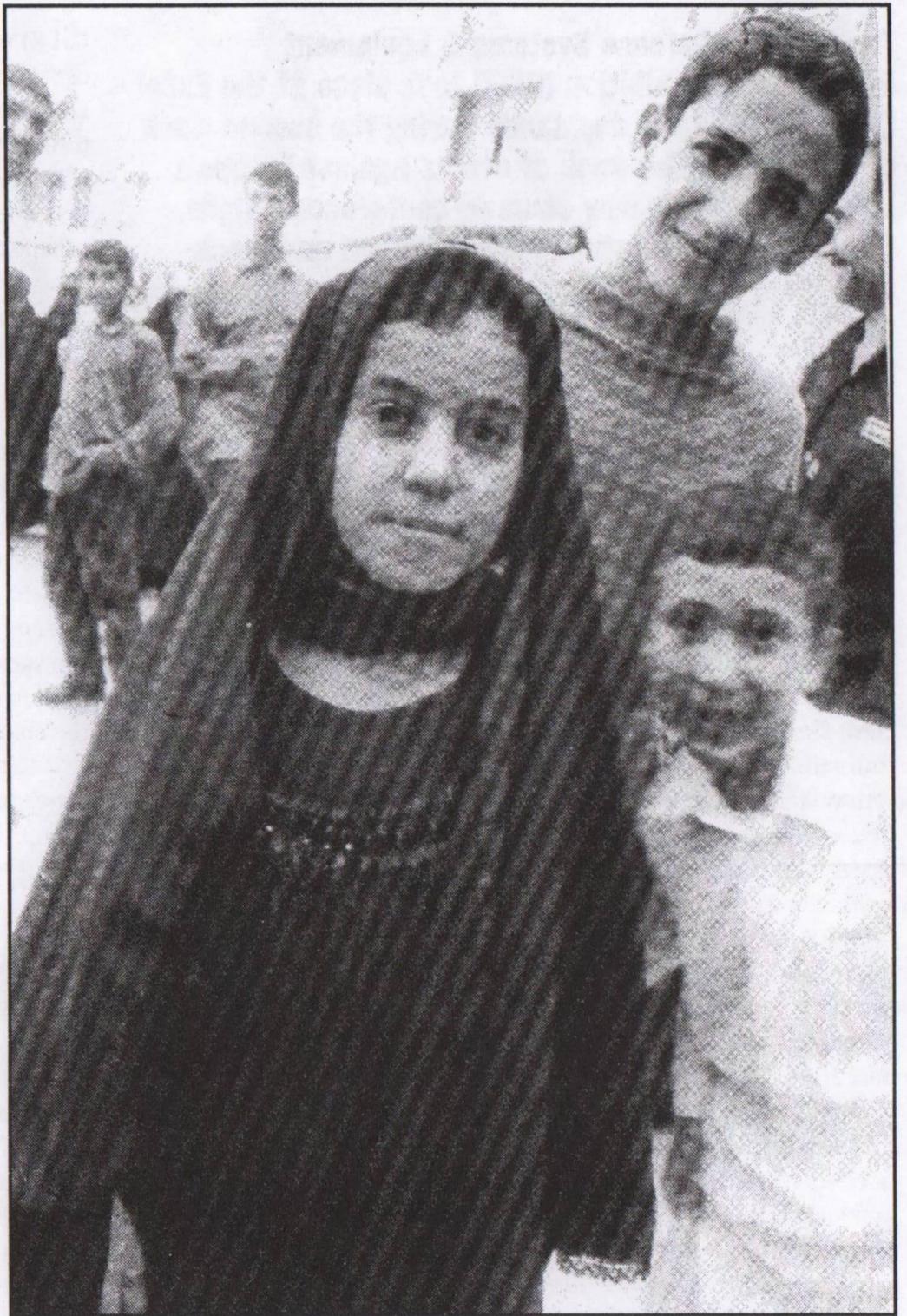
This is unsurprising, if annoying, for anarchists. It is worth examining why the chaos in post-Saddam Iraq is not anarchy nor, in fact, a case against anarchism.

Kropotkin once said that "without disorder, the Revolution is impossible" and he was right. Every revolution has been marked by "disorder," by strikes, riots, looting and so on. However, in social revolutions such periods are short lived. Inspired by ideas and hope for the future, the mass of people quickly go beyond the destructive phase of popular revolt and start the construction of a new world.

So Kropotkin argued against the idea of "one-day revolutions" and the idea that a revolution could occur independently of popular struggle and mass movements. A "structure based on centuries of history cannot be destroyed by a few kilos of explosives," he correctly stated. Anarchy would be the product of collective struggle at the heart of society, not the product of external shocks. "To make the revolution," he argued, "the mass of workers will have to organise themselves. Resistance and the strike are excellent means of organisation for doing this." Thus it was "a question of organising societies of resistance for all trades in each town ... against the exploiters ... of federating them ... Workers' solidarity must no longer be an empty word but practised each day between all trades and all nations." In the struggle against oppression and exploitation, we not only change the world, we change ourselves at the same time. So it is the struggle for freedom which creates people capable of taking the responsibility for

their own lives, communities and planet. People capable of living as equals in a free society, so making anarchy possible.

What happened in Iraq is not an example of anarchy. As George Barrett put it, the strength of the state lies "in the superstition of the people who think that it is right to obey [it]. So long as that superstition exists it is useless for some liberator to cut off the head of tyranny; the people will create another, for they have grown accustomed to rely on something outside themselves." This means that "if, then, by some external means" the state was destroyed then people would "rebuild the old society." However, if "the people develop their ideas of freedom, and then themselves get rid of the last stronghold of tyranny - the Government - then indeed the Revolution would be permanently accomplished." Like Kropotkin, he saw anarchist revolution in terms of working class self-organisation and direct action, with the capitalist class "abolished by the people so organising themselves that they will run the factories and use the land for the benefit of their free communities, i.e. for their own benefit ... The only thing then that will be put in the place of government will be the free organisations of the workers."



ANARCHY IN IRAQ?

This has not happened in Iraq. Rather, the government has been destroyed by kilos of explosives. Unsurprisingly, therefore, chaos rather than anarchy resulted. It cannot be denied that the looting is, in part, a reaction to inequality and class society. It is a form of wealth redistribution. Nor can it be denied that some of the looters see their actions as a form of justice. "Every single item that we take is the blood of the people," said one. However, it is not the end of private property, simply a change in who claims to own it. This can be seen from the

irresponsible attacks on hospitals and other resources that should be held in common, not squandered by breaking them up and destroying them.

To quote Luigi Fabbri, anarchists "do not think of expropriation in terms of some sort of 'help yourself' operation, left to personal judgement, in the absence of any order. Even were it possible to predict as inevitable that expropriations, once disorder sets in, would take on an individualistic complexion ... anarchist communists have no intention of adopting that sort of an approach as their own." In

other words, collective expropriation must replace individualistic looting. Instead, he pointed out that the working class has its "own, free institutions, independent of the state" (such as federations of unions and co-operatives) to achieve the end of private property and that "during the revolution other collective bodies more attuned to the needs of the moment will be set up."

And this is the problem in Iraq. There has been no popular movement that created the framework of a new society while fighting the old. Rather we have people who, in the main (and so far), have not seen beyond statism and capitalism taking advantage of a break down of the state and its protection of property.

Now the Iraqi people have three choices. They can accept the rule of the US, either freely or be forced to. This seems the most likely, although it will be imposed by force upon a population which, while anti-Saddam, is also anti-US, its occupation and the wealthy, westernised Iraqi exiles it wants to rule the country. Or they fall behind some new religious/nationalist gang aiming for state power. This is less likely. Or, finally, they can start to construct their own ways of getting society back on its feet in a way that will be in their interests. This is the anarchist solution and would result in a true anarchy, a society of free and equal people co-operating together freely.

Impossible? Far from it. No society could survive without its libertarian elements, elements which often come to the fore in periods of intense struggle and change. Every struggle and revolution has seen anarchist ideas and practices develop spontaneously as people draw the obvious conclusions from their own experiences. They have seen free, self-managed, organisations develop whenever the people have freedom of initiative. The French revolution had its sections and communes, the Russian revolution its soviets

and factory committees, the Spanish revolution its unions, collectives and co-operatives. These were the bodies that turned riot into revolution, expropriating capital for the benefit of all and allowing society to be run from the bottom up (at least for a time). So in terms of what anarchism is, Iraq is not an illustration of its failure. The necessary pre-conditions do not exist. The historical examples of anarchism in practice show how very different real anarchy is.

The creation of new socialist and libertarian institutions is always a possibility. The Iraqi peoples' experiences may push them towards anarchist conclusions, the awareness that the state exists to protect the wealthy and powerful few and to disempower the many. That while it is needed to maintain class and hierarchical society, it is not needed to organise society nor can it do so in a just and fair way for all. This is possible. There is a history of Shoras (workers councils) in Iraq, so many have an example of working class self-organisation that can be applied.

Unfortunately the odds are stacked against this. The Iraqi people have had their state destroyed for them and are now subject to an occupying power. The Iraqi people would have to defend any moves towards a free society from two enemies. Firstly, the US/UK occupation forces. These have

"It is doubtful that the US and UK government's tolerance for "public disorder" in Iraq will be applied to those seeking meaningful regime change at home..."

no interest in seeing a functional grassroots democracy built from below. And, secondly, those in Iraq who seek to maintain inequality in wealth and/or power. Without a conscious anarchist presence any libertarian tendencies are likely

to be used, abused and finally destroyed by parties or religious groups seeking political power over the masses.

During these events the US occupying power has made its priorities clear. While letting essential services like hospitals and historical treasures be looted, the US army secured oil fields and defended only two government ministries (namely of Oil and of the Interior). When US officials boasted that oil production would restart soon, people across Iraq were wondering when the same would be said of their water, food and electricity supplies.

Nor should we be surprised by the fact that the US is reintroducing the old regime's police force. They did the same all across Europe and the Far East after defeating the fascists, where they replaced popular anti-fascist committees with fascist politicians and businessmen. We can expect to see the Baath state resurrected, but with new leaders at the top. And who knows, perhaps this policy of tolerating chaos and looting is part of a plan to "win hearts and minds," to get people used to the idea of a US dictatorship presiding over Saddam's police force as the alternative would be chaos?

And, lastly, it is doubtful that the US and UK government's tolerance for "public disorder" in Iraq will be applied to those seeking meaningful regime change at home. Number 10's

recognition that oppression and exploitation produces resistance will not be applied here. We will be expected to obey the state like good citizens and be punished if we step out of line. After all, we live in a democracy... ■

'Anti Terror' Crackdown in Spain

Last year, in Spain, there was a country wide campaign of repression against anarchists, especially in the city of Valencia.

The campaign had two objectives. Discrediting the squat and anarchist movements, through talk of imaginary terrorist cells and connections on the one hand, and material repression aimed at intimidation on the other. Nearly a dozen of autonomists and anarchists have been charged with terrorism during recent months. Meanwhile more than a dozen squatted social centres have been evicted, including few of the most representative ones like Casa Encantada in Galicia, Casa de las iniciativas in Andalucía and El LaboratorioIII in Madrid.

The story began with the detention of four anarchists in Valencia on charges of terrorism. The youths of between twenty and twenty-five years old, faced up to fifteen years in jail.

The story began in October 2002, after the eviction of the Malas Pulgas squatted social centre. In reprisal for the eviction, four estate agents were attacked. The activists were identified and charged with terrorist aggression. If the attack had been carried out by non political vandals, they'd have been charged with criminal damage which is not an imprisonable offence in Spain.

This caused an upsurge of anger and solidarity all over the country culminating in a demonstration of thousands on January 2003 in Valencia.

Five months after the activists were put in jail, the Audiencia Nacional¹ were

continued on page 11



Direct Action against War - the battle for Shannon Airbase

All over the world millions of people have mobilised against the war in Iraq. These mobilisations were biggest in the countries like Britain, Italy and Spain where the government supported the war but the population was against it. Southern Ireland also saw a massive demonstration on February 15th when around 10% of the capital's population marched through the city of Dublin.

The turnout on these demonstrations has been great but in reality they have had little effect on the war. The governments concerned have simply ignored them. In Ireland however anarchists promoted direct action against the war machine. Specifically action was directed at driving out the commercial airliners who had been flying tens of thousands of Gulf bound US troops through Shannon airport in the west of the country. Three of the four companies involved pulled out before the war began as a result. World Airlines, which had brought in over 8,300 U.S. soldiers, pulled out in early February. North American Airlines and Miami Airlines also announced they were quitting Shannon because of concerns about security at the airport at the end of February.

The acting head of the U.S. Embassy in Dublin, Jane Fort, blamed the "threatening" behaviour of protestors for their decision to leave: "The combination of two back-to-back incidents of real destruction would prompt any company to ask if it would put people in harm's way, people

who might be working on planes or riding on planes."

Ireland might be expected to be something of a sideshow with regard to the war. Yet because of our dependence on US capital and our geographic location on the edge of Europe we have been given an opportunity to strike a blow against war that we hope can provide real inspiration for those elsewhere.

Our economic dependence on the US (Ireland is by far the largest per capita receiver of US investment in Europe) means that we have a ruling class slavishly chained to the interests of the US government.

Our geographical location has made us relatively essential for the war effort. Official government figures revealed that some 20,000 US troops were flown through Shannon airport in the opening weeks of the year. This amounts to over 40% of the US ground troops heading for the Gulf, showing the importance of this airport in the US military supply chain.

Direct Action gets the goods

Over half a dozen successful actions have taken place at Shannon airport ranging from a large scale breach of the fence in October to physical attacks on planes as the build up to war escalated.

Shannon has long been a target of Irish anti-war movements for it has been used to refuel US military planes as far back as the Vietnam war. During the 1991 Gulf war many of us marched around Dublin demanding 'no refuelling at Shannon' - to no effect. In the years since many things have changed, not least the growth of a libertarian network and a direct action culture. "Reclaim the Streets" events have been the most visible manifestation of

this, growing in a couple of years from one hundred participants to over a thousand.

As elsewhere the questions anarchists faced was how to help organise this new movement into forms that could take effective action. A couple of years back Irish anarchists in the "Workers Solidarity Movement" (WSM) initiated the first of a series of conferences, the Grassroots Gatherings, aimed at bringing together the new groups of activists who could be described as libertarian in the broadest sense of the word. With the build up to war in Afghanistan it seemed obvious that this was the time to move from the traditional passive opposition to the refuelling of war planes at Shannon to taking direct action. At the first Grassroots Gathering it was decided to call a protest for December 15th.

About 70 people took part, far less than the 3,000 at the Dublin anti-war parade around the same time. There were no passionate speeches from politicians and only one paper seller. This was a direct action protest not a carnival. Some people infiltrated the terminal but a solid phalanx of airport police and Gardai meant that any mass entrance was impossible. It turned out that as the protest was in progress a jet loaded with US marines had landed. A protest took place outside the terminal with the outlines of bodies being drawn on the ground, slogans chanted etc. A minute's silence was observed for the dead of the war and then word filtered through that US marines were re-boarding their plane.

The protesters proceeded to the fence near the plane to let the US marines know what we thought of them and nervy airport police and Gardai became more

aggressive. Some of the barbed wire atop the fence was pulled down. One courageous soul legged it across the margins towards the plane but was tackled to the ground and arrested. There was a stand off for about 20 minutes and then we withdrew in an orderly fashion, the message given and a marker put down.

A report written shortly afterwards observed "What we could have done with 3,000 people will remain in the realms of speculation until those opposed to war realise that direct action is the way forward." This was a challenge to the other anti-war movements in Ireland as well as ourselves, one that we have yet to meet.

Demonstrations started to become regular from that point on including further demos at the terminal building and incursions onto the runway.

Pressuring the IAWM

These protests were still small, again around 70 people. The SWP controlled Irish Anti War Movement (IAWM) continued to prefer marching around Dublin to taking action at the site where the Irish state was directly aiding the US war effort. Pressure was put on the IAWM to help organise major protests at Shannon that could shut the airport for a period of time.

In October the pressure paid off when the IAWM finally organised a demonstration there. As they had greater resources over 300 people attended. However problems arose almost immediately on arrival.

Many of us thought we had agreed to hold a mass meeting at the gate to discuss tactics for the day. But when activists began to gather SWP stewards with the megaphones announced that we were going to start marching to the terminal. This resulted in bad feeling afterwards both from those who wanted direct action to happen (and would have liked a chance to organise it properly) but also from those who did not (who wanted to argue against it or at least that there should be a clear division between the two groups).

It became clear that the IAWM aimed to confine the demonstration to a very tokenistic effort to enter the terminal building and the usual speeches from the usual politicians. Meanwhile some of those who had travelled to Shannon to engage in direct action held a small meeting of their own. They decided that as we marched out of the airport they would go to the perimeter fence and start to shake it.

Some two and a half-hours after the demonstration had started we were told that as the buses were leaving soon it was time to march back down to the airport entrance. On the way back about a dozen

people crossed to the perimeter fence. When they started to shake it, the fencing rapidly fell away from the supports and within seconds a 50m section was down. The Gardai grabbed one activist standing near the fence but as they did so another jumped through the fence and entered the airfield.

After a stunned few seconds she was followed by half a dozen more and then seconds later another 20 or 30. As the Gardai took up the chase, more and more people streamed over the fence until about half the protesters had got through and the other half were watching from just behind it.

Inside the thirty or so protesters at the front made it to a point near the tarmac where a UPS plane was parked. It was decided for safety reasons not to move onto the runway and instead everyone sat down on the grass and started to chat and sing.

As more Gardai arrived they initially concentrated on stopping this group moving any further into the airfield by standing in front of us. Meanwhile other Gardai, some with dogs, concentrated on intimidating those between us and the fence into leaving the airfield. A third group of Gardai pushed a group of fifteen or so who had linked arms back to the fence.

With most of the protesters back behind the fence the Gardai then concentrated on those sitting on the grass. They grabbed a number of people from this group and threw them into vans, concentrating on

that they were going to use water cannons, but when the activists still failed to move they moved back in again.

At this stage the vans carrying the prisoners were driven off and the activists on the grass decided to head to the police station to support those arrested.

Within minutes of us arriving they started to release those arrested. They hadn't been charged but were told a file was being sent to the DPP and that charges might arise from this. Months later, after the March 1st action the cops finally decided to prosecute these people.

On the buses back to Dublin a debate was organised over events on the day. This was probably useful to clear the bad feeling that resulted in the failure to debate tactics in advance. But it also revealed some pretty deep divisions over what direct action was and how the taking of such actions could be decided. If the movement as a whole was to grow (and here I include both those involved in the IWAM and those who choose to remain outside it) then these questions need to be resolved, at least on the level of agreeing to differ.

That day was our first real success. For the first time there was a trespass at Shannon that involved dozens of people. It also revealed just how vulnerable the airport was to such tactics: there are miles of perimeter fence and it would take hundreds if not thousands of police to protect it from a large demonstration.

Tactical Questions

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"Three of the four companies involved pulled out before the war began as a result. The acting head of the U.S. Embassy in Dublin, Jane Fort, blamed the "threatening" behavior of protestors for their decision to leave: "The combination of two back-to-back incidents of real destruction would prompt any company to ask if it would put people in harm's way, people who might be working on planes or riding on planes.""

those they thought were organisers. If they hoped this would intimidate the others it failed to work, as they said they would only leave if those arrested were released.

Meanwhile on the other side of the fence a group of a dozen or so blocked the airport road, bringing traffic to a halt, and demanding the release of the prisoners. This action was actually opposed by the SWP who ordered their more eager members off the road. Inside the airfield two fire engines were brought up and the Gardai moved back a little, making out

The question of tactics was really a question of how best to stop refuelling at Shannon. Some, including many of the far-left parties, seem to think it is just a question of mobilising a large number of people to march up and down and listen to speeches. Others, including the anarchists, argue that the government will continue to ignore such mobilisations because of the depth of its alliance with imperialism. In that context what is needed is larger and larger numbers of people willing to engage in mass direct action against the war.



As it was increasingly clear that the IAWM intended to talk tough about Shannon but do nothing beyond the usual protests, those involved in the Grassroots Gathering realised there was a need to seriously organise to get more people to Shannon protests. A Grassroots Gathering meeting in Belfast resulted in the formation of the Grassroots Network Against the War which called a demonstration for December 8th.

This was successful in that 350 or so people took part. But beyond this nothing much happened - the Gathering had decided to leave it up to affinity groups to organise their own thing on the day but with a couple of exceptions these were never formed. This and a substantial police presence meant that people ended up standing around wishing something would happen but without the organisational structures needed to get things going.

Saturday 18th of January saw a second IAWM demonstration at the airport at which around 3,000 people took part. These numbers represented the first real possibility of a successful mass action but the IAWM took a position of not taking part in direct action and no real organisational efforts had been made by the "Grassroots Network Against War" (GNAW). We had hoped to meet up on the day but even this didn't work out and we proved unable to even march as a block up to the terminal.

Spontaneous Direct Action

The day was somewhat salvaged when the 'direct action' aspect of the demonstration developed spontaneously. Aer Rianta have reacted to the presence of anti-war plane

spotters at Shannon through various methods including shutting down the public viewing gallery at the Airport. At the edge of the demonstration a few people used the staircase onto the roof of the two-storey building to get a view of the crowd. The Gardai ordered them down at which point they realised they had accidentally reclaimed the viewing space.

Then some bright spark noticed that the adjoining one storey building also had a flat roof. A group went around the side, scaled a drainpipe and appeared with banners facing the front. Lots of others ran to join them. At this point four Gardai with dogs charged into the crowd who were trying to scale the pipes, the dogs bit a couple of people as they were driven back.

Those on the roof responded by dousing the cops below with milk and throwing down a lit flare. The dogs went apeshit but the crowd calmed down and backed off, many people finding others ways to climb onto the roof. The roof top protest came to a voluntary end after 30 minutes or so.

The protest was a bit scrappy but showed that more people were willing to engage in direct action to shut down Shannon. What was very much missing on the day was any real attempt to organise this sentiment and create an action in which a large number could participate.

As the crowd drifted back to the buses a second action was organised. A poorly guarded gate appeared to offer a way through onto the tarmac, near two military planes. A group of about 30 people tried to charge through the five cops at this gate. Some eight or nine made it but found themselves charging into a dead

end. When they kept going into a warehouse, they were then trapped by the police. Thinking they might be arrested, those at the gate attempted to block a Gardai van gaining access by sitting in front of it. But as it turned out they were allowed to leave without arrest after 20 minutes or so.

Striking a blow for peace

As well as the large scale protests, both individuals and small groups were planning their own actions. These were to have a very direct effect on the issue. On January 29th Mary Kelly, who had been arrested on the December 2001 demonstration at the airport, entered the airfield. She found a US Navy Boeing 737 on the runway and whacked the nose with a hatchet, putting the radar out of action (and according to the state, causing 500,000 Euros worth of damage).

In the early hours of February 1st five activists from the Catholic Worker organisation entered the airfield and began to tear up the runway. They then discovered the US military jet damaged by Mary Kelly in a hanger and smashed up the more sensitive external equipment with a hammer. Some time later the WSM received an angry email from Fort Worth in Texas which claimed to be from one of the US repair crew who had worked on the plane. It turned out they had just finished fixing up the plane the evening before the new attack took it out of commission again.

The direct actions before March 1st had been fairly minor, involving no more than 150 people. They had been organised either in secret or by small groups of friends at the protests themselves. Not

surprisingly many people felt that this was less than ideal. Some party political hacks took the opportunity to label these actions 'elitist' or bizarrely to claim that while they would support mass direct action they couldn't support these smaller actions.

Mass Direct Action

The two consecutive failures to organise ourselves seriously - and the two missed opportunities they represented - did however give us the kick up the arse we needed. Proper planning was got underway for the next demonstration. As it became obvious not only that war was imminent but that opposition was overwhelming a debate began in the GNAW about organising a mass action whose details would be publicly announced in advance. It was reckoned that it would now be possible for thousands of people to take part.

However disagreements within GNAW began to surface. The need to agree to a single plan sat unhappily with some of the groups which meant that commitment to any decision was either half-hearted or in one case withheld.

But on the morning of February 15th a meeting in advance of the 100,000 strong march that day, started to devise plans for a publicly announced direct action on March 1st.

The plan that was later agreed was simple. One group would form a line facing the fence, march over to it and attempt to tear it down. Another group would stand behind them as observers in solidarity. Full details are still online at <http://grassrootsgathering.freeservers.com/gnaw.html>

Within a day of the plan being made public two of the remaining three troop carrying airlines announced they were pulling out of Shannon citing security concerns. The small but highly effective disarming actions along with the threat of another mass trespass had obviously caused ructions amongst the companies making profits out of the war. A successful mass action at the airport on March 1st just might drive out all military traffic before the war was even underway.

Action or Excuses?

We recognised that for cynical party political reasons and straightforward control freakery some would still oppose that plan. But with war imminent, March 1st represented the last chance for such a mass action before its outbreak. We did not expect to win over the die-hard 'law and order' brigade but we did hope that those claiming to be from revolutionary organisations would recognise that this

was the moment to act (or at least not to get in the way!).

Alas that is not how things seem to be. The so called revolutionary organisations told us that the action would be 'premature'. But with war expected to formally break out only days after March 1st, the question was 'if not now, when?' There was a further range of miserable evasions that did their authors no credit. With three troop carrying airlines already gone from Shannon they asserted that such actions cannot work! They muttered darkly about state repression, soldiers with guns, armoured cars, plastic bullets and the special branch. What should we conclude from this, that we should avoid effective opposition in case a cornered state strikes back?

Worst of all perhaps was the argument that direct action will alienate people from the anti-war movements. This ignores the fact that a good part of the movement building in this country happened through the publicity following direct actions, in particular the physical attacks on planes at Shannon

A more poisonous aspect to this argument was that the direct actions would somehow stop workers in Shannon striking against refuelling. The sad truth is that while all of us would welcome such action as the most effective in stopping

airport should be made up by the state or that equivalent jobs should be created in the area.

On the other hand if the Shannon workers continue to agree with their bosses in insisting that war work is essential for jobs then where will that leave them after the war? This war is all about the same forces of corporate globalisation that are privatising and slashing airlines and ground services across Europe. Militancy and public solidarity are the only weapons Shannon workers have to defend their jobs in the long term, sacrificing both for short term gain (won at the expense of those who will die in Iraq) was no way forward.

After March the 1st GNAW activists initiated a letter signed by hundreds of Irish trade unionists to the Shannon workers asking them to take some sort of action and pledging our support if they did so. Ironically this was the first such attempt to formally engage with Shannon workers despite all the previous talk from the Trotskyists.

We knew that direct action in Shannon had worked. Each and every action catapulted refuelling into the headlines and ensured that people talked about Irish involvement in the war at work, at school and in the pub. And these were small actions. Now we were talking of an action

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refuelling there was little evidence of it being about to happen.

Some people in GNAW had been talking to Shannon workers and it was clear that there was little or no talk in support of anti-refuelling strike action. With the war just days away, to put all our eggs in the 'workers must strike' basket seemed foolish, to say the least. Particularly if it meant failing to take action that had been proved capable of driving out the troop carriers.

We did say this to the workers at Shannon: If they took strike action against the war then the mass of the population would support them. Those of us in the anti-war movements will owe them solidarity. Beyond this the vast majority who oppose the war should be open to the argument that any loss of income at the

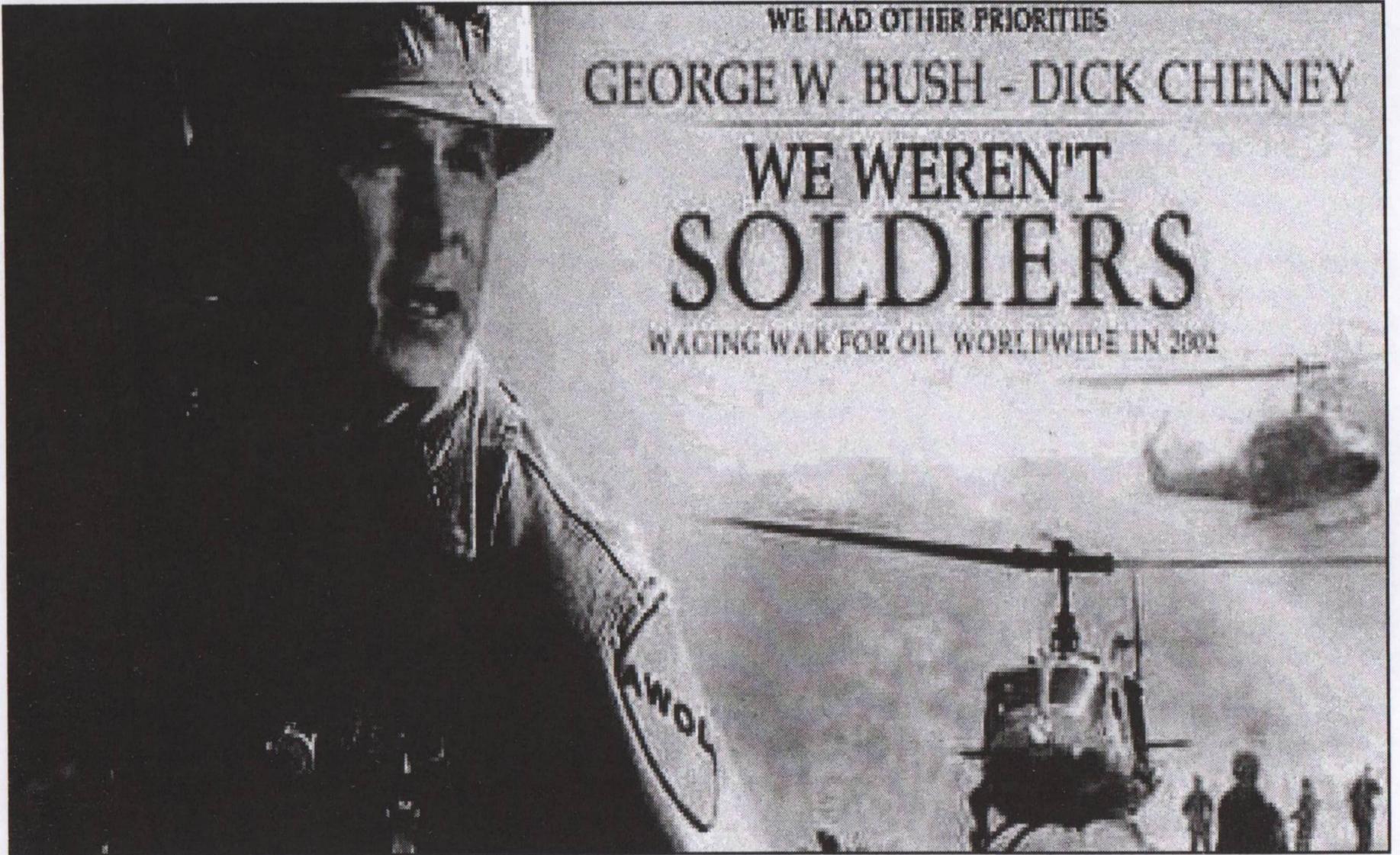
that should have involved thousands.

Media Hysteria!

In the end the March 1st direct action at Shannon failed to get onto the airfield. But it demonstrated to the anti-war movements that such an action is possible and that is a major step forward. Indeed were it not for the week of 'its going to be violent' hype from the media, the bishops and even some other sections of the anti-war movements we almost certainly would have succeeded.

A major mistake had been placing too much trust in the comprehension skills of journalists. 'Non violent action' became 'violent protest' and headlines to that effect were splashed all over the media.

Things turned to real farce when Sinn Fein, the Green Party and the Labour



WE HAD OTHER PRIORITIES

GEORGE W. BUSH - DICK CHENEY

WE WEREN'T SOLDIERS

WAGING WAR FOR OIL WORLDWIDE IN 2002

Party released press statements saying they were staying away from the protest for fear of violence. Sinn Fein's new found fear of violence would normally have had us splitting our sides. But unfortunately there was little room for humour as we knew that many people thinking of going would presume Sinn Fein 'knew something' and wonder what possible level of violence we could be planning that would frighten Sinn Fein off!

The sheer level of hysteria seems a little unbelievable now after the event. But it's a game that our opponents can only play a limited number of times. The credibility of those who added fuel to that fire is now pretty damaged - next time far fewer people are likely to be scared off.

Despite all this and the searches of coaches travelling to the protest, over 300 people decided to take part in the GNAW action. The IAWM had also decided to hold their own march there at the same time and, as agreed, we explained what we intended to do to all those at the meeting point and then left for the airport building ahead of their march.

We had expected most people with us would be joining the pink observer line rather than the white direct action line but this turned out not to be the case. At least two thirds chose to march up to the fence with the white flags.

Taking Action

At the fence were a couple of hundred Gardai waiting for us, including the riot

squad. The decision to publicly deploy the riot squad in the first line in this manner is very unusual in southern Ireland. Normally at demonstrations they are sitting in vans, out of sight, on stand by.

Arriving at the fence the agreed plan was put into action where the people carrying the white flags spaced themselves out at regular intervals and everyone else in the white line linked arms and filled in the gaps. We then slowly walked forward until we came into contact with the line of Gardai. We had hoped that at this point we would outnumber them and be able to simply walk around them. (Before the protest their senior officer had said it would be impossible to guard 7km of perimeter with 500 men but they would try their best).

Unfortunately, in the event there was pretty much one cop for each protester in the white line. Plus they had enough to spare to have a cop every 5 metres or so running up either side of us and dozens more visible inside the fence.

There was a long good-natured face off at this point. Our line up included several US citizens and Bob from Yale (Cork) who celebrated his 84th birthday this week. When the IAWM march (with around 800 on it) passed us, far from witnessing a violent fracas they were greeted by the sight of the white line doing a can can in front of a solid line of cops.

Shortly after they had passed we decided to try something different and got the whole white line moving parallel to the

fence. Surprisingly this caught the Gardai on the hop and quite a few of them just stared at us until their senior officers ordered them to follow. This meant one end of our line suddenly found they were no longer facing a wall of cops but that there was only one every 5 metres or so. Seizing the opportunity people walked up to the fence or threw crude grappling hooks to the top of the fence and started to pull it down.

In the space of a couple of seconds the fence had started to peel off from the top and cops had come charging in, rugby tackling people to the ground, grabbing the ropes and generally shoving people around.

Most of the arrests happened at this point as cops randomly grabbed people out of the crowd and threw them into vans. There were further arrests of the few who attempted to stop these vans moving off - despite the fact that a sea of cops surrounded them. But on our side at least things remained calm.

We formed up and marched back to the car park by the airport entrance where we had a short meeting, to get details of all those arrested for the legal support team. Both here and on the coach back to Dublin the overwhelming feeling was very positive.

Those arrested were taken to court that evening and released on bail. The bail conditions excluded them from the entire county of Clare (and not just the airport). In cases of barring orders to prevent wife-

beating the offender is often told to stay 500m or less away. It seems that the state values protecting warplanes way ahead of 'protecting' battered women.

The Future

Post Shannon the anti-war movements find themselves in a difficult place. The direct action proved to be a catalyst, around which all the differences simmering in the movements surfaced, often in pretty ugly forms. Now that all this is out in the open we need to start a discussion of how we overcome these problems in the future.

A few things seem essential. Firstly, we must accept that although we disagree on tactics we must unite in opposing the war. Organisations using their media contacts to attack the plans of other groups should not be repeated. All they succeeded in doing was damaging the movement as a whole and damaging their own credibility.

Secondly those who opposed the action because they believed it to be premature should now spell out how they want such actions to be planned in the future and when they think they may become appropriate. GNAW will presumably continue to insist that the time is now and that mass actions should be called in a public format so that all those attending can be aware of and discuss the consequences. As well as our own actions we should continue a dialogue with the IAWM and others aimed at building towards a mass action supported by as many sections of the anti-war movement as possible.

On March 1st it was obvious that even the few hundred of us there seriously stretched the ability of the Gardai to enforce the wishes of the government against the wishes of the Irish people. We got to the fence despite being outnumbered by police. We aimed to pull it down and failed, but only just. We came close enough to demonstrate that this sort of action can work, it just needs more people

to be willing to take part.

Two weeks into the war and it had been announced that 120,000 US reinforcements on their way to the Gulf would be using Shannon as a refuelling stop. Routine and constant harassment of plane spotters at the airport became the rule. Even small demonstrations are faced with massive police mobilisations, including the stopping and searching of coaches en route to Shannon.

Conclusions

The protests outlined above scored a major success in forcing the hidden issue of refuelling to the top of the agenda. Before this it had been an open secret, known to activists but not discussed in the media. The actions at Shannon transformed that situation. This in itself is a considerable victory - it's very hard to organise people to oppose something they are unaware of.

A vote has been forced in the Dail (the southern parliament) to enable refuelling to continue. This should effectively bury the lie of supposed Irish neutrality. It is now clear that the southern Irish state has never been neutral and has always allowed its facilities to be used by the US military in particular. This will help move the debate from the nationalist dominated terrain of 'neutrality' to the more libertarian ground of anti-militarism.

To date the direct actions have had a fairly limited impact on the war - although airlines were driven out of Shannon. The reality is that only a couple of dozen people were the core organisers of these and now over 20 have been arrested, tried (and in some cases done time) for their role. Well over a dozen are actually banned from the whole of county Clare for the next two years. And the state now takes the threat seriously enough to diffuse the sort of action that the couple of hundred we could mobilise to date can offer.

In terms of the original groups of organ-

isers and in particular the Grassroots Gathering we have succeeded both in raising the issue and demonstrating that direct action is an effective way of stopping refuelling. We now have to recognise that being able to build on this requires that we convince far, far wider forces in the anti-war movement that they also need to be willing to act.

This is not impossible. The outbreak of war has widened the acceptance of the need for more militant action. The strategies open to the rather cynical Trotskyist parties that were forever claiming to be 'for direct action, but not this action' have pretty much been exhausted. So the Irish SWP for instance has suddenly woken up to the need for 'mass civil disobedience'.

The immediate aftermath of March 1st and the outbreak of the war saw a move towards more local actions and internal work to both increase the numbers involved in GNAW and improve communication and organisation. Talks have started about calling another mass action in the future - but this time where we have much more preparation time to organise ourselves. If, as is likely, we continue to learn from the problems that have arisen we can look forward to greater success in the future.

The general model however has been shown to work. In countries where libertarian movements can claim thousands or tens of thousands of adherents it should be possible to organise similar actions on a far, far larger scale. Above all else GNAW demonstrated that if we take ourselves seriously we can move from complaining about the tokenism of the left's opposition to the war to demonstrating an alternative. A mass movement organising action against both refuelling and Anglo/US military bases in the European countries could have a very serious impact on the ability of the Bush/Blair army to wage more wars. ■

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continued from page 5

forced to drop the terrorism charges, and they were put on parole. Nearly immediately after, in February, another five anarchists were arrested by the magistrate Baltasar Garzon², in Barcelona and Almeria accused of bank attacks, again, on terrorist charges. Once more, the terrorism charges fell a few months later.

From then on the same story has been repeated many times. Most recently in Valencia, two compañeros were arrested under anti-terrorist laws charged with the destruction of private property (one bank and one crane) and a letter bomb sent to the Subdelegado del Gobierno³ in Valencia (largely responsible for the campaign of repression in Valencia).

The Anti-terrorist laws in Spain regard the destruction of public

and private property as a terrorist crime. It's only applicable when political ideas or objectives motivate the action. It is being used to charge young activists, who attack the apparatus and symbols of capitalism with terrorism. The fact that, after few months in prison, none of the activists have been found guilty of terrorism indicates a tactic (on behalf of the state) of intimidation to prevent further anarchist and autonomist direct action.

1 Audiencia Nacional: Central Judicial body in charge of judging terrorist offences.

2 Baltasar Garzon: Famous Spanish magistrate, directly responsible for the banning of several basque newspapers and political parties.

3 Subdelegado del Gobierno: Political representative of the central government in the provinces and responsible for state police bodies. ■

We are printing this article on the IWCA because it is an example of political activists acting as a catalyst for working class communities to act on their own behalf. Struggling over real problems makes a difference, whether at work or where you live. Anarchists need to be aware of what other activists are doing and learn from them.

The article does not address in detail the IWCA tactic of putting up candidates for elections. Nor does it go into the arguments for and against elections that most of us are familiar with. This is because electoralism isn't a central plank of the IWCA strategy (which is one of the reasons they actually do better) but also why we should look at their successes in reaching people no one else wants to know about. Clearly most anarchists reject electioneering as a tactic and as a contribution to this debate we will run an article in the next issue on anarchist rejection of electoralism and what we can do instead. Until then, we hope this article will provoke debate and provide an example of practical work in the community.

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In 1995 elements in Anti-Fascist Action started to look outside the physical opposition to fascism that the organisation had carried out for a decade. It was obvious to many involved that the election of the labour government would provide an opportunity for the far right to flourish. AFA had argued that the street cleaning work it was doing should have been making space for a working class alternative politics to emerge. The Independent Working Class Association (IWCA) was formed to make this happen. AFA continued to operate but suffered internal difficulties and external pressures. By 1997 a number of IWCA local groups were launched. At this time the IWCA comprised AFA activists, Red Action members but also anarchists from the anti-fascist movement. While the IWCA is perceived by many as a front for Red Action, there were anarchists openly involved and working within it. In time, AFA activity declined - it was felt that the BNP needed to be opposed politically, that whacking a few of them was not going to prevent electoral success or prevent them gaining influence amongst a wider working class. So how far has the IWCA come as a working class response to New Labour or as an alternative tactic in the fight against fascism?

Winning in the polls?

While the fascists have by no means made the same electoral gains as their counterparts in Europe the BNP has grown in size and in influence. Every electoral gain gets them national publicity in a way the Green Party can only be, well, green with envy over. On the other hand, proportionately, candidate for candidate, the IWCA have done phenomenally well. Over 10% of their candidates got elected. Well, one, in fact. Oddly this success - as well as some very close results in North and East London - has not benefited them with the

same media hype as the BNP.

But the elections are neither the most important nor the most interesting part of what the IWCA groups have been doing. Much of their work over the past few years

is extremely relevant to class struggle activists, in raising issues that need tackling, and in providing an opportunity for strengthening work that many already do.

The strength of the IWCA is its relevance to working class people in the areas where they are functioning. This is because the IWCA activists are working in their own communities. An early example of the direction that has been followed was in Newtown, Birmingham, where community activists mobilised against anti-social crime and found themselves confronting the police, racists and the local authorities as well as the muggers themselves. This was reported in Red Action 75 Autumn 1997 and is on the Red Action website. This was not the IWCA as such but the Newtown Independent Residents Association.

Community responses to anti social behaviour

Crime is one area where existing IWCA

Fighting on

Community politics & the IWCA



groups have responded to the real genuine concerns of the people around them (as opposed to fears whipped up by Crimewatch or the Daily Mail) and shown how a community response can work. The anarchist movement has produced little more than a few "anti-mugger" stickers and articles optimistically hoping for community control after "the cops fuck off". If we are serious about living without government we have to take this issue seriously now.

Harold Hill is in the borough of Havering in East London. Here local IWCA activists have helped organise meetings and set up an action group to deal with anti-social behaviour by gangs of young people. The Petersfield (an estate on Harold Hill) Action Group was set up and the IWCA organised citizens patrols along with other locals.

In groups of three or four, local people took to patrolling the streets in and around the Petersfield area. The IWCA worked along side residents patrolling

spate of garage break-ins after its patrols spent a week patrolling on the Briar Road area of the estate.

Local people who were given a small flyer which informed them the Citizens Patrol had been in the area, actually came to their front doors and thanked the IWCA for the work they were doing.

It should be stressed that the IWCA has more recently moved onto arguing that to solve the ongoing problem of anti-social behaviour then youth investment is essential. They have supported efforts by local youth and community to engage the youths not only in getting involved in a positive way on the estate, but also to lead the way in promoting issues that directly and indirectly affect young people.

And the backlash?

Predictably, the police and councillors were more concerned about "vigilantism" than about the suffering of the people on the estate. The police response has been peri-

'contravening the human rights of those implicated.' Early IWCA newsletters had covered concerns about other anti-social behaviour by a couple of residents and the failure by the Housing Association to act against them. More recently local residents have had to resist the local Housing Associations threats against "noisy street games". It is of course this street presence - along with action such as reclaiming parks used by crack dealers by using them for football and kick boxing - that allows communities to resist the police tactics of containing drug dealing, and the problems associated with the trade, on particular working class estates.

As a councillor Stuart Craft has a more obvious profile with the police (he pays their wages) but has resisted, publicly, attempts to draw him in to the system and refuses to attend meetings with the police unless they are open to Blackburn Leys Constituents.

The IWCA national website places anti-social behaviour and the idea of community restorative justice at the top of its manifesto. More usefully the local groups in Oxford and Havering have been instrumental in showing how communities can take control in this area. However as well as promoting practical responses IWCA groups have pushed other vital - though perhaps less immediately obvious - issues. In Finsbury and South Hackney, areas of central London, a central plank of IWCA activity has been resistance to gentrification and the driving out of working class people from these areas.

Resisting gentrification

Finsbury is part of the borough of Islington. After over a decade and more of council house sales, rent rises, gentrification of pubs and shops, parts of the borough are unrecognisable. However there is still a large working class community in Finsbury and in other parts of the borough. If you are in any doubt about what class hatred is - and the necessity for working class resistance - listen to local businessman and New Deal Board member David Abramovitch: "People who have lived here for 40 years are upset about it changing - but what's so wrong about change? The new businesses and people who come in are the ones who are going to bring change. The older generations will fade away, while the people who run the coffee bars and the restaurants - like it or not - will remain." (Islington Gazette - 7.3.02). He's just one businessman but he is a New Deal Board Member.

New Deal is a government scheme to put money into inner city areas. The amounts of money are large in terms of local

Home Turf

areas where groups of 30-40 youths had been causing various problems.

The patrols were at first every night, but they were so successful in reducing anti social behaviour that nightly patrols became unnecessary. Various tactics were used including taking photos and videos to unnerve those who were known to be involved in anti-social behaviour. However at all times the IWCA stressed that confrontation was not the aim of the patrols.

After the problem had reduced some local people along with the IWCA continued to hold regular patrols to monitor the situation. Local shop keepers and those most affected by the problem gave unanimous support for what had been done (and indeed had backed the setting up of the patrols at the first anti-social behaviour meeting).

The IWCA's work was constantly advertised in its local newsletter the Harold Hill Independent. This led to work being undertaken in at least five other parts of the estate and the IWCA successfully stopped a

odic ineffectual swamping of the area when budgets or elections are on the horizon. The IWCA's work has continued - working to reinforce the strength of the local community, talking to the young people involved and pushing for better leisure and youth provision. Another of the local IWCA campaigns was support for a young man who had been left in a wheel chair after an attack but had twice been refused compensation by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. He was finally successful in his appeal.

On Blackburn Leys estate in Oxford, the IWCA have a councillor, Stuart Craft. There the IWCA have been involved in action against drug dealers - publicising the addresses in public meetings and pressurising landlords to evict. You might expect the police to be grateful for the community spirit but at the time, July 2002, Inspector Gratwohl of the local Police said that residents who tried to gather their own evidence or demonstrated outside the homes of drug dealers risked

resources - £5m per year in Finsbury - though minimal in the bigger picture. Obviously the money does not come from anyone other than ourselves as taxpayers. The money is allocated by a New Deal Board. These have some locally elected members (who, it is hoped will be easily manipulated, whilst giving the appearance of community participation) and others drawn from "partners" such as the police or council and some local appointees. In Finsbury the IWCA decided to back local activists and won all the available seats - only one was contested. In a new twist for democracy the unsuccessful candidate managed to still make the board - as an appointee. A second election in early 2003 was more heavily contested - as the political parties put up front candidates but the IWCA continued to support the local activists who were ultimately successful. Getting involved in these structures is a new direction but it gave a much needed boost to a community whose needs and views have been pushed aside over the last 20 years. It didn't do the IWCA any harm either.

In Shoreditch the IWCA worked with tenant activists to fight off proposals by the New Deal board there that would have led to estate sell-offs and, instead, pushed successfully for the money to be spent on refurbishing council flats. The New Deal organisation had their own paper which, together with the council's propaganda sheet (both paid for by you and me) attacked the activists and tenants organisations who were opposing sell-offs. The IWCA countered by distributing their own paper amongst local people. The New Deal realised the strength of opposition and tried to put forward a "preferred option" of demolishing 20% of council housing in the area. But when 100 angry tenants turned up at the board meeting they backed down. The New Deal was not intended to involve local people - the hope was that local representation would be tame, unrepresentative or easily outmanoeuvred. In Finsbury and Shoreditch the IWCA have helped people mobilise to take some degree of control.

Council housing sell-offs

Harwood Court is a rundown block on prime land that the council had been running down for some years. It was targeted for demolition. Working with the Tenants Association the IWCA talked to virtually all the tenants and established that rather than be moved out they simply wanted the repairs, services and security they are entitled to. Meetings were held and 90% of tenants signed a petition to the New Deal board making it very difficult

to say that demolition was acceptable to them, and work has now started on some improvements.

Estate sell-offs is a major issue for both Hackney and Islington IWCA. As the prospect of blatant privatisation has become less welcome on the estates, the idea of Arms Length Management Organisations is being pushed. These are clearly bad for any real tenant control and also for the council's workforce. Given that most people who live on council estates will have a jaundiced view of the council's ability to run housing effectively, it is important that tenants realise what is going on. For those of you who don't understand ALMOs check <http://www.iwca-islington.org.uk/homepage.htm#almo> where Islington IWCA have helpfully posted a Centre for Public Services report on ALMOs. More immediately, IWCA in Hackney were alerted to a "consultation" meeting where tenants on one estate were being asked if they favoured a private landlord or an ALMO. 40 tenants made it to the meeting - waving the IWCA leaflet demanding "Option 3" (the one they hadn't been offered.)

Given what is happening in South Hackney it is no surprise that a major part of the IWCA's work there has been over housing. It has given them good contacts with tenants associations and respect and appreciation from the tenants themselves. This converted into a close second at the last local elections in the ward where they stood.

Local campaigns

One of the key features of the IWCA's work is the sheer hard work they put in. In Shoreditch a small group distributes 15,000 newsletters across estates - fortunately they now have contacts on many estates who will help out with this. However they also spend a lot of time talking to tenants about what issues concern them. Hackney IWCA carried out a survey - knocking on people's doors and asking them what they thought the important issues were... and since then have taken these issues up. A novel approach for any political organisation or movement - including - sadly, many of our own.

The action these issues have led to have not always been massively successful. An idea for promoting better street lighting, hassling the council to mend lights in areas where people felt unsafe did not get lots of people involved - though the lights in question were mended.

The IWCA's contacts made their involvement in a campaign to stop the closure of Laburnam School (in South Hackney) useful. Long-term contact made it easier to

draw links between this, the closure of a local swimming pool, threats to a one o'clock club and the overall move to exclude ordinary people from the area. They felt they could point to the bigger picture - of how the local authorities work with the City and how gentrification affects these decisions.

Other initiatives include Islington IWCA's support for a campaign by a family whose son, Christopher Pullen, had been killed when a steel door left on his estate fell on him while he was playing. Neither the council nor the Health and Safety Executive had taken their responsibility for this incident seriously. The campaign has centred around supporting his mother's attempts to see the authorities brought to account. Now the HSE are facing a judicial review of their failure to act. With luck this cannot now be swept under the carpet.

Hackney IWCA took on the cases of individual tenants facing eviction when they fell into arrears when their housing benefit was being mismanaged by the private firm IT net - at a time when due to cuts to the local advice centre many found it hard to get any representation or advice.

"The IWCA in Hackney were alerted to a "consultation" meeting where tenants on one estate were being asked if they favoured a private landlord or an ALMO. Forty tenants made it to the meeting - waving the IWCA leaflet demanding "Option 3" (the one they hadn't been offered)."

More happily Hackney IWCA organise film shows in tenant's halls for children. Inspired by Blackburn Leys children's film club, these have been well attended. They showed Harry Potter which reflected the wishes of the children rather than the ideology of the local IWCA.

The lessons for anarchists

There is no compatible anarchist organisation doing the same sort of work. Only Haringey Solidarity Group has had the same level of involvement with community politics in recent times. However many anarchists are involved with Tenant's Associations, anti council sell off campaigns, local initiatives on saving schools, libraries or other resources, usually on a fairly individual basis. All too often, when one campaign ends that's it. Some contacts or friendships are made but the impetus is lost. However the IWCA approach is to support these initiatives as well as providing a political perspective and some longer term sustainability. I think the approach of asking people what they want, what concerns them, is key to this. Some left wing militants are often

seen as "parachuting in" - even when they have lived or worked in a community for many years. This is because ultimately their agenda is from outside that community.

On 28 July the IWCA moved on from their "pilot projects" and re-launched as a national organisation - with a website and manifesto. There aren't lots of local groups as yet - it certainly does not have the same national coverage as AFA even at its lowest ebb. They intend to stand a candidate in the London Mayoral elections. This is obviously quite a gamble - their electoral success in Oxford and respectable showings elsewhere have come as a result of consistent intelligent hard work by local activists. At present they do not have the numbers - or the time - to have the same sort of impact across London.

Many anarchists may feel uneasy about the IWCA's standing in elections - particularly for the London mayor. This article is not going to rerun arguments about elections or representation. However, even if they stood for Parliament, it would not write off the work that they have done in promoting working class self-activity and

strengthening the idea and the practicality of working class resistance. Equally there are issues where their manifesto is totally silent - such as work place organisation. However the point is that what they are doing they have shown themselves good at.

The sort of work the IWCA do is not "sexy" for some activists. This is not a bad thing. Firstly we need to ask why some activists describe political activity as "sexy" anyway. Secondly I think we are starting to see how unsustainable the "sexy" activist protest politics of the last few years has become. If there is to be any effective resistance to the state it has to be sustainable. The IWCA are not writing off direct action or confrontation but neither are they making promises they can't keep or threats they can't back up. In areas where there are IWCA groups it makes sense to work with them at whatever level works. What they are doing and promoting comes down to necessary self-defence. We have the same interests. ■

IWCA, BM 1734, London, WC1N 3XX

The billboard pictured below advertising appartments in Hackney (whilst pretending to be in Islington!) reads "A stunning landmark development capturing the Islington lifestyle with Armani suited concierge, air conditioned gymnasium and private secure parking"



MAYDAY - WHERE

NOW?



Once again this year direct action orientated, largely anarchist, protests on Mayday, unsanctioned by the state, made headline news, especially in London. So routine has this become that it is difficult to remember that it was only in 1999 that the process of reclaiming Mayday began.

Mayday has become the one time in the year when anarchism, or more pointedly anarchists, receive widespread coverage of their activities. That of course is a part of the problem. Another is that much of the attention is negative, portraying us as largely violent hooligans, not least in articles written by those employed to recuperate our ideas (liberals such as Vidal and Monbiot for instance). Yet in the years 2000 to 2002, despite the negative coverage and the state's disinformation, our activities received a large degree of support. This resulted in significant numbers turning out to clearly anti-capitalist and anti-state protests. It also led to a massive overreaction from the cops, media and politicians. Radio chat shows, phone-ins and newspaper letter columns were filled with supportive comments from the wider population. All this seemed to reflect the growing disenchantment of people with the formal political process and its media spin-doctors.

This year saw more of the same, but on a much lesser scale. This partly reflected the concerns of the state and ruling class in the face of the massive anti-war protests and a slight increase in workers struggles, hence the need to play down protests (as evidenced by the non-reporting of many anti-war direct actions, and the offensive against the fire-fighters). It also reflected the fact that this year the media had far more important matters to concern themselves with, such as the war on Iraq. At the same time the demonisation of Mayday protests was much sharper and focused, potential participants were

referred to from the outset as rioters, and the events as riots, despite the fact that none of the previous Mayday protests resulted in a single prosecution for riot. Indeed the level of violence and damage caused over the previous years has been no greater than a typical Saturday night in central London, and has certainly never approached the level of, say, Millwall's last home game of the 2001/2 football season. Bizarrely, and probably unconsciously, the media picked up on the fact that people opposed the war on Iraq precisely because they oppose senseless violence, suffering and destruction. So in a twisted and hypocritical way they portrayed the Mayday protests as likely to result in exactly that.

Meanwhile, the London Mayday Collective operated off a very short organisational run in to the day. Given the intense level of anti-war activity this was unavoidable, although the failure to publicise the initial meetings was not. The Collective, correctly in our view, focused its activities on this capitalist war, and on two of the engines of capitalism driving the pursuit of war – the arms and oil industries. It gambled on the recent anti-war anger fuelling much greater dissent on Mayday. Sadly this was a miscalculation, so whilst the column inches of negative media was less this year, so was the positive response to it, and so was the turnout on the day.

Within the movement we can discern four main responses to Mayday. The first is localism. The argument here is that we should do something in 'our community' rather than in central London. Leaving to one side the question of whether there can be said to be any community under the rule of capital, we see no contradiction between ongoing local activity and participation in occasional mass actions. There are many who have had no difficulty combining the two.

The second objection is that the Mayday event is not focused on class struggle. In this view class struggle is seen to be exclusively strikes and workplace activity and,

when you scratch the surface, all too often reveals a belief that trade unions are the organisations of the working class. Logically therefore we should attend the trade union march. As revolutionaries, we reject the idea that the unions represent the class, what they actually represent is a layer of labour bureaucracy. The trade union march is as irrelevant as it was five years ago and - alongside the Countryside Alliance march - it remains the only demonstration promoted by the state. We support the idea in principle that there should be a revolutionary Mayday event as an alternative to the reformist march.

A third strand is to view Mayday as a pointless (or at least ill-thought out) one-off confrontation with the state, on their territory playing into their hands, which to a degree it was. The counterpoint to this is the need to 'do something now'. After all London Mayday brought 3-4000 protesters out, at numerous actions, taking our opposition to the front doors of the ruling capitalist class, saying fuck you despite the threats. It is this last point of view that held sway within the Collective for the last two years, with the result that discussion of the political and even strategic aims of Mayday are pushed firmly into the background whilst consideration is given only to immediate tactical concerns.

As supporters of Mayday actions, we back the view that Mayday is both an important day to celebrate historical working class struggles, as well as a focus for expressing our solidarity and desires in the here and now. There does however need to be a much wider debate on the politics we seek to put forward, the strategic aims of our movement and in how we combine this in action. In this sense, Mayday cannot be seen in isolation, but rather as symptomatic of the problems facing the anti-capitalist movement as a whole.

It has been suggested that the working class doesn't want to protest on Mayday, but more likely is the fact that most proletarians don't see it as a high enough priority compared to other pressures on their

time. Despite the lengthy (but off-on and mostly top-down controlled) fire-fighters dispute, class struggle remains at a low level. Equally, after months of anti-war and other protests, many protesters were worn out, and many more dispirited given the failure to stop the war and its disastrous outcomes. Amidst the post-war chaos and destruction, it is easy to forget the many positive aspects of the anti-war struggle, not least the re-emergence of young people on to the political battleground.

However in retrospect, it is not surprising that the likelihood of spending a day being chased and penned in, and possibly battered and arrested by cops in central London, doesn't look very enticing. Either way, that is no reason to stop marking such an important day in working class history. However, after five years of anti-capitalist, largely anarchist, attempts to reclaim Mayday, clearly we are at a point where we need to stop and think about both the validity of the protests and the way we organise them (or rather why so few anarchists and anti-state communists do actually organise them).

Back in 1999, the first of the modern day alternative London Mayday protests was organised by individuals from two groups, Reclaim the Streets and West London Anarchists & Radicals. The initiative was influenced by three main objectives. Firstly, with the emergence of the anti-capitalist movement, they sought to orientate it more closely to class struggle politics by linking in to current struggles (i.e. the tube workers) and by celebrating the episode of working class history that is Mayday. Secondly, bored with the tedious A to B march of the traditional lefty dominated trade union event, they sought to harness the imagination and creativity of the new layers of protesters to create an event that would be both effective, fun, and appealing to others. The third objective, which was better reflected in Mayday 2000 (and previously at Bradford in 1998), was to bring together the various anarchist, direct action and anti-capitalist groups in creating an event that was ours, that was not just a reaction to the latest attacks by the ruling class, but that happened on our terms at a time and place of our choosing.

There is no doubt that, to date, 2000 represented a highpoint in the various individuals, groups and federations working together. Since then this collective working has fallen away again, and not just around Mayday, although we hope this will change, and we believe the changes at Freedom are a sign of the start of this. There are many reasons, probably a books worth, but here's a brief summary. Mayday 2000 was originally to be called 'A Festival

of Anarchist Ideas and Action', but following a tense London Mayday Collective meeting 'anti-capitalist' was substituted for 'anarchist'. This was grudgingly accepted at the time by many of the class struggle anarchists involved (and doing much of the donkeywork), but others believed that the change of emphasis was worth it in the interests of inclusivity and broadening the movement. Certainly, it would have been impossible otherwise to achieve anything on the scale of 2000 (critical mass, historical walk, two day conference, day of action, and more) and also that the actions themselves in confronting the state and ruling class head on were in any case worthwhile.

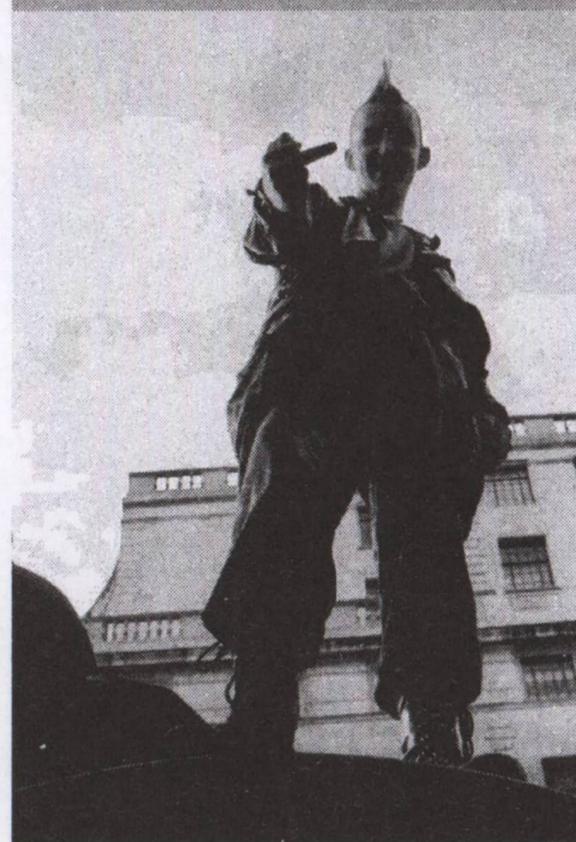
What could not have been foreseen was the intense level of state and media interest. The conference, which took place under police surveillance, was in retrospect quite extraordinary. Some of those involved felt the heat more intensely than others as the state began their failed attempts to seek out informers. The media interest, and more importantly the misrepresentation of our ideas and our inability to respond effectively to this, caused many to question the validity of an event which seemed to spiral out of our control, although some were happy to surf the media wave whilst becoming increasingly detached from the Collective.

Unfortunately subsequently many of those of both sides of the debate distanced themselves from the annual reconvening of the London Mayday Collective, with only some individuals and not their groups remaining formally involved in the planning process, although many still turned up on subsequent Maydays. Many class struggle anarchists used the liberalisation of Mayday 2000 as an excuse not to be involved, but this has simply led to their isolation from the wider movement. The decline of Reclaim the Streets has also been a major factor.

In retrospect, we do see the liberalisation of 2000 as a lost opportunity for the class struggle revolutionary movement. Political differences were underestimated and there was a subsequent lack of honesty in addressing them. Indeed, it is noticeable that the 'Reflections' pamphlet published after the event contained almost exclusively articles on 'What I did on Mayday', rather than generate any debate. Factionalism, particularly prevalent in London, has played a part, as has the inherent defensiveness of various groups and federations to criticism and change. Additionally, the temporary nature of much of the movement, especially in London, its tendency towards lifestylism, added to its lack of basic agreement and adherence to class



"As supporters of Mayday actions, we back the view that Mayday is both an important day to celebrate historical working class struggles, as well as a focus for expressing our solidarity and desires in the here and now."



struggle politics (even lack of politics), has proved to be an ongoing barrier to greater cohesiveness across the movement, or movements.

As a result, and as well as the intense activity of many activists in anti-war and other work, the 2003 London Mayday Collective was not only smaller, but represented a much narrower section of the movement. From the outset there was a lack of political discussion, with many activists seemingly content to accept that there is broad agreement, but this led to many disagreements being papered over. While true that time was short, this became used as an excuse to avoid addressing this state of affairs. On the one hand, many seem to have only the vaguest critique of capitalist social relations and are consequently unwilling to subject this to further critique. Others, no doubt aware of the fragile unity that exists within the movement, do not press the issue. Again this is symptomatic of the wider problems we face. A further problem stemmed from the lack of structure. Whilst agreements appeared to have been reached and decisions taken at Collective meetings, many were overturned in subgroups or, worst of all, in informal groups outside of the decision making process. This led to the main debates, including the imagery and wording of the propaganda (which we will discuss later) or indeed the actions themselves being conducted by email, a useless medium for collective decision-making. Whilst there is no doubt that this was in part due to a lack of activists with time on their hands and the skills to do what was needed, resulting in a concentration of tasks and decisions on a very few people - and 'leadership' by default - this is not the whole story.

Another reason for the narrowing of the Collective in subsequent years could be a growing perception of Mayday (among other big "days" out) with a failure of its aspirations. Rather than acting as a hub to co-ordinate imaginative and inspirational alternatives to capitalism, using direct action; the actions selected to embark upon have ended up being dictated by the cops. While the police have been perfecting the methods of public order crowd control in recent years, we have so far been unable to respond to these restrictions. Instead we continue to employ similar tactics to the ones that might have worked in blocking a street for a party six years ago, but have been made redundant by this new reality. Moreover, we have failed to adequately think our way around being part of a small crowd that's going nowhere fast.

It's difficult to see what can be done here, other than not get into the situation in

"So where next for Mayday? We believe it is not sustainable in its present form, although we remain committed to its original objectives, just as we remain committed to the long-term revolutionary objective of smashing capitalism for a world of peace and freedom"

.....
the first place! But this fails to answer our predicament. As we have seen over the last three years on Mayday, once contained, the primary focus shifts, becoming instead a running battle trying to outwit the cops, occasionally ending up in fisty cuffs. For some, this does not necessarily present a problem, as rucking with the cops ends up becoming a yardstick for success in itself, a result. But it is an inadequate response, both tactically and in terms of our numerical strength. And it is not sustainable. For others, there is a different experience of Mayday. One that is characterised by boredom, frustration and not being in control of events. Feelings that sum up and enforce much of our daily experience of life within capitalism. Not the kind of objective for Mayday we set out months before to plan and facilitate, surely?

The lesson here seems clear: if the police are able to manage the outcome of our events, it's time to rethink the form of event to begin with, whom we wish to engage with, and how we wish to engage with them.

Which brings us to the propaganda, which was such as it was. We feel that little attempt was made to explain the politics of the event or to inject any revolutionary perspective by way of leaflet or paper. The imagery focused on the 'black bloc' (never a significant part of the UK scene), with pictures of masked up young men in macho poses. There was none of the ambiguity of previous years, no sense of fun and playfulness. Some comrades independently produced a leaflet aimed at explaining the roots of the event and the ongoing tradition of class solidarity. This was well received by passers by on the day, many of whom were naturally curious. It is a shame that the Collective as a whole did not consider such a leaflet a necessary priority.

Of the prop that was produced by the Collective (a map with targets across central London), despite the dusting over of situationist-derived language, we were encouraged to reproduce the kind of alienated political practice that would have Debord turning in his grave. Without a

trace of irony the "hardcore" radical staring out from the stickers and map served only to reinforce the separation of political action into something that should only be carried out by the specialists.

Yet despite all this, we still believe the Mayday actions to have been worthwhile, and a relative success, and despite our disagreements we acknowledge the commitment and courage under fire of those involved.

So where next for Mayday? We believe it is not sustainable in its present form, although we remain committed to its original objectives, just as we remain committed to the long-term revolutionary objective of smashing capitalism for a world of peace and freedom. Arguments about Mayday reflect many of the problems facing revolutionaries, and are sharpened by the present worldwide conflicts and attacks of the ruling class. If Mayday is to continue it needs to be more than an ad hoc collection of individuals, brought together through informal networks and occasional email invites to meetings (and we are guilty of this failing as much as anyone else). It will need to be adopted as an objective by the wider movement with a clearer political basis and tactical focus. That means hard work - networking, discussing, honesty - and a breaking down of factional barriers to open up the process.

If it continues in its present form, we foresee numbers continuing to fall away from future organising collectives, if there is no room to reconcile difference, diversity and the "i" word: inclusivity. We think it is possible both to maintain a libertarian and revolutionary base, whilst allowing for different perspectives. Difficult granted, but possible we think and moreover, absolutely necessary.

In looking forward it is essential that everyone concerned in the process next time do not ignore the need to clarify our objectives:

1. What we want to achieve?
2. How do we intend to achieve it?
3. How do these objectives get communicated? - assuming we are looking for wider endorsement and attendance at a future mayday event.

Before winding itself up, the London Mayday Collective held a post-Mayday debrief, that also looked forwards. There will be a number of meetings towards the end of this year to discuss Mayday 2004, starting at the Anarchist Bookfair. There now needs to be a wide debate on the content of Mayday, bearing in mind that it does not fall on a working day for the next three years. Perhaps the time has come to reclaim Mayday again. ■



Strange Defeat

In the spectacular arena of current events recognized as "news," the funeral of social democracy in Chile has been orchestrated as high drama by those who understand the rise and fall of governments most intuitively: other specialists of power. The last scenes in the Chilean script have been written in various political camps in accordance with the requirements of particular ideologies. Some have come to bury Allende, some to praise him. Still others claim an *ex post facto* knowledge of his errors. Whatever the sentiments expressed, these obituaries have been written long in advance. The organizers of "public opinion" can only react reflexively and with a characteristic distortion of the events themselves.

- the Chilean Revolution 1973

By the situationist group Pointblank in 1973 - in a rare libertarian analysis of the period.

I
As the respective blocs of world opinion "choose sides," the Chilean tragedy is reproduced as farce on an international scale; the class struggles in Chile are dissimulated as a pseudo-conflict between rival ideologies. In the discussions of ideology nothing will be heard from those for whom the "socialism" of the Allende regime was supposedly intended: the Chilean workers and peasants. Their silence has been ensured not only by those who machine-gunned them in their facto-

ries, fields, and houses, but by those who claimed (and continue to claim) to represent their "interests." In spite of a thousand misrepresentations, however, the forces that were involved in the "Chilean experiment" have not yet played themselves out. Their real content will be established only when the forms of their interpretation have been demystified.

Above all else, Chile has fascinated the so-called Left in every country. And in documenting the atrocities of the current junta, each party and sect attempts to conceal

the stupidities of its previous analyses. From the bureaucrats-in-power in Moscow, Peking, and Havana to the bureaucrats-in-exile of the Trotskyist movements, a liturgical chorus of leftist pretenders offer their post-mortem assessments of Chile, with conclusions as predictable as their rhetoric. The differences between them are only ones of hierarchical nuance; they share a Leninist terminology which expresses 50 years of counterrevolution throughout the world.

The Stalinist parties of the West and the "socialist" states quite rightly view the defeat of Allende as their defeat: he was one of their own - a man of State. With the false logic which is an essential mechanism of their power, those who know so much about State and (the defeat of) Revolution decry the overthrow of a constitutional, bourgeois regime. For their part, the "left" importers of Trotskyism and Maoism can only lament the absence of a 'vanguard party' - the *deus ex machina* of senile Bolshevism - in Chile. Those who have inherited the defeat of revolutionary Kronstadt and Shanghai know whereof they speak: the Leninist project requires the absolute imposition of a deformed "class consciousness" (the consciousness of a bureaucratic ruling class) upon those who in their designs are only "the masses."

The dimensions of the "Chilean Revolution" lie outside the constraints of any particular doctrine. While the "anti-imperialists" of the world denounce - from a safe distance - the all-too-convenient bogeyman of the CIA, the real reasons for the defeat of the Chilean proletariat must be sought elsewhere. Allende the martyr was the same Allende who disarmed the workers' militias of Santiago and Valparaiso in the weeks before the coup and left them defenseless before the military whose officers were already in his cabinet. These actions cannot simply be explained as "class-collaboration" or as a "sellout." The conditions for the strange defeat of the Unidad Popular were prepared long in advance. The social contradictions that emerged in the streets and fields of Chile during August and September were not simply divisions between "Left" and "Right" but involved a contradiction between the Chilean proletariat and the politicians of all parties, including those that posed as the most "revolutionary." In an "underdeveloped" country, a highly developed class struggle had arisen which threatened the positions of all those who wished to maintain underdevelopment, whether economically through continued imperialist domination, or politically through the retardation of an authentic proletarian power in Chile.

Everywhere, the expansion of capital creates its apparent opposite in the form of nationalist movements which seek to appropriate the means of production "on behalf" of the exploited and thereby appropriate social and political power for themselves. Imperialism's extraction of surplus has its political and social consequences, not only in enforced poverty of those who must become its workers, but in the secondary role allotted to the local bourgeoisie, which is incapable of establishing its complete hegemony over society. It is precisely this vacuum which the "national liberation" movements seek to occupy, thereby assuming the managerial role unfulfilled by the dependent bourgeoisie. This process has taken many forms - from the religious xenophobia of Khadafi to the bureaucratic religion of Mao - but in each instance, the marching orders of "anti-imperialism" are the same, and those who give them are in identical positions of command.

The imperialist distortion of the Chilean economy provided an opening for a

urban proletariat which emerged as the most important class and one with revolutionary aspirations. In Chile, both Christian and Social Democrats were to prove to be the opponents of any radical solution to existing problems.

Until the advent of the UP coalition, the contradictions on the Chilean Left between a radical base of workers and peasants and its so-called political "representatives" remained to a large extent latent antagonisms. The leftist parties were able to organize a popular movement solely on the basis of the foreign threat posed by American capital. The Communists and Socialists were able to sustain their image as authentic nationalists under Christian Democratic rule because Frei's "Chileanization" program (which included a policy of agrarian reform that Allende was later to consciously emulate) was explicitly connected to the American-sponsored "Alliance for Progress." The official Left was able to construct its own alliance within Chile in opposing, not reformism itself, but a reformism with external ties. Even given its moderate nature, the opposition program of the Chilean Left was only

affirm its autonomy left it open to the manipulations of the politicians. Despite this, the battle between reform and revolution was far from having been decided.

The election of the freemason Allende, although it in no way meant that the workers and peasants had established their own power, nonetheless intensified the class struggle occurring throughout Chile. Contrary to the UP's assertions that the working class had won a major "victory," both the proletariat and its enemies were to continue their battle outside conventional parliamentary channels. Although Allende constantly assured the workers that they were both engaged in a "common struggle," he revealed the true nature of his socialism-by-decree at the beginning of his tenure when he signed the Estatuto, which formally guaranteed that he would faithfully respect the bourgeois constitution. Having come to power on the basis of a "radical" program, the UP was to come into conflict with a growing revolutionary current at its base. When the Chilean proletariat showed that



popular movement which aimed at establishing a national capital base. However, Chile's relatively advanced economic status precluded the kind of bureaucratic development which has come to power by force of arms in other areas of the "Third World" (a term which has been used to conceal the real class divisions in those countries). The fact that the "progressive" Unidad Popular was able to achieve an electoral victory as a reformist coalition was a reflection of the peculiar social structure in Chile, which was in many respects similar to those in advanced capitalist countries. At the same time, capitalist industrialization created the conditions for the possible supersession of this bureaucratic alternative in the form of a rural and

adopted after the militant strike activity of the 1960s - organized independently of the parties - threatened the existence of the Frei regime.

The succeeding UP was to move into a space opened up by the radical actions of the Chilean workers and peasants; it imposed itself as an institutionalized representation of proletarian causes to the extent that it was able to recuperate them. In spite of the extremely radical nature of many of the earlier strike actions (which included factory occupations and the workers' administration of several industrial plants, most notably at COOTRALACO), the practice of the Chilean proletariat lacked a corresponding theoretical or organizational expression, and this failure to

it was prepared to take the slogans of the UP program literally - slogans that amounted only to empty rhetoric and unfulfilled promises on the part of the bureaucratic coalition - and put them into practice, the contradictions between the content and form of the Chilean revolution became apparent. The workers and peasants of Chile were beginning to speak and act for themselves.

For all his "Marxism," Allende was never more than an administrator of state intervention in a capitalist economy. Allende's etatism - a form of state capitalism that has accompanied the rise of all administrators of underdevelopment - was itself not more than a quantitative extension of Christian Democratic policies. In national-

izing the copper mines and other industrial sectors, Allende continued the centralization initiated under the control of the Chilean state apparatus—a centralization initiated by the Left's "archenemy" Frei. Allende, in fact, was forced into nationalizing certain concerns because they had been spontaneously occupied by their workers. In forestalling the workers' self-management of industry by defusing

sentation to impose itself on the realities of the Chilean class struggle. This role was assumed by the Guevarist militants of the MIR [Left Revolutionary Movement] and its rural counterpart, the MCR, both of which succeeded in recuperating many of the radical achievements of the workers and peasants. The Miristas slogan of "armed struggle" and their obligatory refusal of electoral politics were merely pro forma

Cordones industriales, which controlled and coordinated the distribution of products and organized armed defense against the employers, were formed in the factory complexes. Unlike the "popular assemblies" promised by the UP, which only existed on paper, the cordones were set up by the workers themselves. In their structure and functioning, these committees—along with the rural consejos—were the first manifestations of a councilist tendency and as such constituted the most important contribution to the development of a revolutionary situation in Chile.

A similar situation existed in the neighborhoods, where the inefficient, government-controlled "supply boards" (JAPs) were bypassed in the proclamations of "self-governing neighborhoods" and the organization of commandos comunales by the residents. Despite their infiltration by the fidelistas of MIR, these armed expropriations of social space formed the point of departure for an authentic proletarian power. For the first time, people who had previously been excluded from participation in social life were able to make decisions concerning the most basic realities of their daily lives. The men, women, and youth of the poblaciones discovered that revolution was not a matter for the ballot box; whatever the quarters were called—New Havana, Heroic Vietnam—what went on inside them had nothing to do with the alienated landscapes of their namesakes.

Although the achievements that were realized by popular initiative were considerable, a third force capable of posing a revolutionary alternative to the government and the reactionaries never fully emerged. The workers and peasants failed to extend their conquests to the point of replacing the Allende regime with their own power. Their supposed "ally," the MIR, used its talk of opposing burocratismo with the "armed masses" as a mask for its own intrigues. In its Leninist scheme, the cordones were seen as "forms of struggle" that would prepare the way for future, less "restricted" organizational models, whose leadership would be supplied by the MIR, no doubt.

For all its concern over the right-wing plots that menaced its existence, the government restrained the workers from taking positive action to resolve the class struggle in Chile. In so doing, the initiative passed from the workers' hands into the government's, and in allowing itself to be out-manuevered, the Chilean proletariat paved the way for its future defeat. In response to Allende's pleas after the abortive coup of June 29, the workers occupied additional factories, only to close ranks behind the forces that would disarm

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"After the bosses' strike in October 1972, the workers did not wait for the UP to intervene, but actively occupied the factories and started up production on their own, without state or trade union "assistance." Cordones Industriales, which controlled and coordinated the distribution of products and organized armed defense against the employers, were formed in the factory complexes."

these occupations, Allende actively opposed the establishment of socialist relations of production. As a result of his actions, the Chilean workers only exchanged one set of bosses for another: the government bureaucracy, instead of Kennecott or Anaconda, directed their alienated labor. This change in appearances could not conceal the fact that Chilean capitalism was perpetuating itself. From the profits extracted by multinational corporations to the "five-year plans" of international Stalinism, the accumulation of capital is an accumulation always made at the expense of the proletariat.

That governments and social revolutions have nothing in common was demonstrated in rural areas as well. In contrast to the bureaucratic administration of "agrarian reform" which was inherited and continued by the Allende regime, the spontaneous armed seizures of large estates offered a revolutionary answer to the "land question." For all the efforts of the CORA (the central agrarian reform agency) to prevent these expropriations through the mediation of "peasant cooperatives" (asentamientos), the peasants' direct action went beyond such illusory forms of "participation." Many of the fundo takeovers were legitimized by the government only after pressure from the campesinos made it impossible to do otherwise. Recognizing that such actions called into question its own authority as well as that of the landowners, the UP never missed an opportunity to denounce "indiscriminate" expropriations and to call for a "slow-down."

The autonomous actions of the rural and urban proletariat formed the basis for the development of a movement significantly to the left of the Allende government. At the same time, this movement provided yet another occasion for a political repre-

sentation: shortly after the 1970 election, an elite corps of the ex-urban guerrillas of MIR became Allende's personally selected palace guard. The ties that bound the MIR-MCR to the UP went beyond purely tactical considerations—both had common interests to defend. Despite MIR's revolutionary posturing, it acted according to the UP's bureaucratic exigencies: whenever the government was in trouble, the adjutants of MIR would rally its militants around the UP banner. If the MIR failed to be the "vanguard" of the Chilean proletariat, it was not because it wasn't enough of a vanguard, but because its strategy was resisted by those whom it tried to manipulate.

IV

Right-wing activity in Chile increased, not in response to any governmental decrees, but because of the direct threat posed by the independence of the proletariat. In the face of mounting economic difficulties, the UP could only talk of "rightist sabotage" and the obstinacy of a "workers' aristocracy." For all the impotent denunciations of the government, these "difficulties" were social problems that could only be solved in a radical way through the establishment of a revolutionary power in Chile. In spite of its claim to "defend the rights of the workers," the Allende government proved to be an impotent bystander in the class struggle unfolding outside of formal political structures. It was the workers and peasants themselves who took the initiative against the reaction and in so doing created new and radical forms of social organization, forms which expressed a highly-developed class consciousness. After the bosses' strike in October 1972, the workers did not wait for the UP to intervene, but actively occupied the factories and started up production on their own, without state or trade union "assistance."

them a month later. These occupations remained defined by the UP and its intermediaries in the national trade union, the CUT, who kept the workers isolated from each other by barricading them inside the factories. In such a situation, the proletariat was powerless to carry on any independent struggle, and once the Weapons Act had been signed, its fate was sealed. Like the Spanish Republicans who denied arms to the anarchist militias on the Aragon front, Allende was not prepared to tolerate the existence of an armed proletarian force outside his own regime. All the conspiracies of the Right would not have lasted a day if the Chilean workers and peasants had been armed and had organized their own militias. Although the MIR protested against the entry of the military into the government, they, like their predecessors in Uruguay, the Tupamaros, only talked of arming the workers and had little to do with the resistance that took place. The workers' slogan, "A disarmed people is a defeated people" was to find its bitter truth in the slaughter of workers and peasants that followed the military coup.

Allende was overthrown, not because of his reforms, but because he was unable to control the revolutionary movement which spontaneously developed at the base of the UP. The junta which installed itself in his position clearly perceived the threat of revolution and set about eliminating it with all the means at its disposal. It was no accident that the strongest resistance to the dictatorship occurred in those areas where the power of the workers had advanced the furthest. In the Sumar Textile Plant and in Concepcion, for instance, the junta was forced to liquidate this power by means of air strikes. As a result of Allende's policies, the military was able to have a freehand in finishing what it had begun under the UP government: Allende was as responsible as Pinochet for the mass murders of workers and peasants in Santiago, Valparaiso, Antofogasta and the provinces. Perhaps the most revealing of all the ironies inherent in the UP's downfall is that while many of Allende's supporters did not survive the coup, many of his reforms did. So little meaning was left to political categories that the junta's new Foreign Minister could describe himself as a "socialist."

V

Radical movements are underdeveloped to the extent that they respect alienation and surrender their power to external forces instead of creating it for themselves. In Chile, the revolutionaries hastened the day of their own Thermidor by letting "representatives" speak and act on their behalf:

although parliamentary authority had been effectively replaced by the cordones, the workers did not go beyond these conditions of dual power and abolish the bourgeois State and the parties that maintained it. If the future struggles in Chile are to advance, the enemies within the workers' movement must be overcome practically; the councilist tendencies in the factories, neighborhoods, and fields will be everything or nothing. All the vanguard parties that will continue to pass themselves off as the "workers' leadership" - whether they be the MIR, a clandestine CP, or any other underground splinter groups - can only repeat the betrayals of the past. Ideological imperialism must be confronted as radically as economic imperialism has been expropriated; the workers and peasants can depend only on themselves to advance beyond what the cordones industriales have already accomplished.

Comparisons between the Chilean experience and the 1936 Spanish Revolution are already being made, and not only here - one finds strange words coming from Trotskyists in praise of workers' militias which fought against all forms of hierarchy. While it is true that a radical third force did emerge in Chile, it did so only

construct a corporate state in Argentina, this time in a leftist guise, while the Trotskyist commandos of the ERP denounce him for not being "revolutionary" enough, and the ex-guerrillero Castro berates all those who fail to meet the standards of "communist" discipline. History will not fail to dissolve the power of these idiots.

A conspiracy of tradition-with agents on both the Left and the Right - ensures that existing reality is always presented in terms of false alternatives. The only choices acceptable to Power are those between competing hierarchies: the colonels of Peru or the generals of Brazil, the armies of the Arab states or those of Israel. These antagonisms only express divisions within global capitalism, and any genuinely revolutionary alternative will have to be established since it is nowhere in power in Latin America or anywhere else, and this powerlessness constantly impels it to new actions. The Chilean workers are not alone in their opposition to the forces of counter-revolution; the revolutionary movement that began in Mexico with Villa's guerrilla bands has not yet come to an end. In the armed workers' militias that fought in the streets of Santo Domingo in 1965, the

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"In Chile, the revolutionaries hastened the day of their own Thermidor by letting "representatives" speak and act on their behalf..."

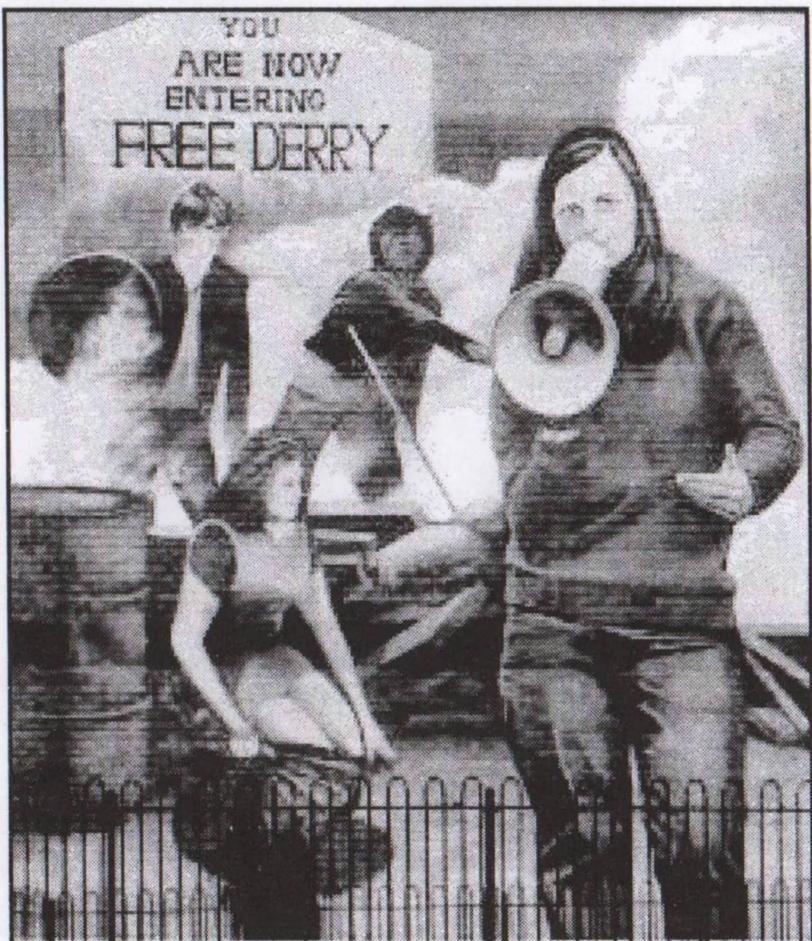
tentatively. Unlike the Spanish proletariat, the Chilean revolutionaries never created an entirely new kind of society on the basis of councilist organization, and the Chilean Revolution will only succeed if these forms (cordones, comandos) are capable of establishing their social hegemony. The obstacles to their development are similar to those that were confronted in Spain: the Spanish councils and militias faced two enemies in the form of Fascism and the Republican government, while the Chilean workers face international capitalism and the manipulators of social-democracy and Leninism.

From the favellas of Brazil to the labor camps of Cuba, the proletariat of the Caribbean, the proletariat of Latin America has maintained a continual offensive against all those who seek to maintain present conditions.

In its struggle, the proletariat is faced with various caricatures of revolution which masquerade as its allies. These travesties have in turn encountered a false movement of so-called "ultra-left" opposition. Thus, the ex-fascist Peron prepares to

urban insurrection in Cordoba, Argentina in 1969, and the recent strikes and occupations in Bolivia and Uruguay, the spontaneous revolt of workers and students in Trinidad in 1970, and the continuing revolutionary crisis is itself over the ruins of these spectacular conflicts. The combined lies of bourgeois and bureaucratic power must be confronted by a revolutionary truth in arms, all over the world as in Chile. There can be no "socialism in one country," or in one factory or district. Revolution is an international task which can only be solved on an international level - it does not recognize continental frontiers. Like any revolution, the Chilean Revolution requires the success of similar movements in other areas. Everywhere, in the wildcat strikes in the United States and West Germany, the factory occupations in France, and in civil insurrections in the USSR, the foundations for a new world are being laid. Those who recognize themselves in this global movement must seize the opportunity to extend it with all the subversive weapons at their disposal. ■

By Pointblank



YES WE HAVE NO BANNANAS

*Class and Sectarianism in
Northern Ireland by T.J.*

From my home in the north-east of England I can catch a flight to Belfast which will get me there quicker than one to London. When I've been to Belfast before I've seen things that remind me of home: shipyards, rolling hills, terraced houses, the bloody rain. When I'm there I spend the same currency, speak the same language, and drink the same beer. I perceive that I see, what I sense I see at home, a population made up of a mainly white working class with a heritage shaped by the Industrial Revolution, modern capitalism and the British state. Yet I realise that there is more to Belfast than this. For well over twenty years I've read left-wing articles which have implored the Catholic and Protestant working class communities of the north of Ireland/six counties to 'open their eyes' and to thus see the true enemy – the bosses.

However, in the history of Belfast, class solidarity across the religious divide has only really happened twice, in 1907 and 1932. Why only twice, if it is so bleeding obvious who the 'true enemy' is? Are the working class of the north of Ireland stupid? Of course not. The reality for the majority of people in Belfast is that it is religious affiliation, although as much a quirk of fate as mine of being born English, which is generally more important than any feelings of class solidarity, even though the latter do definitely exist. Therefore, in the north of Ireland/six counties, a world-view may be created in which religious affiliation is seen as the crucial, central factor in life. Just as, to my eyes, and based on my life experience, class is the crucial central factor in my life. By looking at some aspects of Belfast's social history, this article sets out to explore some of my anglo-centric class (mis) conceptions. Firstly a word about definitions. The terms nationalist, republican, and Catholic are often used interchangeably as are Protestant, unionist, and loyalist. These amalgamations can be too simplistic. For example a 1994 survey showed that a quarter of Catholics want the Union preserved and could therefore be called unionists¹. Furthermore, 'it is erroneous to suggest that Republicanism

is Catholic in ethos, motivation and ambition'² and the Catholic Church has often criticised Republicans. Also, the two communities can be described as representing two different Christian religious sects (Catholic and Protestant), two different nationalist views (Irish nationalist and British nationalists) and two different ethnic groups. Though whether any of these terms help with understanding is open to debate.

In comparison, the importance of Belfast within the history of the north of Ireland over the last 150 years cannot be overstated. It has been said that, 'without the existence of Belfast it seems likely that Ireland would have been united and independent by 1920'³. Historically, Belfast saw the foundation of, amongst others, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, People's Democracy and it was here that the 100,000 strong Ulster Volunteer Force drilled before the First World War. Belfast was essentially a product of the Industrial Revolution, it had a significant working class, and Belfast has a long history of working class unrest and organisation. On the one hand some aspects could be viewed as positive. For example one of the earliest Trades Union Congress meetings was held in Belfast, in 1893, in

recognition of the importance of Belfast within the British labour movement. The 1907 Docks Strike, the first time that Catholics were unionised in significant numbers, saw Catholic and Protestant workers unite. At the height of the strike 100,000 marched on a demonstration in its support⁴. The strike led to rioting, the first and only mutiny by the Royal Irish Constabulary and thousands of troops on the streets of Belfast (not for the first time). Its main organiser, Jim Larkin, was an English Catholic, who employed the tactics of syndicalism. Posters of the time warned of the dark cloud of anarchy over Belfast and of 'Mercenary Anarchist Agitators'⁵. In 1919 an Engineers Strike saw 60,000 affected across Belfast in a dispute aimed at reducing the working week from 54 to 44 hours and only the presence of troops caused the strike to collapse⁶.

In 1932, at the height of the Depression, when a quarter of Belfast's workforce was unemployed⁷, an organisation called the Unemployed Workers Committee was formed. It included members of both the Catholic and Protestant working class of Belfast. A march in October 1932 attracted 60,000 people, led by a band that played the only non-sectarian tune they knew, 'Yes, we

have no bananas'. The next day there were 7,000 in a subsequent march and serious rioting broke out⁸. Due to such disturbances, substantial increases in benefit were achieved and no further riots took place. However, once again working class unity between the communities was short-lived, as indicated by the severe sectarian riots of 1935⁹.

Indeed there are several other aspects of Belfast's working class history which may be viewed negatively, and Belfast's history of segregation mirrored that of its surrounding region. For example, Protestant workers led sectarian riots and evicted Catholics¹⁰ with the result that, 'working class districts became entirely monoethnic'¹¹. The majority of trade unionists in the shipyards and engineering industries of Belfast were skilled Protestant workers and were content to maintain their relatively privileged position. Furthermore, 'in 1892-3 the shipyard engineers were an essential element in the background of Unionist opposition to the threat of home rule'¹². Thirty years later, in 1920, it was Protestant workers in the Belfast shipyards and engineering works who expelled all they considered 'disloyal' meaning Catholics and socialists, the 'rotten Prods' as they were abusively called¹³. More recently, in 1974 the Ulster Workers Council, a body of Loyalist trades unionists, appeared and directed the general strike which brought down the power-sharing executive.

For these and other reasons, negative views of the entire working class of the north of Ireland have been put forward. For instance, one author describes 'the working classes of each side as the main carriers of the more conservative, irrational and extreme political philosophy, to be realised, if necessary, by violent means'. She continues by describing the requirement 'to modernise the

working classes and thus obliterate their need to cling to their fundamentalist political and cultural values'¹⁴. Such a view of the working class as some dangerous animal, best caged and not stirred from its 'natural' position is not new, however to write off tens of thousands of individuals in such a way is arrogant.

Today, class remains important in the north of Ireland. Prior to the current 'Troubles' a major social survey noted that 39% of Catholic and Protestant respondents said they had more in common with people of their same class rather than those of the same religion¹⁵. Another large survey from 1997 showed that class politics are alive and well within both communities¹⁶. While Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) stated 'my Britishness is rooted in my sense of belonging to the wider British working class and its struggles and it is from the British working class movement that we take our political philosophy and perspective'¹⁷.

The two communities of Belfast have also tended to align themselves with two competing nationalisms. The nationalism of Belfast Protestants has been tied to ideas of British nationalism, which viewed itself as advanced, progressive and internationalist¹⁸. Further, being descended from, and part of, the same stock that had 'conquered' or 'civilised' a huge part of the globe¹⁹ many Unionists saw themselves as a special people, superior and having a unique civilised culture²⁰. These ideological differences were exaggerated by the fact that most Catholics in Belfast aligned themselves with Irish nationalism. Their perspectives were based on a sense of injustice at oppression and domination from Britain as well as a belief in the idea of self-determination for the people of Ireland. Importantly, the two competing nationalisms fed off each other. While dif-

ferences between the two nationalisms were and remain important, it is also worth pointing out that the debate between them automatically downplays the concept of working class solidarity. Each nationalism 'has preached a community of class interests within the national group'²¹. When the issue of class was raised, 'the Protestant view was internationalist, characterising Irish nationalism as a backward-looking creed with no place in the strategy of the Irish working class. In the Catholic view this internationalism was "indistinguishable from imperialism" in that it ignored the colonial nature of the relationship between Ireland and England'²². Other authors would also argue that viewing the situation in terms of colonialism may provide understanding of the history of conflict in Northern Ireland^{23,24}.

As radical nationalism has always tended towards socialism²⁵ so Irish nationalism, republicanism and the IRA have often found sympathy on the left. Jim Larkin and James Connolly added socialism to republicanism, while the IRA pronounced socialist ideals, especially in the 1930s and 1960s²⁶. A similar ideology can be seen in the pages of Sinn Fein's newspaper, where it has been stated that the 'objective of the republican movement is a socialist republic. Republicans cannot achieve equal citizenship or democracy under capitalism, where class, profit and exploitation prevail'²⁷. It is also commonly accepted that, in general, Catholics were, and remain, discriminated against and the poorest in Northern Ireland²⁸ so the socialist tradition of sympathy for the oppressed has meant that the left has inclined towards the Catholics of Northern Ireland. In turn it was recently shown that Catholics in Northern Ireland are more left-wing than Protestants²⁹.



"In 1932, at the height of the Depression, when a quarter of Belfast's workforce was unemployed, an organisation called the Unemployed Workers Committee was formed. It included members of both the Catholic and Protestant working class of Belfast. A march in October 1932 attracted 60,000 people, led by a band that played the only non-sectarian tune they knew, 'Yes, we have no bananas'."

There is also a history linking unionists with right-wing ideology. There are the obvious links of Unionist politicians to the British Conservative party, but there is evidence of fascist groups (Combat 18) being linked to loyalist paramilitaries³⁰. Such connections can lead to some left-wing commentators writing off the bulk of the Protestant working class of Belfast and the north of Ireland as reactionary³¹ or as dupes of the ruling class³² though other commentators are more sympathetic to the Protestant working class³³⁻³⁴. Indeed, some working class Belfast Protestants are proclaiming a class-based view. For example, David Ervine of the PUP has said that the 'politics of division see thousands of people dead, most of them working class'³⁵. Conversely, it should be recognised that class conflict and ethnic conflict are not mutually exclusive and that 'ethnic militancy was not incompatible with class consciousness'³⁶. Other authors have gone further and suggested that class consciousness and ethnic consciousness can be inseparable³⁷.

In Northern Ireland the colonial relationship from plantation onwards was nurtured and sustained for four hundred years. With the Industrial Revolution, Belfast grew to be a major industrial centre within Britain and housed a significant working class community. Or more precisely, two separate working class communities. In discussing the issue of working class organisation in Belfast, it is important to be aware of any inherent bias. This author interprets events from an ideology in which class is a crucial factor. However, such a philosophy can entail an implicit belief in the 'naturalness' of class consciousness compared with the 'divisiveness' of national consciousness³⁸; of the authenticity of the

class consciousness but the falseness of national consciousness as many on the left suggest³⁹.

However, this view is unlikely to be shared with a citizen of Belfast, where 'religious affiliation remains the best single predictor of party support and of attitudes to a range of politicised issues such as national identity and preferences about the constitutional status of Northern Ireland'⁴⁰. Or, put another way 'national identity assumes an importance in Northern Ireland not evident elsewhere in the United Kingdom'⁴¹. In a 'British' working class environment, poverty, industrial heritage, and a class based analysis of the situation is not the full story. A little more understanding of the situation in the north of Ireland/six counties is needed.

By way of a conclusion

What I'm trying to say is that a lot of "our" left-wing theory which sees and interprets the world primarily or completely in terms of class, appears to me to be incomplete in a British city only 50 miles from Liverpool. If it is incomplete somewhere where people watch Coronation Street, follow both Premier Leagues and spend pounds in pubs, then how can we expect it to apply in places



further away such as Gaza?

So no, I don't have any big conclusion about what to do next. Partly because any conclusion must be a product of collective discussion and work. Partly because the article comes from self-questioning and I aimed to pass on the results of that self-questioning. This is not to say that I've moved away from a class-based analysis, but I now feel that what I interpret as applying in Newcastle and Middlesbrough won't necessarily apply in Belfast or Derry, despite the huge similarities between these four British cities.

Ultimately, any theory must be informed by practice and vice versa. If our theory cannot handle complex issues without falling into the crudest class reductionism then we won't be taken seriously by the people we seek to influence. It also means that our practice will be flawed. Unless we understand reality we will never be able to change it. ■

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 11 Hepburn, *ibid*, 149
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 32 Black Flag, 218, 2000
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 39 Hobsbawm, E. *Working Classes and Nations*, Saothar, vol. 7. 1982
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London is bidding to host the 2012 Olympic Games. The official website announces proudly that "not only have the Government given strong backing to the bid, but the project has received cross party support in Parliament and from the business community". The residents of London's East End, where the Games are proposed to take place, on the other hand, haven't been asked. Nor are they likely to be.

Fluid - the company being paid a small fortune to consult the public on the 2012 Olympic bid recently confirmed that it would not be speaking to the public until its 'masterplan' had been put in place!

The company had only three months in which to carry out the consultation and submit its masterplan to the government, who must, in turn place full plans before the IOC by 15th January 2004.

One month into their contract, no consultation had been carried out. In October 2003, Fluid still had no plans to hold any public meetings or to approach key members of local communities. Instead, plans have been discussed with invited guests behind closed doors.

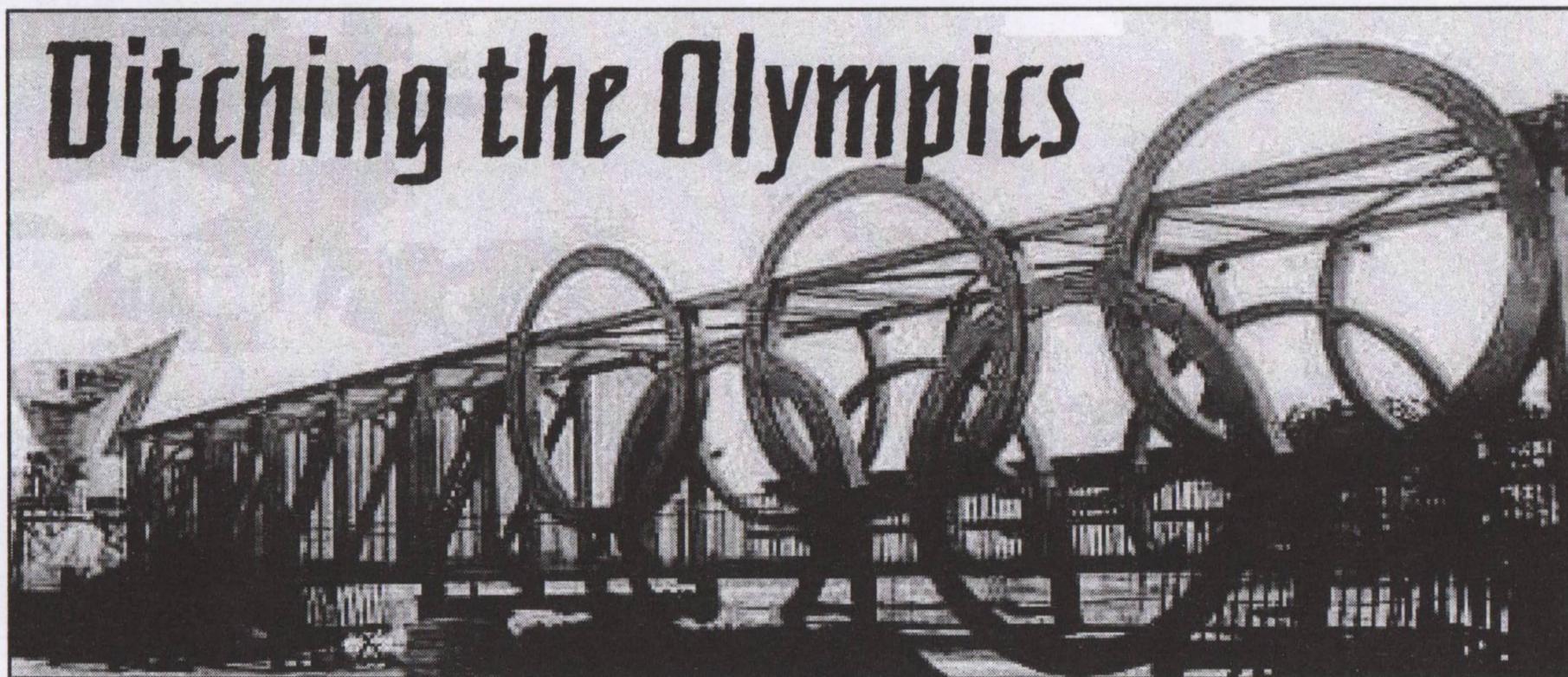
The public will be presented, towards the end of the process in November, with a fait accompli. Public meetings, if Fluid can be bothered to hold them, at this stage will serve only to "ask us if we want it green or white, but not if we want it at all" (Chairwoman Hackney Marshes Users Group, Hackney Gazette 2/10/03).

The bid is being sold to East Londoners as a means of regenerating a severely depressed and under-resourced area. But who is going to pay? Tessa Jowell and Ken Livingstone have agreed a £2.4 billion funding package for the Games, with the actual bid costing around £17 million. The government have apparently put together "innovative funding schemes, including

an Olympic Lottery and increases in council tax". Wow that really is innovative. And to really kick the boot in, Tessa Jowell says "I believe the cost should be borne at least in part by those who would most benefit". Which presumably is us...

The official website declares that "security is a priority. London is one of the world's safest major cities. So much so that the police routinely patrol without guns." Tell that to residents of 'shotgun mile' in Clapton, Hackney, where shootings happen on a depressingly regular basis. The website then boasts "the Metropolitan Police has unrivalled experience in managing large-scale events safely and unobtrusively, covering everything from traffic control to counter-terrorism..." How reassuring.

If this is the picture that Ken and his friends want to paint for the IOC, then we could have a lot of fun disillusioning them. The articles to follow show how it can be done...



Dutch Courage?

During the campaign against the Amsterdam bid, activists found one of the most effective tactics was to counter each glossy pamphlet, each PR event, each bribe to the IOC with their own:

"Until October 17th, 1986, the day of the IOC's deciding vote, a minimal group of activists would succeed for at least two years in achieving the maximal media effect. The fact that ...the administrators had been using the candidacy for image improvement, which by definition belongs in the media sphere, made it possible to slay them with mere media presence. If the city had put all its money on, for example, the encouragement of sports in Holland, such ...(a) strategy would have been impossible..."

Unscrupulously they copied all the methods and techniques of the enemy foundation: the organiser's personal gift to the IOCers was followed by a bag of marijuana, received in the mail, with a letter signed Mayor Ed van Thijn: "After the South African diamonds, we're sending you something with which you can clear your mind. The Dutch Olympics Committee would like to acquaint you with one of the products of Amsterdam. We hope to exert a positive influence on your decision in this matter. Our national product can be obtained in five hundred legal sales outlets. Please don't be bothered by increasing opposition in Amsterdam".

From 'Cracking the Movement' - Squatting beyond the media, Adilkno pps 133-135

Countdown...

The London Olympic Bid Timetable is as follows.

- 15 July 2003 - deadline for countries to hand their first formal bids to the IOC
- 15 January 2004 - Full plans to be submitted to the IOC.
- 31st May 2004 - IOC to reject the least attractive bids
- 15th November 2004 - Formal last bid to be handed to the IOC
- Feb - March 2005 - Each city to play host to the IOC's evaluation commission for one week
- 15th May 2005 - IOC to name the hosts at a conference in Singapore

NO OLYMPICS IN BERLIN

This article, "How did the Anti Olympia Committee stop the Berlin Olympics", has been translated from the Granwacke Collective's "Autonomists in the Movement: from the 1st 23 years".

When US President Regan visited Berlin in June 1987, he floated the idea for an Olympic games in East and West Berlin. Stupid, we thought, just like his demand - "Mr Gorbachov tear down this wall!"... After the fall of the wall we were forced to take this idea seriously, when the Berlin Senate applied to host the games in 2000. The International Olympic Committee's decision was due in 1993.

Our starting point was different to other "Stop It" campaigns. We didn't want to focus on the actual event with actions and a huge demo on the first day - instead we wanted to stop the Games coming to Berlin at all. Because once the decision to give the games to Berlin was made, a whole lot of things would happen which we didn't want.

Restructuring (of the city) was always only a part of the issue for us, but it was the main push factor for the campaign. The examples of other host cities spoke volumes. The rents go up, tenants are forced out and yuppification occurs. It's a great party for the City bosses and top bureaucrats - fuel for their "city policies". But there were other important reasons why we were opposed to the Olympics as a whole - which differentiated us from other groups and parties whom often just argued that Berlin was "the wrong city at the wrong time".

The elitist history and practice of the Olympics was a first fundamental point of criticism. In the ancient Olympics only male nobles or (later) rich "citizens" were allowed to take part either as participants or observers. Only victory counted - nothing else. The revival of the Games in the late 19th century was by racist imperialists like Pierre Coubertin and excluded once again the great majority of the population. Amateurism meant that only those sportspeople who could afford to without payment could take part.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is a reactionary, anti semitic

Brotherhood. As Fidel Castro put it "A mafia of white counts, princes and millionaires". Our opinion, which we put on a billboard in Mitte (central Berlin) was that "the IOC is a pigsty of corrupt, dope dealing mafia with a fascist leadership".

The hosting of the 1936 Games by the Nazis was another ground for our complete opposition. In every host city there has been, with varying levels of severity, some sort of "clean up operation". Under the Nazis, Roma were sent to a concentration camp at Marzhan on the edge of the city. In Mexico City, shortly before the start of the 1968 Games, 300 people were murdered by security forces at an extra parliamentary opposition demo. In Los Angeles for the 1984 Games, homeless people were driven out from the city.

Elite, competitive sport is itself a copy of capitalism's system of competition - and is designed to propagate the dog eat dog ideology of individualism. The heightened state of security that accompanies any Olympic event requires not only thousands of coppers to keep people in line, but also an enforced mass consensus. A radical oppositional movement is, in this context, potentially even more irritating (for the state) and requires from them

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"the starting point was different to other "Stop It" campaigns. We didn't want to focus on the actual event with actions and a huge demo on the first day - Instead we wanted to stop the Games coming to Berlin at all. Because once the decision to give the games to Berlin was made, a whole lot of things would happen which we didn't want."

tough preventative action. The wider global political situation was for us, only the final dot on the 'i' in arguments against the spectacle of the Olympics in Berlin.

We started early, and by the beginning of '91 we were organising to build an "up for it" group. Our opponents weren't too far ahead then and the media were also slow to take up the issue. We needed stamina but had yet to recognise that the autonomist scene would only mobilise itself for the highlights and not for a sustained campaign that could last for two and a half years.

Nonetheless at the start it was an attempt at another "classic" Autonomie campaign. We only realised that we could sustain this campaign in the absence of a 'movement' in the relative lull of 1992. Before that we were convinced that this theme of the Olympics with all its aspects and sub themes needed to be taken up by a wide range of other groups, who would incorporate anti Olympic politics into their existing theory/practise.

So Antifascist groups would work around a critique of "Greater Germany" and the Olympics; Neighbourhood campaigns would take up the Olympics and urban restructuring, anti sexist mens groups would discuss competitive sport and the competitive system and the Olympics etc. Our hopes and plans were that there would be many more similar link-ups without the need for any specific anti-Olympic group. In short, we wanted to gather together the existing (autonomie) forces around the issue in order to strategically intervene and topple a central project of the Berlin Senate Government.

Opinion in the city was divided from the start. In none of the opinion polls was there ever a clear majority for the Olympic bid and scepticism in the population and the negative effect of 'Olympic mania' increased. We always thought we had a good chance of winning because we were seeking to influence a non-state decision making body (the IOC) in deciding between various host cities. A decision against Berlin would involve no loss of face for the IOC, nor would it be 'backing down' because of 'pressure from below'. In this aspect it was very different to other campaigns we'd been involved in which directly threatened the state - because the

state were always extremely reluctant to back down from any position - fearing this would mean the beginning of the end.

We began talks in the early summer of '91 with some people from the AL (the Greens in Berlin) and PDS (ex East German Communist Party) and so knew that there were people who would take part in certain types of mobilisation. Over the summer we prepared the ground for the first big action - the visit of the IOC executive in September '91 - through posters, meetings and discussions in Interim (the Berlin Autonomist magazine). The demo was two and a half thou-

sand people strong and was quite feisty. After the demo people were still hanging around the Alexanderplatz (the main square in East Berlin) and a number of windows were put in and the French President Mitterand's (who happened to

ness of the anti - Olympic activists was hyped up, the more the bigwigs of the IOC would get the idea that Berlin was an unreliable candidate in terms of security and that there was a halfway active resistance. We added to our plans the tactic of

Diepagen (the leader of the Berlin Senate) tried to play down the actions, the international press asked if his casual attitude was because street battles and other volksport actions were normal here. And when the press hyped it up as usual, this damaged the bid too.

From the start of '93 we heightened targeted pressure on the IOC and its members. At the end of January we were in Lausanne (the Swiss IOC Headquarters) at the official presentation of the bid. The IOC confused the official delegation with two anti Olympic politicians. At night a bit of colour was added to the IOC Headquarters - to tremendous effect - Marc Hodler from the IOC said "We won't vote for cities what besmirch our building...".

We offered each IOC member a bribe of \$1 - only 7 sent them back so the rest were clearly buyable. A second trip to Lausanne in June ended up with IOC boss Samaranch getting paint bombed... and visits to the local nick for many. A glossy brochure for all of the IOC members detailing the advantages of riot capital Kreuzberg (a suburb of Berlin) was sent shortly before the vote in September - to some effect.

In April and September '93 there were mass demos of fifteen to twenty thousand people in Berlin - as well as a growing number of militant actions against sponsors and others - the spice in a successful campaign soup. True to the "Strategy Paper", there were three levels of activity. The official coalition (Berlin Anti Olympic Committee - BAK), the autonomist AOK and the rapidly increasing number of night time volksport activists. The only annoying people were those from the PDS and the Greens who only participated in preparing for the mass demos and managed even to annoy their own members.

Otherwise the division of work was accepted - we provided the demo infrastructure and had a free hand in terms of action - whilst the parties would talk to the media. this worked so well that at the last press conference the autonomist representative could say, without contradiction from the PDS, Greens and SPD youth - "Arson attacks (without danger to people) are an integral part of the anti Olympic campaign".

At the vote on 23rd September 1993, Berlin got just 9 votes and got kicked out just after Istanbul. This was broadcast live on the Oberbaum bridge (by Kreuzberg and Griedrichshain) where over one thousand people celebrated. ■

1. Literally "people's sports" - but with undertones of (unarmed) guerilla actions.



be visiting) limo was given a free panel beating.

After this came a long silence. There were many things which people had to take care of. The fascists were on the move, most horrifically in the Hoyerswerda and Rostock pogroms against refugees. All the same, there were some nice Volksport¹ actions e.g. In January '92 the "Lutz Gruttke" commando (named after the first Olympic bid chief who was sacked because of incompetence) kidnapped a memorial plaque for the Nazi sports administrator Carli Dieu from the '36 Olympic Stadium Memorial. Among the ransom demands were the withdrawal of the bid for the 2000 and all future Olympic Games. The TV news from RTL humourlessly hyped this as "Anti Olympic activists blackmail the senate".

In February, we tried to make a routine Senate presentation more interesting through a mobilisation of activists. But only 80 people came. A couple of us got into the Hall, stopped the Minister for Construction's speech and managed to throw some leaflets giving our opinion on the issue... until some under cover cops firmly invited us to leave the hall. We were frustrated by this flop and began to think over what we were doing and to broaden our ideas on what could be done in the future.

By now we had realised that "bad press was good news". The more the terrible-

image damage. Using the model of the Amsterdam anti-Olympic campaign who'd sunk their bid for the '92 Games in '86 we operated as a small but beautiful "communications guerrilla".

This was not restricted to our small group, a video made by the then Green politician Judith Demba, and other activities fed into this new way of working. The video wasn't particularly spectacular, but the final scene was used by many TV programmes - a balancing activist juggles a stone and then puts a finger up at an imaginary IOC member..."We wait for you".

Image damage meant that every report about resistance and problems for the bid was in our terms good news. So for example in Amsterdam, tourist boats were attacked as a media stunt - not because they had much against tourists, but rather because it created headlines which damaged the bid. Opportunities for creativity were boundless - so for example, a fake autonomist "strategy paper" was "leaked" to the national press and city parliament. The paper itself was a boring set of rehashed old ideas, but the effect nonetheless, was immense. CDU representatives foamed at the mouth ("...Firebombings! Lady and Gentlemen representatives..."), the press fumed, autonomes smirked and the IOC was bewildered.

Image damage was a deciding factor - the Senate was powerless to stop it. When

One of the strangest arguments against anarchist ways of organising is that they are “undemocratic.” This argument is usually associated with Trotskyists. As it crops up with regular frequency, it is worthwhile to discuss this accusation in detail.

Anarchists are for federations of self-managed groups. This means that the group membership decides policy directly at open meetings. Anyone delegated from that group to do specified tasks or to attend a federal meeting is given a strict and binding mandate. Failure to implement that agreed mandate means that the delegate is instantly replaced. In this way power remains in the hands of all and decisions flow from the bottom up. Anyone placed into a position of responsibility is held accountable to the membership and any attempt to usurp power from the grassroots is stopped.

Such forms of organisation do not spring from the brains of a few anarchists thinkers, independently of working class struggle. The idea of strict and accountable mandates can be found in the works of Bakunin and Proudhon after both became active in working class struggle. Proudhon raised the idea during the 1848 revolution, while Bakunin talked about it after becoming active in the struggles of the International Workers' Association in Switzerland. So these ideas were developed within the class struggle itself, often spontaneously. For example, both the Paris Commune and Russian Soviets implemented a system of imperative mandates.

Anarchists have long argued that we should organise in ways that prefigure the kind of society we want. We often call this “building the new world in the shell of the old.” Moreover, in anarchist theory, the class struggle is the link between capitalism and any future libertarian socialist society. We start to build the structures of the free society when we fight against capitalism. In support of our arguments we point to the unions, factory committees, workers' councils, collectives, community assemblies and other popular organisations which have been created during numerous revolts and revolutions which have later become the structural basis for post-revolutionary working class management of society (before being undermined or destroyed by either the bourgeois or so-called workers' states).

This means that the way we organise today is important to anarchists. We only become capable of managing society if we make our own decisions and directly manage our own struggles and organisa-

tions today. Self-management today is the foundation for the self-managed socialist society of tomorrow.

Others disagree. They say that anarchism is “undemocratic.” They argue that while anarchist groups are, in theory, directly democratic, in practice a few leaders still call the shots without being accountable. It is still a leadership except it is not democratically decided and would be taken up by those with the most time, charisma, experience etc. Because not all activists can attend all activist meetings, it is argued, a lot of decisions are made at meetings with low attendance. A hierarchy exists, masked by fine sounding rhetoric. Worse still, there is no structure to change the leadership that exists under the surface. Would it not, ask the critics, be far more democratic if some people were elected to regularly meet and do essential work and then hold these elected people accountable in general meeting that everyone can attend?

Does this proposed “democratic” solution sound familiar? Well it is. It is representative democracy, a basic principle of liberal bourgeois ideology. That self-proclaimed socialists should be seeking to reproduce one of the principles of capitalist politics into anti-capitalist movements might seem strange to anarchists. Moreover, the influence of those with the most time, charisma, experience, etc will be, at best, as strong in a representative

democratic group as in a directly democratic group. Why does this render only the latter “undemocratic”? And, in practice, this problem will be far worse in representative groups. Would-be leaders are likely to use all their skills and ability to get elected, making use of their charisma, experience, resources and time to sway voters to give them power. The key difference is that the voters would not be in a position to question these “leaders” when the decisions were actually being made. They would simply be left with a fait accompli, being reduced to simply trying to find better leaders next time. In representative democracy decisions are not made by the whole group, but rather by a few leaders who may, or may not, have been elected by a majority.

Look at the UK. Tony Blair was elected by a quarter of the population. Most recently, he ignored the clear wishes of the majority and attacked Iraq. Is that really more “democratic” than self-management?

In response it will be argued that leaders will be held accountable more frequently to the group than is the case in current parliamentary politics. But this “solution” raises more problems than it solves. After all, how can the group hold these elected people accountable unless they meet to evaluate their leaders decisions? And if they are able to evaluate the decisions made for them at such meet-

Democracy is Undemocratic



ings, surely they are capable of making the decisions in the first place?

And what enticement is there for people to attend infrequent "general meetings," where all they do is elect leaders? The example of apathy within the trade union movement, where members rarely turn up to meetings, seems appropriate here. Why assume new hierarchical organisations will not have the same problems as existing ones? And, of course, between elections those elected leaders with the most time, charisma, experience, etc., will be applying them within the small minority elected to the representative committee. Why is this not labelled "undemocratic"? If self-management is "undemocratic" when applied to the base of an organisation, why does it become "democratic" at the top? There is no logical reason why it should and so the leadership faces the exact same problem. To overcome it in the leadership group there can be only one solution, namely to concentrate all power into the hands of one person.

In summary, therefore, we can say that the self-proclaimed democrats are wrong. Rather than anarchism being undemocratic, it is representative democracy that is so. Their "far more democratic" organisation simply empowers a few leaders at the expense of the rest, whose job is to pick who will tell them what to do until the next election. At best, the arguments against direct democracy are applicable to representative democracy. At worse, they are far more applicable to a hierarchical system than a non-hierarchical one.

This is an age old debate. During the American and French revolutions self-managed popular assemblies were created in many towns and cities. The

wealthy were horrified by this participation of the many in society's affairs. They consistently favoured representative democracy over direct democracy and delegates. They did so to reduce participation and ensure minority class rule. Today, in Argentina politicians are calling the popular assemblies "undemocratic." Self-proclaimed socialists are, together with bourgeois politicians, advocating a structure explicitly designed to restrict mass working class participation in social decision making. Is this a coincidence? Perhaps not, as the aim of Trotskyism is, after all, for the party to seize power on behalf of the masses. To quote Lenin: "the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through an organisation embracing the whole of the class, because in all capitalist countries... the proletariat is still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted in parts... that an organisation taking in the whole proletariat cannot directly exercise proletarian dictatorship. It can be exercised only by a vanguard... for the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised by a mass proletarian organisation." Trotsky held this Bolshevik truism until his death, repeatedly arguing in favour of party dictatorship over the working class. "The very same masses," he argued in 1939, "are at different times inspired by different moods and objectives. It is just for this reason that a centralised organisation of the vanguard is indispensable. Only a party, wielding the authority it has won, is capable of overcoming the vacillation of the masses themselves."

And yet they call anarchism "undemocratic" for advocating and implementing participatory decision making in the revolutionary struggle! These opinions, needless to say, have not stopped his

followers claiming that Trotsky or his ideas were democratic. If working class people are deemed incapable of running the future socialist society directly, then why expect Trotskyists to support self-management in the struggle today? Or, for that matter, within their own parties? With regards to whether the referendum could be used as a means of setting policy within the party, Trotsky argued that it was "not possible to answer this question except in the negative." He goes on to argue that "whoever is in favour of a referendum must be in favour of imperative mandates." While allowing the right for locals to vote on "every question" he considered it right that the representatives could ignore that decision as they had "the right to weigh all the arguments" made at the party conference. The party members only had the right to "subsequently deprive him of its political confidence" while implementing the decisions they had no part in determining, either at conference or subsequently.

Compare this to Marx who praised the Communards of 1871 for implementing the "imperative mandate". Today his modern followers pay lip service to that idea while, in practice, dismissing it as "undemocratic." Now, why would Trotskyists oppose a form of decision making praised by Marx? Could it be because they, just like the bourgeois politicians, are aware that it stops, to quote Engels, the "transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society"? Why should self-proclaimed socialists be so against self-management, calling it "undemocratic, while, at the same time, subscribing to a organisation structure which places power into the hands of a few? The answer seems all too plain. ■

THOUGHTS ON FREEDOM

About seven years ago, I wrote a review of Albert Meltzer's autobiography for Black Flag. In it I said Freedom Press was a wasted resource, being as it was unconnected to the rest of the anarchist movement, and happy to present itself as a wing of militant liberalism. I know that for many comrades the dispute between Albert and Freedom was something they didn't understand, and many felt that it was really personal. The experiences of many comrades in the 80s and 90s in getting Freedom to publish anything outside of the line it had, led further to that paper's isolation. Truth be told, I expected it to fall even further away from anarchism with the death of its proprietor, Vernon Richards.

However, I was wrong, and indeed took a very long time to heed those people around me who told me things were changing there. Since I've actively taken notice of it in the last year, Freedom has not only improved, but is well on the road to being a useful anarchist paper. In what has been a dramatic turnaround for me I now contribute items to it.

In the last few months, several things have stood out for me. There was an excellent eye-witness report from an anarchist member of the International Solidarity movement in Palestine, an in-depth debate on what to do about old people feeling menaced by young taggers, a debate on how anarchists organise and an interview with Fire Brigades Union organiser, suspended for criticising Gilchrist.

These are small things in themselves, but taken together represent a clear break with the past. Having spoken to and worked with people at Freedom Press now, I think they are open to ideas and activities from a much wider range of anarchists than before. At the moment editing and layout is mainly done by two people, and they are to be congratulated for their work. For the first time since the miners strike, there is a regular fortnightly anarchist paper that the movement as a whole can use.

Just as things never got into Black Flag without people doing the work - whether editing or writing, or even just letting others know what they were up to in their area - the same is true of Freedom today. We have a resource here - let's use it!

Martin H

Slavery has not been abolished in Britain, behind high walls and locked doors it still flourishes. Working class people are being forced to toil in poor conditions, beyond the reach of health and safety inspectors, denied even the most basic employment and trade-union rights, and severely punished if they refuse to work.

In British prisons, there have been savage cuts in education budgets over the past half-decade, any pretence at rehabilitating prisoners and empowering them with trade skills has been abandoned. They are now seen as a readily exploitable labour force, a Third World colony in Britain's own backyard, cheap, non-unionised, available, and literally compelled to work.

Wilkinson's claim to be a company with a 'caring' outlook which works 'in partnership with local communities' and has an 'ethical' view. But in contrast, rather than offer jobs to the community, Wilkinson's prefer to use the slave labour of a captive non-unionised workforce in order to keep their costs low and their profits high.

If prisoners refuse to work, or are not considered to be working hard enough,

prisoners are forced to do packing work for Wilkinson's, the pay is little more than £1 per day. This greedy company would rather use slave labour than give more work to their own workers or employ new ones.

The issue of prison slavery is an issue for ALL working-class people, not least because it undermines workers' pay and conditions generally. Not because prisoners are somehow 'stealing' jobs, they have absolutely no choice in the matter, but because companies can drive down the wages of their own employees by using prison labour, and it brings with it the threat of short-time and redundancies. The employees of Dysons, for example, were thrown out of work when Dysons decided to use cheap non-unionised labour in Malaysia, but how many Dyson workers

Salonika 8

During the June international protests at the EU Summit in Salonika (Thessaloniki), Greece, Simon Chapman from the UK and 7 other protesters from Europe, the Middle East and the United States were arrested.

Scuffles had broken out between the police and sections of the anti-authoritarian block march and the police responded with, amongst other weapons, CS gas.

During a CS gas attack, Simon was targeted by police and seriously beaten. At the same time his rucksack was swapped, presumably by undercover police, for three bags of molotov cocktails. Simon was charged with resisting authority, construction and possession of molotovs, arson, serious damage to property and riot. He could face a prison sentence of between 7 and 25 years.

Simon and his co-prisoners are now languishing in a Greek jail, have been refused bail and face very serious charges. All of the 8 have been separated from each other in prison and can only communicate with a quick hello if they pass in a corridor.

The Salonika 8 Campaign is working to free Simon and his co-detainees, and hope film footage of the incident. will assist in this aim. International solidarity protests have been held in Berlin (where the Greek Embassy was occupied twice), Denmark, Milan and London.

There are many ways in which you can show your support for the Salonika 8:

- Write to Simon and / or send him books (paperbacks only - political / historical)

Kratoumeno Simon Chapman
Dikastikes Fylakes Diavaton
T.K. 540 12
Thessaloniki
GREECE
- Send money (Greek prisoners need to pay for their own food) by cheque made out to:

"ABC" and posted to BM Automatic,
London WC1N 3XX.
- Write letters of protest to the Greek Ambassador to the UK at:

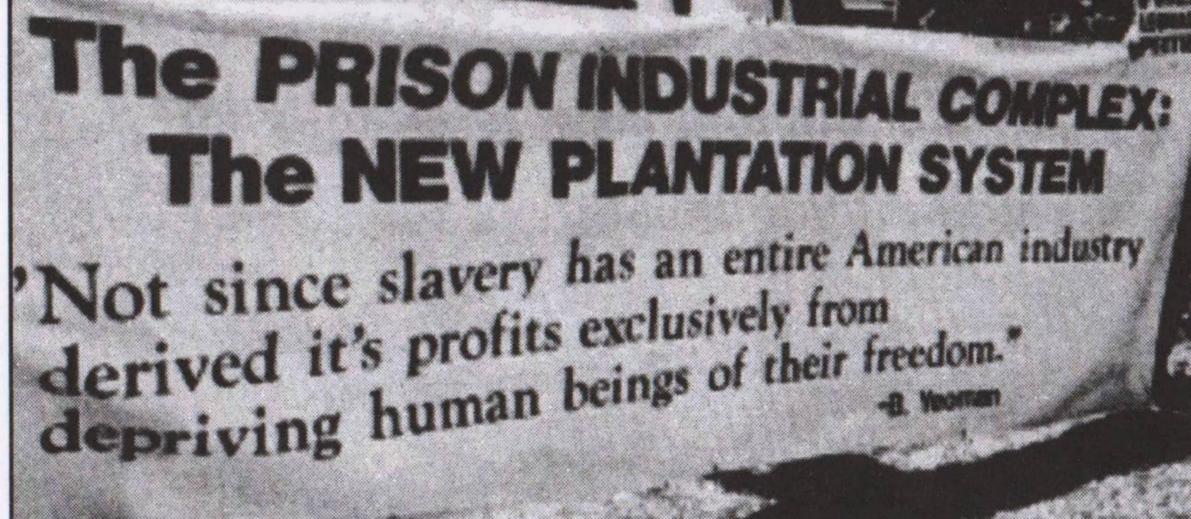
Embassy of Greece
1A Holland Park
London W11 3TP
Email political@greekembassy.org.uk
- Join the international solidarity actions. Email the following to receive regular updates and info -

thessalonikiprisoners@yahoo.co.uk
- Check out the campaign website at:

[Http://www.enrager.net/simon](http://www.enrager.net/simon)

Cheap because we use

slave labour



they are punished - placed in solitary confinement, brutalised, denied visits, have days added to their sentences. Private companies are making enormous profits from prison labour, £52.9 Million in 1999, and growing. Prisoners may be paid less than £5 for a week's work - and for prisoners there are no 'sickies', no holidays, no union meetings, no transport problems, and if there's no work they can simply be locked back in their cells. Prisoners are treated as the bosses would like to treat all of us.

Wilkinson's are one of many companies profiting from the slave labour of prisoners. In Swansea prison for example, where

knew that for some time the company had been using cheap, non-unionised labour at Full Sutton prison? Not surprisingly the latter-day slave-masters are desperate to keep their involvement secret, from their own employees and from the wider public.

The Campaign Against Prison Slavery exists to challenge and bring about an end to forced prison labour, and to expose the companies that exploit it. In the 21st Century it is high-time that slavery in all its forms was ended for good.

Campaign Against Prison Slavery, The Cardigan Centre, Cardigan Rd, Leeds, LS6 1LJ. E-mail againstprisonslavery@mail.com

Whether or not you think Empire will be as useful as Capital it has certainly made an impact. The web is full of reviews of Empire from all angles of the political spectrum. Orthodox Marxists gnash their teeth at it, while right wing conspiracy theorists around Lyndon la Rouché see it as confirmation¹ of the existence of a plan for globalisation that unites the 'left and right'. After *SII* numerous US liberal and conservative reviews² made a big deal out of Negri's 'terrorist past' (he is under house arrest in Italy for being an ideological influence on the Red Brigades). They eagerly seize on Negri and Hardt's description of Islamic Fundamentalism as post rather than pre modern and their claim that it is a form of resistance to Empire as if this description was intended as a justification for the attack.

Empire rapidly sold out after publication and the paperback edition I have (bought in October 2001) is the seventh printing. Empire doesn't mention the Seattle protests at all and one suspects that, like Naomi Klein, the authors have had the good fortune to write a book that would be seized on to 'explain' the new movement before the movement itself had come to the public's attention. To an extent Empire probably deserves this more than "No Logo" as Negri is one of the major 'historical' influences on the section of the movement around 'Ya Basta!'

Like Marx in Capital, Hardt and Negri admit that most of what they write is not original, indeed a lot of the book is taken up with a discussion of the philosophical sources that have led up to it. Like Capital its strength is in bringing together into a unified whole theories and discussion from many different areas. As Hardt and Negri put it their "argument aims to be equally philosophical and historical, cultural and economic, political and anthropological"³.

It is also an attempt to make Marxism relevant once more to the revolutionary project, often by fundamental re-interpretation of areas of the writings of Marx and Lenin. A lot of this is also not original: anyone who has tried to read Negri's previous works in English, in particular Marx beyond Marx will be aware one of his major projects is to rescue Marx from historical Marxism.

For instance Negri spends part of a chapter explaining how although Lenin's Imperialism may appear wrong, it is in fact right because Lenin "assumed as his own, the theoretical assumptions" of those he appears to be arguing against⁴. Now while this may be useful for those who have an almost religious attachment to the

Is the Emperor wearing any clothes?

A review of Negri and Hardt's Empire from an anarchist perspective - by Andrew Flood

The publication of Empire in 2000 created an intense level of discussion in left academic circles that even spilled over at times into the liberal press. This should please the authors, Antonio Negri, one of the main theoreticians of Italian 'autonomous Marxism' and a previously obscure literature professor Michael Hardt. It is clear that they see Empire as the start of a project comparable to Karl's Marx's Das Kapital. The Marxist Slavoj Zizek has called Empire "The Communist Manifesto for our time".

label of Marxism it is a big barrier for any anarchist reading the book. But thankfully, although this is one of its major flaws, Empire contains much else besides.

Later I'll look specifically at what anarchists can gain from this book. But let us start by looking at what it actually argues.

A criticism that has to be made right from the start is that this is not an easy book to read. In fact large sections of it are almost unintelligible. Empire is written in an elitist academic style that is almost designed to be understood only by the qualified few. The subject matter and broad scope of the book would, in any case, make it difficult but the authors also delight in obscurity, a very simple example being the common use of Latin quotations without any adequate translation or explanation.

This is particularly off putting because they are quite capable of writing in a clear fashion. Indeed, their strongest arguments seem to be by far the ones that are expressed in the clearest language. It is when they are on their weakest ground that it becomes increasingly difficult to unwind what is actually being said.

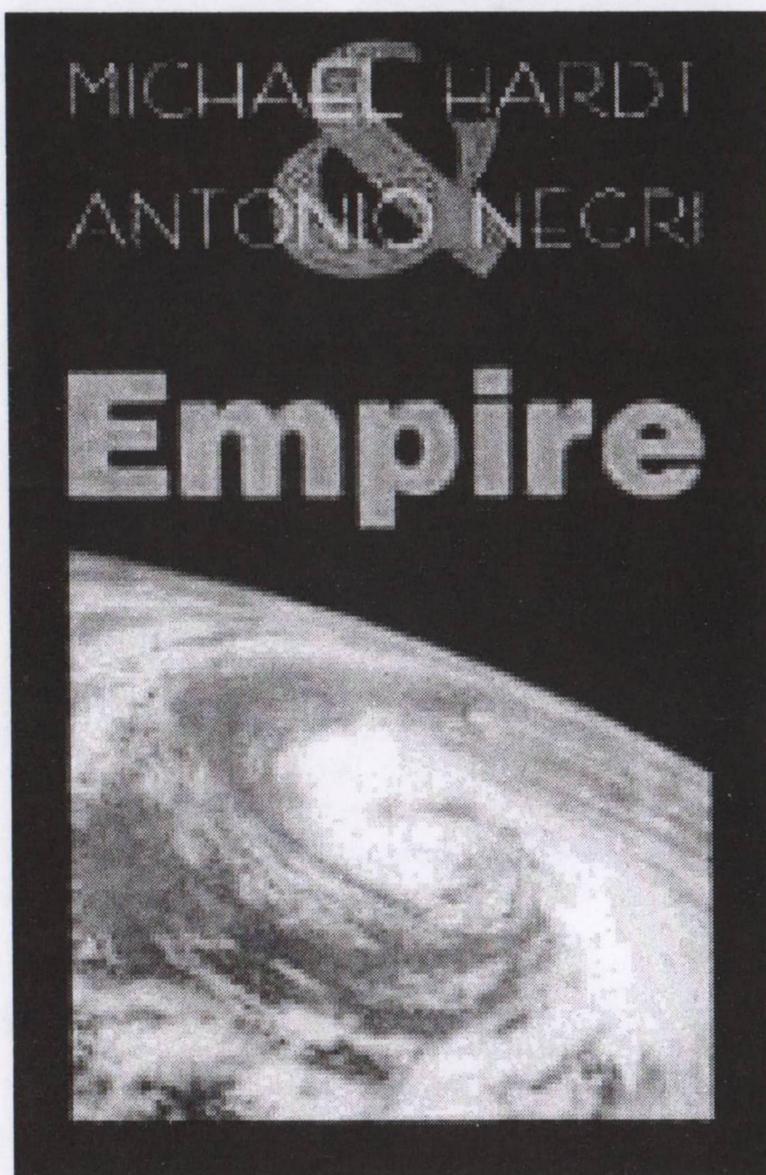
This elitist academic style is also part of the Italian autonomist tradition and illustrates how their use of the word autonomy does not carry the same meaning as that given to it by anarchists. We aim to build working class organisations that are autonomous from the state and political parties. They intended the working class

to be autonomous only from capital. The worker will apparently still need to be led by the intellectual elite who are the only ones, in the autonomists' eyes, capable of reading the changes in strategies needed in the battle against capitalism.

Even other Leninist commentators have attacked the "highly elitist version of the party that emerges"⁵ although given the record of the organisation concerned (British SWP) it is easy to suspect this is based more on jealousy of the influence of autonomous Marxism than anything else. But of course the autonomists views are quite consistent with Lenin's insistence in 1918 that "there are many... who are not enlightened socialists and cannot be such because they have to slave in the factories and they have neither the time nor the opportunity to become socialists"⁶.

Autonomist Marxism is part of a rich history of 'left-communism' in Italy which represented a break with the reformism of the Communist Parties but only partly or not at all with its authoritarian politics.

But enough of the background politics. What does Empire have to say? The opening paragraph gives a good sense of the overall argument. "Empire is materialising before our very eyes ... along with the global market and global circuits of production has emerged a global order, a new logic of structure and rule - in short a new form of sovereignty". Negri and Hardt are not presenting Empire as a future plan of the ruling class or a con-



spiracy of part of it. Instead they are insisting it has already come into being.

It's important right from the start to realise Negri and Hardt are not arguing that Empire is simply a new stage of imperialism. Imperialism they say was all about borders and the extension of the sovereignty of the imperialist country over specific parts of the globe. They also reject the idea that it is a process being controlled by the United States or that it is even centred there. Rather they argue that it is a "decentered and deterritorialising apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open expanding frontiers" 7.

The idea here is that there is no single institution, country, or place that is becoming the command centre of Empire. Rather all the various global bodies, from the ones with formal power like United Nations or those with less formal power like the World Economic Forum alongside the corporations, the military and, to a much lesser extent, the world's people have interacted to create a global network distribution of power. This network has no centre and is not based in any country but is rather spread globally.

The internet is an obvious analogy for this sort of power distribution. No one body controls it yet it obviously exists, decisions are made on its future and in reality control is exercised over it though national government, service providers and cyber-censor software. Schools restrict

access to particular websites, employers monitor the email of their workers and parents and sometimes libraries use cyber-censor software to prevent access to certain types of information.

There is, however, one point where Empire does give the US a privileged position. This is the constitutional process that is part of the formation of Empire. The opening chapters discuss how this operates both on the formal level of international law and the informal level of the discussion and lobbying around these bodies. Hardt and Negri see the US constitution as representing a historical precedent and model for this discussion. They claim for instance that Jefferson's contributions to the original constitution actually aimed for a network distribution of power.⁸

It is easy to make a counter-argument that the UN and similar bodies are not really global but dominated by the old imperialist powers 9. The top powers have a veto at the UN security council and without the security council the UN takes no effective action. Every World Bank president has been a US citizen and the US is the only country with a veto at the IMF. Hardt and Negri answer this by saying that this very bias is what is driving the formation of Empire forward. "In the ambiguous experience of the UN, the juridical concept of Empire

"Empire is not simply a description of the evolution of capitalism to a new form. It is far wider in its aim to be a post modern 'grand narrative', providing an overarching view of how society (dis)functions and how it can be transformed."

began to take shape" 10. It is trivial to observe that the reaction of many on the left to the bias of the UN sanction's against Iraq for instance or the failure to take effective action over Israel is to call for a better (and more powerful) United Nations.

Central to Hardt and Negri's argument is the idea that interventions are no longer taking place along the lines of national imperialist interest but rather as global police actions legitimated by universal values¹¹. They admit that intervention is "dictated unilaterally by the United States"¹² but insist that "The US world

police acts not in imperialist interest but in imperial interest"¹³. This, they insist, is a role imposed on the US and that "Even if it were reluctant, the US military would have to answer the call in the name of peace and order"¹⁴.

The idea here is that US military intervention is no longer simply taking place for 'US national interests' (i.e. the interests of US capital) but instead occurs in the interests of Empire. One problem with the book is it presents no empirical evidence for any of its claims, and here is one point where evidence is really needed. Much of Hardt and Negri's discussion is drawn from the 1991 Gulf War. Yet even a casual glance at that war shows that alongside the massive US military intervention went a political intervention designed to ensure that the profits of that war, in rebuilding contracts, military arms sales and oil field repair flowed to the US rather than to any of its 'allies'.

On the other hand during the Rwandan genocide in 1994 there was no such compulsion on the US to intervene despite the horrific scale of the slaughter. What intervention occurred was of the old fashioned imperialist kind. When tens of thousands were already being killed on "April 9-10, 1994 France and Belgium send troops to rescue their citizens. American civilians are also airlifted out. No Rwandans are rescued, not even Rwandans employed by Western governments in their embassies, consulates, etc." 15

Hardt and Negri cite Bosnia (where again one can point to political struggles between the US, Germany, France and Britain over their various 'national interests' in the region) but Rwanda passes without mention. Surely this makes nonsense of any argument that we moved

towards a set of universal rights imposed/granted by Empire? The authors simply ignore this glaring contradiction with their model.

The initial reaction of many Empire fans to SII was that this was an almost perfect example of the sort of struggle between an imperial police action and a decentered resistance to Empire. But the Afghan war turned almost instantly into a national war with the Afghan government (the Taliban) squarely in the bombsights rather than the 'decentered' Al Quada. At the time of writing that war is turning into yet another colonial style occupation

using a local government heavily dependent on imperialist (rather than imperial) troops to maintain order. The treatment of the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay briefly raised a discussion of universal values (with regards to the treatment of prisoners). This was rapidly stamped on by George Bush Jr. and the US military, the very forces that we might expect from Empire to be imposing such values.

The wider political row between the European imperialist powers and the US over the planned attacks on Iraq, Iran and perhaps even North Korea on the one hand and on US support for Israel on the other again points to a pattern of intervention dictated by US 'national interests' alone. A non-military example is found in the unilateralist tearing up of the Kyoto greenhouse gas agreement by George Bush on his inauguration. In this case he quite openly claimed US national interest as his justification stating "We will not do anything that harms our economy, because first things first are the people who live in America".¹⁶

"One of the interesting and indeed most refreshing aspects of autonomous Marxism is that they turn the traditional left analysis of the relationship between capital and the working class on its head. In the autonomist tradition it is the success of working class struggle that forces changes on capital. On its own, they insist, capital contains almost no creative power. Although they often overstate their case there is something quite encouraging in the overall picture of capital forced to modernise by working class struggle as opposed to a working class always being the victim of capitalist modernisation..."

All of this suggests that US policy, including military policy, is still determined by what is best for US capital rather than what is best for Empire. This is not quite to claim Empire's argument is useless; it does offer a convincing sketch of how a truly global capitalism might exist and perhaps even be coming into existence. But in assuming the existence of Empire now it leaves a lot to be explained.

Much of what I covered so far is summarised quite well in the preface of the book. Fortunately it's also the easiest part to understand. But Empire is not simply a description of the evolution of capitalism to a new form. It is far wider in its aim to be a post modern 'grand narrative', providing an overarching view of how society (dis)functions and how it can be transformed. Now I make no claim whatsoever to expertise on post modernism because my limited forays into it have been discouraged by the sheer weight of academic jargon one is required to try and digest. So treat the analysis that follows with caution!

The most obvious critique of post-modernism from an anarchist perspective is that in its rejection of revolutionary program, the centrality of the working class, the Enlightenment, Scientific truth etc, etc it left the revolutionary nothing to construct and nowhere to go. It may at times offer a powerful criticism both of life under capitalism and the traditional left but it leaves one with no alternative. Negri and Hardt are attempting to sketch just such an alternative in Empire.

And this is where things get tricky. As anyone who has tried to approach post-modern political writing will know that the very language it is written in makes the ideas very difficult to grasp. You are left with the strong suspicion that this impenetrable form of expression is intended to disguise the fact that there is not much in the way of real ideas present. But let us try and have a peek.

The most obvious question that arises from the idea of decentred power is how will control over the working class be maintained by capital? After all strong

imperialist powers played an essential role in the development of capitalism from the conquest of the Americas and the slave trade to containing 'national liberation' struggles so that independence could be granted while guaranteeing capitalist stability.

Empire essentially turns to the ideas of Foucault to explain how this will be done. Foucault argued that we have moved from a "disciplinary society" where discipline was imposed in the school, army, factory or jail to a "society of control" where discipline exists everywhere, in all aspects of life, internalised by people¹⁷. He used the expression biopower which "is a form of power that regulates social life from within".

Actually the basic idea of the regulation of social life from within may be familiar to many libertarian communists. Maurice Brinton's "The Politics of the Irrational" (1970) which drew on the work of the German communist William Reich analysed why some workers supported Fascism or Bolshevism and other authoritarian ideologies against their own objec-

tive interests. They attributed this to the fact that workers have internalised the authoritarian concept of discipline. We are controlled not just by the fascist or Bolshevik secret police but primarily from within by the ideas formed from everything we are exposed to.

Reich, as Foucault was later to do, placed sexual repression at the heart of this disciplining process writing "the goal of sexual repression is that of producing an individual who is adjusted to the authoritarian order and who will submit to it in spite of all misery and degradation... The result is fear of freedom and a conservative, reactionary mentality. Sexual repression aids political reaction, not only through this process which makes the mass individual passive and unpolitical, but also by creating in his structure an interest in actively supporting the authoritarian order."¹⁸

The arguments in Empire also flow from the work of two other Foucaultians, Deleuze and Guattari, whom Empire says "present us with a properly post-structuralist understanding of biopower that renews materialist thought and grounds itself solidly in the question of production of social being"¹⁹. Hardt and Negri also argue that autonomous Marxists established the importance of production within the biopolitical process.

This is built on the theory of the 'social factory' where the working class is not simply composed of the industrial workers of orthodox Marxism but also all those whose labour or potential labour creates and sustains the industrial city (or social factory). This includes housewives, students and the unemployed. Empire argues that what capitalism produces are not just commodities but also subjectivities. This idea is not all that original in itself, after all even Marx observed that the dominant ideas in any era were those of the ruling class. What Empire seeks to do is put some of the mechanisms which produce these subjectivities at the heart of the productive process of capitalism.

Because they put this production of subjectivity at the centre of Empire they argue that the old centre of the working class, that is industrial workers, have been replaced by "intellectual, immaterial and communicative labour power"²⁰. This claim has been criticised by pointing out that even in the US there are more truck drivers than computer programmers²¹ but Empire counters this criticism by pointing out that the industrial jobs that exist are now governed by information technology. The Detroit car factories may have moved to Mexico rather than simply vanishing but the Mexican based industry does not simply re-create that of 1960's Detroit. Rather in using the latest technology it

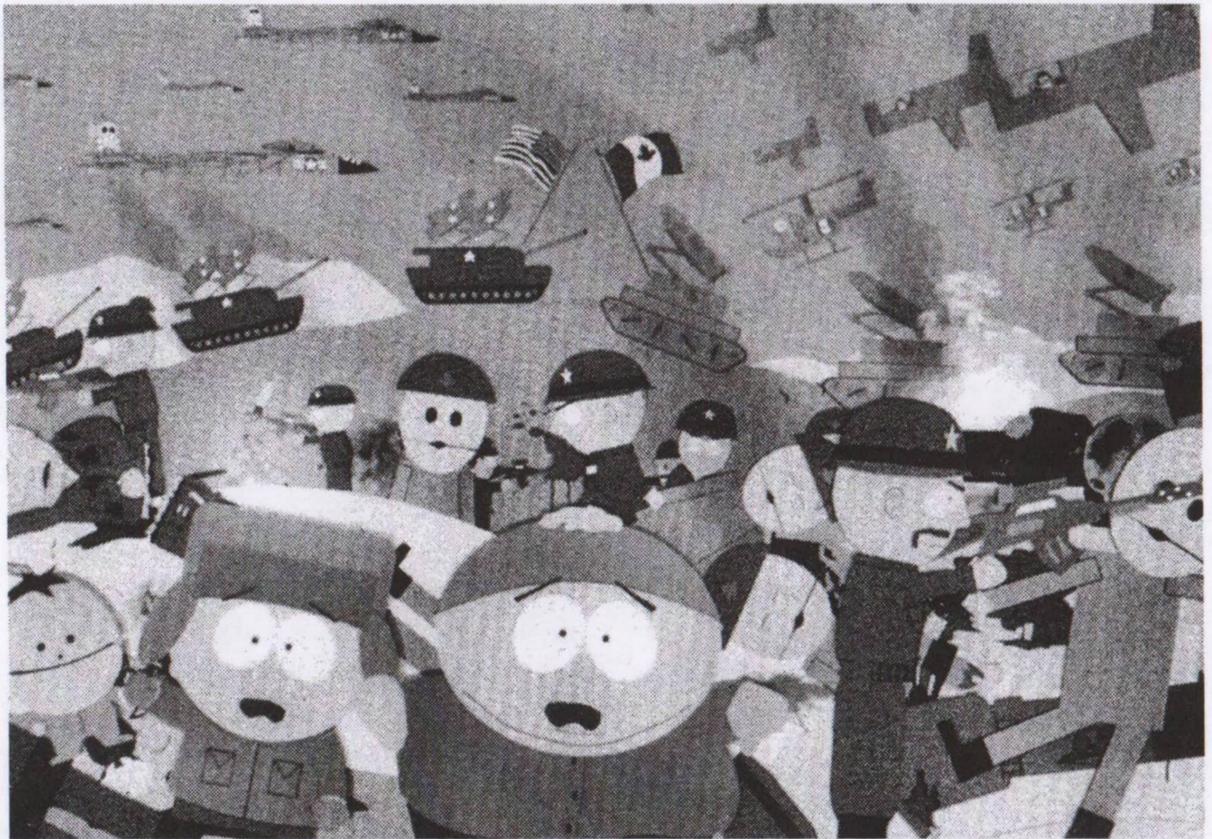
creates a labour process that is dependant on information workers as well as those on the assembly line.

They go beyond this argument that the centre of the working class has shifted. They essentially drop the category of 'working class' as out dated²². They see the proletariat as having grown but in their arguments shift to using the category of multitude. Although they never clearly define what they mean by multitude²³ it appears to mean something similar to the way sections of even the Irish trotskyst left now say 'working people' rather than working class. The need for this new term is an artifact of Marxism and in particular the way that Marx chose to define a working class separate from and hostile to the peasantry on the one hand and the lumpen-proletariat on the other. That industrial working class may now be bigger than it was when Marx wrote but it is also often only one of a number of sections of the proletariat in the vanguard of struggle.

This brings us back to one of the bigger flaws of the book. Many of the better conclusions it reaches, for instance that national liberation struggles offer no way forward, are conclusions anarchists reached 170 years ago. Similarly anarchists have no need to redefine the working class as 'multitude' precisely because we always argued for a working class that included those elements Marx sought to exclude. From the start anarchists addressed both the peasantry and what is called the 'lumpen-proletariat' as part of the working class, sometimes even as part of the vanguard of that class rather than something outside and hostile to it.

Perhaps anarchism has now become the 'stopped clock that is right twice a day' but I'm more inclined to argue that this demonstrates that Marxism took a wrong turn when these arguments split the 1st International in the 1870's. In that case much of the convoluted argument is Empire is only necessary because the authors choose to stand within the Marxist tradition.

Many of the reviews actually call Hardt and Negri anarchists. They really only try to address this obvious similarity with anarchist arguments at one point, when they rejoice in the end of "big government" which "forced the state to produce concentration camps, gulags, ghettos and the like". Here, where their conclusions are so obviously close to anarchism, they fudge the argument saying "We would be anarchists if we not to speak (as did Thrasymachus and Callicles, Plato's immortal interlocutors) for the standpoint of a materiality constituted in the networks of productive cooperation, in other



words, from the perspective of a humanity that is constructed productively, that is constituted through the "common name of freedom."²⁴

This sentence is also a good illustration of how the arguments and language of the authors becomes more obscure the weaker their points are. Even leaving aside the reference to Greek philosophy it's pretty hard to work out what Hardt and Negri are saying. They seem to be making the ludicrous suggestion that anarchists are not materialists, but it is hard to credit authors who go to extraordinary lengths to demonstrate their knowledge with such an ignorant position.

On the positive side one of the interesting and indeed most refreshing aspects of autonomous Marxism is that they turn the traditional left analysis of the relationship between capital and the working class on its head. In the autonomist tradition it is the success of working class struggle that forces changes on capital. On its own, they insist, capital contains almost no creative power. Although they often overstate their case there is something quite encouraging in the overall picture of capital forced to modernise by working class struggle as opposed to a working class always being the victim of capitalist modernisation.

In this case Hardt and Negri argue that the development of Empire is something the working class has imposed on capital. They recognise that it is easy to fixate on ways the development of Empire makes traditional working class organisation weaker (e.g. removing the ability of unions to restrict capitalism on a national basis). But they claim what is more important is that by breaking down the barrier between first and third world so that both come to exist alongside each other everywhere, capital has lost some of the most

powerful weapons it had to divide the working class. Cecil Rhodes is quoted in relation to class relations in Britain "If you want to avoid civil war then you must become imperialists"²⁵

So if Empire means the end of imperialism it also means the end of capitalism's ability to use third world labour to buy off sections of the first world working class. As elsewhere, though this is an argument that you really need to be able to back up with some empirical evidence. There is no denying that the third and first world increasingly exist yards from each other in the great cities. Washington DC is almost as famous for its homelessness and poverty as it is for being the capital of the richest state in the world. Anyone visiting Mexico City or a host of other 'third world' cities is struck by the obvious wealth and the glass skyscrapers of the few that exist alongside the shanty towns and desperate poverty of the many. Yet wage differentials between workers in the west and elsewhere are still enormous.

The above is a brief survey of some of the more interesting areas of Empire. But as I've noted it is a very dense book. Hardt and Negri say at the start Empire is not necessarily intended to be read from start to finish, dipping in here and there is intended to carry its own rewards.

Finally let us move onto the weakest area of Empire, the way it suggests we can move forwards. Let us start by noting that Hardt and Negri recognise that their suggestions here are weak but see this as inevitable at this stage. They say any new and successful opposition will be required to define its own tactics. Returning once again to Marx they point out that "at a certain point in his thinking Marx needed the Paris Commune in order to make the leap and conceive communism in concrete terms as an effective alternative to

capitalist society.”²⁶

This is not a sufficient explanation for the weakness in their positive program. Even their historical comparison with Marx's writing before the commune is flawed. The Paris Commune (1871) did force Marx to reconsider his ideas of revolutionary organisation and the state. But the early anarchist movement predicted the form it took. In 1868 Bakunin wrote:

“As regards organisation of the Commune, there will be a federation of standing barricades and a Revolutionary Communal Council will operate on the basis of one or two delegates from each barricade, one per street or per district, these deputies being invested with binding mandates and accountable and revocable at all times.

“An appeal will be issued to all provinces, communes and associations

written before Seattle but even before Seattle numerous texts had been written on the forms new movements, in particular the Zapatistas, were taking. Given their political background Hardt and Negri must have been aware of this discussion, it is curious they fail to mention it.

Leaving that aside, Empire's strongest point is that it rejects some of the so-called alternatives that are around, in particular any idea of anti-globalisation or de-globalisation, for a return to old style national capitalism. At the moment of writing the reformist forces in the movement against corporate globalisation have been arguing precisely for such a de-globalisation at the World Social Forum in Porte Alegre, Brasil. Instead Hardt and Negri argue we must “push through Empire to come out the other side.”²⁸

They draw parallels with the way the early Christian church transformed rather than overthrew the Roman empire. Hardt and Negri argue that like the early church we need a prophetic manifesto around which to organise the multitude³⁰. Like Augustine they say we need to talk of constructing a utopia but our utopia is simply an immediate one on earth. They praise the early Christian project in the Roman Empire clearly with intended lessons for today's Empire when they write: “No limited community could succeed and provide an alternative to imperial rule; only a universal, catholic community bringing together all populations and all languages in a common journey could accomplish this”.

One suspects they are chuckling at the fact that almost all the orthodox Marxist reviews will be apoplectic over the religious imagery. The last paragraph of the book contains what can only be intended as a deliberate provocation of the left in holding up the legend of Saint Francis of Assisi “to illuminate the future life of communist militancy”³¹ A successful windup as this quote is singled out again and again in left reviews!

A model that will sit happier with anarchists is the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW): “The Wobbly constructed associations among working people from below, through continuous agitation, and while organising them gave rise to utopian thought and revolutionary knowledge”³². Here again though they show a real weakness in their grasp of libertarian history as they claim that while the IWW wanted to organise the whole world “in fact they only made in as far as Mexico”³³. In fact the IWW also organised in several other countries including South Africa, Australia and Chile³⁴ where they reached a size and influence comparable with that reached in the USA. And if the IWW is such a useful model it's odd that they fail to discuss what it is doing today, perhaps they are unaware that it still exists in several countries and see only its historical past?

Hardt and Negri move on to identify the “will to be against”³⁵ as central in the struggle for counter Empire. They reckon that resistance to Empire may be most effective by subtracting from it rather than confronting it head on. Central to this they identify “desertion, exodus and nomadism”. If you hear an echo of Bob Black this is probably because some of his writings are also based on the refusal of work advocated by the autonomists in Italy at the end of the 1970s.

Sections of their suggested methods of struggle are quite bizarre. For instance apparently body piercing represents the

“Hardt and Negri identify the “will to be against” as central in the struggle for counter Empire. They reckon that resistance to Empire may be most effective by subtracting from it rather than confronting it head on. Central to this they identify “desertion, exodus and nomadism”.”

inviting them to follow the example set by the capital, to reorganise along revolutionary lines for a start and to then delegate deputies to an agreed place of assembly (all of these deputies invested with binding mandates and accountable and subject to recall), in order to found the federation of insurgent associations, communes and provinces in furtherance of the same principles and to organise a revolutionary force with the capability of defeating the reaction”²⁷.

This may seem like a side issue but it is striking when reading Empire how the history and writers of the anarchist movement are ignored even when the conclusions reached seem so relevant to the arguments of our movement. Perhaps this simply because anarchism neither sought nor achieved the academic stardom sought by so many Marxist professors. But for an anarchist reading Empire these omissions can only be described as a constant source of annoyance.

More importantly, the example above suggests that like the early anarchists we can make much better ‘educated guesses’ at the future forms of struggle than Hardt and Negri claim. From the European and North American struggles against border controls to the Zapatistas of Mexico there are certain clues that can be read. With the emergence of the globalisation movement and its emphasis on militant action, direct democracy and diversity, the probable methods of organisation start to become clear. Empire may have been

Here, despite the flaws, Empire may have a significant role to play in relation to the non-anarchist sections of the movement around globalisation. Many of these sections are dependent on the theories of earlier generation of Marxists that seem to point to a solution in the nation state and a return to the era of protectionism. The academics pushing this idea may be more inclined to accept correction from a couple of fellow academics than from those they seek to dismiss as ‘window breakers’ out to ruin ‘our movement’.

Anarchists have generally rejected the anti-globalisation label. My contribution to the S26 Prague counter summit demonstrates the line of the anarchist argument: “... the real forces of globalisation are not gathering on Tuesday at the [Prague 2000] IMF/WB summit, rather they are gathering here today [at the counter-summit] and on Tuesday will be blockading that summit. We are a global movement; we fight for the rights of people and not capital and to any sane person this should be far more fundamental. The very governments that are most pushing the idea of ‘global free trade’ are the same ones that are construct massive fences along their borders and employ tens of thousands of hired thugs to prevent the free movement of people.”²⁹

In dismissing a return to localisation what alternatives do they put forward? The initial starting point of their alternative is an unusual choice, St Augustine and the early Christian church in Rome.

start of an important strategy which will become effective only when we create “a body that is incapable of adapting to family life, to factory discipline, to the regulations of a traditional sex life, and so forth”³⁶.

But other suggested methods bear further investigation. They point out that labour mobility has often been a weapon against capitalism³⁷. They acknowledge that migration often means misery for those forced to move. Yet, they say in fleeing, for instance, low wages in one region, people are resisting capitalism. Global capitalism wants a global world where particular regions have low labour costs but if the people of that region flee then capitalism fails to get its cheap labour force.

This puts the current struggles for no immigration controls into a much clearer focus, or at least provides a useful alternative way of viewing them. Fortress Europe for instance then has the purpose of trying to keep workers trapped in conditions of low income and living conditions, a wall that is keeping people in rather than keeping them out.

Consider the one clear recent example where labour mobility had revolutionary implications. The process that brought down the Berlin wall (a barrier to labour mobility) and then the entire state capitalist east was triggered by thousands of East German workers fleeing to Prague and either leaving for the west, or when the border was shut, occupying the various embassy grounds. Today Cuba also has tightly controlled emigration for similar reasons.

Empire comes up with three key demands for the construction for a new world. These are the right to global citizenship and “a social wage and guaranteed income for all”. To this is added the

right to re-appropriation which first of all applies to the means of production but also free access to and control over knowledge, information and communication.

Of these three demands it strikes me that the demand for global citizenship is the one that has already created an issue that is immediately global but also local. The right to free movement without border controls is being fiercely contested all over the globe. In Ireland we are familiar with the struggles within the first world for papers for all and the struggles on the borders of Fortress Europe to gain entry. On almost every border across the world this struggle is re-created as capital tries to control and even profit from the migration of people. On the northern border of Mexico it is on the US side that migrants are intercepted but on the Southern border with Guatemala the patrols of the Mexican ‘migration polices’ are found on every back road.

In this closing ‘what is to be done’ section one can’t help but notice that the book has not really addressed what shape this future society might take. Avoidance of this issue is part of the Marxist tradition but given the authors repeated calls for the construction of utopian visions and prophetic manifestos it is a little odd here. This really is the same weakness as the one mentioned earlier, a complete absence of discussion around the existing movements of opposition.

I suspect the problem here is again the political tradition of Leninism from which Empire emerges and to which Negri wishes to hold onto. Lenin in power saw that the ‘utopian experiments’ of the Russian revolution were crushed in their infancy. Self-management in the factories was replaced by “unquestioning submission to a single will ... the revolution demands, in the interests of socialism,

that the masses unquestioningly obey the single will of the leaders of the labour process.”³⁸ It is very hard to tell from Empire what the decision-making structures of a post-Empire society might look like. Yet after the failure of socialism in the 20th century this is the key question in constructing new ‘utopian’ visions of the future.

Is Empire worth reading? My answer to that question would really depend on who is asking. For anarchists I would say that unless you have time on your hands or are already familiar with post-modern jargon there is not much point in doing anything but dipping in here and there to satisfy your curiosity. Much that is said in Empire will already be familiar from various anarchist texts, quite often expressed in a way that is a lot easier to understand. For those with limited time just read the preface, intermezzo and the last chapter which will give you about 80% of the ideas in 12% of the pages!

In general Empire at first appears to be stuffed full of new ideas but then on reflection you get the idea that the ‘Emperor has no clothes’. In the end though there are gems of insight buried amongst the mass of jargon.

I suspect Empire’s real usefulness will be as a respectable academic Marxist text that will be picked up by a lot of people who won’t, for one reason or another, seriously read anarchist material. There is rather a lot of nonsense spoken by those active in the globalisation movement, often based on Marxist orthodoxy. Empire for all its flaws is not at all orthodox and should have the effect of forcing such people to challenge a number of their basic assumptions. If this ends up with them coming over to one wing or another of the libertarian, anti-state, anti-capitalist camp this can only be a good thing. ■

References with just page numbers are from	http://struggle.ws/ws99/imperialism58.html	22 page 56	32 page 412
Empire (Hardt and Negri, Harvard University Press, seventh printing 2001)	10 page 6	23 see page 103 for the closest approach to a definition	33 page 208
1 See for instance “Toni Negri, Profile of A Terrorist Ideologue” in Executive Intelligence Review, August 2001	11 page 18	24 page 350	34 On the history of the IWW in Chile a Chilean anarchist recommends Peter De Shazo’s “Urban Workers and Labour Unions in Chile 1903 to 1927”
2 The most seriously argued of these is “The Snake”, by Alan Wolfe, written for The New Republic	12 page 37	25 page 232	35 page 210
3 Preface XVI	13 page 180	26 page 206	36 page 216
4 page 229	14 page 181	27 “Program and Object of the Secret Revolutionary Organisation of the International Brotherhood” (1868) as published in “No Gods, No Masters” Vol. 1, p155	37 This was shown right from the start of capitalism in mirror image as the slave trade forcibly moved millions of people from Africa to the Americas with all sorts of legal and physical restrictions to retain them in place both during the passage but also at their destination. South Africa’s pass laws also come to mind as a capitalist strategy designed to not only control black labour but also to keep labour costs down.
5 Jack Fuller, “The new workerism: the politics of the Italian autonomists”, International Socialist, Spring 1980, reprinted at www.isjtext.fsnet.co.uk/pubs/isj92/fuller.htm	15 PBS Online special on Rwanda, www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/etc/slaughter.html	28 page 206	38 Quoted in M. Brinton “The Bolsheviks and workers control” page 41
6 Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 27 page 466	16 Quoted at Financial Times Biz/Ed site in www.bized.ac.uk/case/case_studies/case005-fulltext.htm	29 talk by author delivered to Prague counter summit days before we successfully shut down the World Bank meeting there, I quote it here because despite its wide circulation I have yet to come across any anarchist who disagrees with the idea that we are not ‘anti-globalisation’. Full text at http://struggle.ws/andrew/prague1.html	
7 Preface XII	17 page 23	30 page 61	
8 Preface XIV	18 W. Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, Orgone Institute Press, New York, 1946, pp. 25-26	31 page 413	
9 see for instance the authors’ Globalisation: the end of the age of imperialism”, Workers Solidarity No 58, 1999,	19 page 28		
	20 page 53		
	21 See Left Business Observer Feb 2001 review at www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Empire.html		

Bending the Bars - by John Barker

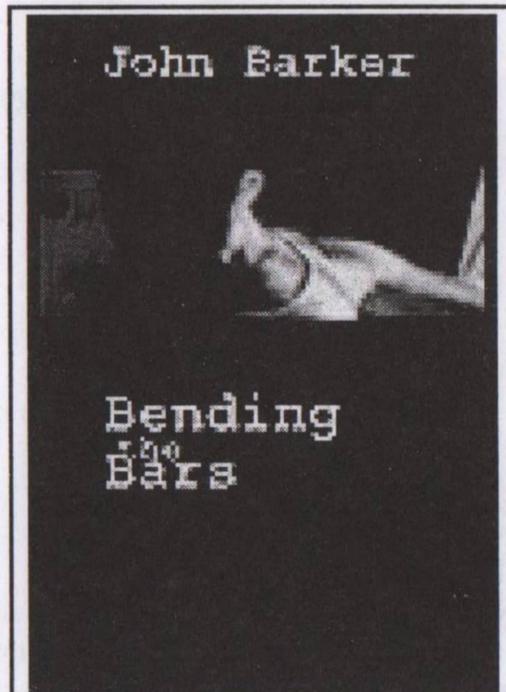
Christiebooks.com, Price £9.95 + £2.00 p+p

Older readers may well remember the Angry Brigade trial in 1971. John Barker made a famous defence at the trial, and later remarked that "they fitted up a guilty man". In his preface Barker calls this book "an unsentimental celebration of the class spirit of many cons" as well as an "obviously selective account" of his first stretch inside. Necessarily so, as the boredom involved would have detracted from a fascinating, humorous book. What you get is a chronological collage of the jails he was in, the mates he made, and their refracted perspectives on what was going on outside. It starts with his period on remand, and that first experience of the cons exercising collective power by having a sit-down in Brixton prison.

The 70s had a lot more going on in terms of everyday politics than now, and this is reflected in the level of consciousness generally among the cons, and the events going on outside. The Hull prison riot particularly energises them. Barker tells of his own experiences, like his first acid trip or the toy rat his mates on the outside send him. When Irish republican prisoners start arriving in the English prison system, he finds much to share with them. In this selective account, it's the spirit of resistance and the imagination the prisoners use to fight back that shines through.

Most of the book is in dialogue form, which is worth elaborating on. Unlike many autobiographical writings which paint the author as a hero who was largely right a lot of the time, Barker knows he is a human. He has a different political consciousness to most of the other cons, but he never pretends it makes him better. He might understand the theory of the class nature of prisons, but all inside are experiencing it. That he gives space to all at times makes the book harder to read, but the value in hearing all those normally-silenced voices makes up for it. Some of the cons' strategies for coping are clearly of their time (obsession with Erik von Danikin's spaceships, for example) but this is like good oral history. If I have a criticism, it's that at £12 this is quite a whack for a book of just over 100 pages. It's written in an informal style and is thus unlikely to feature in many "Best of" lists of prison memoirs, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. ■

Martin H



THE ANGRY BRIGADE: THE CAUSE AND THE CASE by Gordon Carr.

'You can't reform profit capitalism and inhumanity. Just kick it till it breaks.' - Angry Brigade, *communiqué 8*

Between 1970 and 1972 the Angry Brigade used guns and bombs in a series of symbolic attacks against property. A series of communiqués accompanied the actions, explaining the choice of targets and the Angry Brigade philosophy: autonomous organisation and attacks on property alongside other forms of militant working class action. Targets included the embassies of repressive regimes, police stations and army barracks, boutiques and factories, government departments and the homes of Cabinet ministers, the Attorney General and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

These attacks on the homes of senior political figures increased the pressure for results and brought an avalanche of police raids. From the start the police were faced with the difficulty of getting to grips with a section of society they found totally alien. And were they facing an organisation - or an idea? This book covers the roots of the Angry Brigade in the revolutionary ferment of the 1960s, and follows their campaign and the police investigation to its culmination in the 'Stoke Newington 8' conspiracy trial at the Old Bailey - the longest criminal trial in British legal history.

Gordon Carr produced the BBC documentary on the Angry Brigade and followed it up with this book. Written after extensive research - among both the libertarian opposition and the police - it remains the essential study of Britain's first urban guerrilla group. This expanded edition contains a comprehensive chronology of the 'Angry Decade', extra illustrations and a police view of the Angry Brigade. Introductions by Stuart Christie and John Barker (two of the 'Stoke Newington 8' defendants) discuss the Angry Brigade in the political and social context of its times - and its longer-term significance. ■

No War But The Class War! Libertarian Anti-Militarism Then and Now

Edited by Anna Key, ISBN 1-873605-13-7.

Kate Sharpley Library, 2003 -£2

This pamphlet presents 110 years of anti-militarist propaganda, from Spain's last imperialist adventure in 1893, through the First World War right up to the 'War on Terror'. It includes Randolph Bourne's classic analysis of why war is the 'health of the state' and a recent dissection of the myths of Remembrance Day.

Libertarians have opposed the armed forces as the ultimate prop of the state, a pool of scab labour and the place where the authority principle (orders, not logic) runs rampant. Anarchists have always argued that the alternative to dying for our leaders is fighting for a new world. There's a brief glimpse of how this looks in practice, from the Ukraine's Makhnovist insurgents to Spain's revolutionary militias.

Libertarian anti-militarists don't want the kind of peace that is only a breathing space between wars but peace from below. To get all leaders and bosses off our backs, no war but the class war will do! ■

Emma Goldman is, rightly, considered a key figure in US anarchist history. You need only read "Anarchism and Other Essays" or "Red Emma Speaks" to see that she was an important thinker, able to discuss clearly and convincingly on a host of subjects. From 1906 to 1917, she helped produce the legendary journal "Mother Earth."

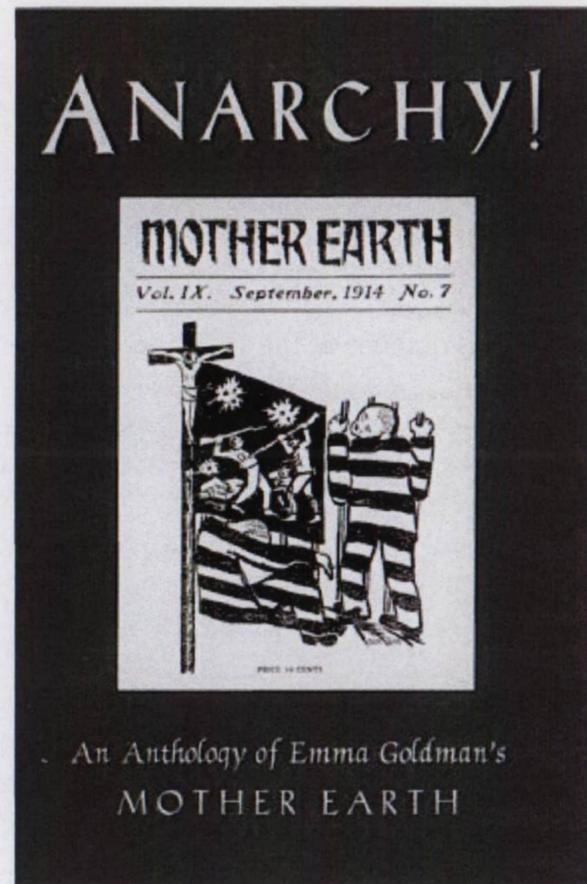
Whilst the journal is often referred to, archive material from the magazine is hard to find. A few essays by Goldman can be found in the above mentioned books but that was it, until now. Peter Glassgold must be congratulated for taking the time to go through over a decade of issues to cull this excellent anthology. It contains articles by anarchists on a wide range of subjects, with contributors including lesser known comrades to such notable anarchists as Goldman herself, Peter Kropotkin, Alexander Berkman and Voltairine de Cleyre (and given the lack of material by the latter two, this makes this book doubly valuable).

All the articles are well written and still enthralling. Reading this anthology makes it clear why the name Mother Earth is still mentioned nearly one hundred years on. It is anarchist publishing at its best and a great contribution to the development and spreading of anarchist ideas. You can understand why the US government suppressed it and exiled Goldman and Berkman!

Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth

Peter Glassgold (editor), Counterpoint Washington - £17.99

The anthology itself is broken up into five sections: "Anarchism," "The Woman Question," "Literature," "Civil Liberties" and "The Social War." Each has important articles, the great bulk of which are unavailable anywhere else. Voltairine de Cleyre writes about the Paris Commune, the Philadelphia General Strike and the Mexican revolution; Goldman discusses the Russian revolution, atheism and feminism; Berkman defends anarchist internationalism, anti-imperialism and anti-militarism against



Kropotkin and his support of the allies in the First World War; Max Baginski argues for anarchist methods to be applied in the labour movement; Kropotkin writes on Mutual Aid and the failure of prisons. All this and so much more.

A powerful collection of essays which not only shows the validity of anarchist ideas but will inspire readers today. It is an essential work for all anarchists who seek to know the history of their movement and use that knowledge to build upon and surpass past glories. ■

ATTITUDE

By Tony Allen,
Gothic Image Publications

In his book, Tony Allen is concerned with how comedy differs from theatre by demolishing the "fourth wall", the shared deceit of acting. This relationship to the audience is what Allen argues characterises performance and his book is called Attitude because attitude is what a performer needs to make that relationship work.

Early on, it becomes clear that Allen likes to play to his home crowd, as his particular political humour requires an understanding of the sub-culture it springs from. He mentions that one of the crucial differences between an anarcho-squatter audience and a lefty one is that lefties don't like anti-work jokes. (Another thing they have in common with bosses).

The most enjoyable parts for me are the tales of creating Alternative Cabaret and

Tony Allen is probably best known as the grandfather of alternative cabaret. His book is part biography, part history, part comedy manual and part analysis.

what it was like at the early Comedy Store shows. That stand-up comedy is today dominated by lads retelling knob jokes and professional patter merchants on a corporate circuit obscures the break that comics of Allen's generation made with the past. Allen himself is keen not to overstate the role of Alternative Cabaret, noting that the rise of the raconteur style of comedians meant that personal authorship became the norm, therefore comics couldn't hide behind the argument that it was only a joke. I get the feeling that Allen would rather see performers challenging themselves and the audience in the process of being funny, rather than entertainment being an end in itself. Even his descriptions of clowning have a political edge to them, albeit an edge that is only visible if you accept that personal behaviour is political, and that play is subversive.

The book is humorous and made me laugh out loud several times, but it's not uniformly funny and certain references are

very specific to the squatting scene. It's in the nature of comedy that some parts are already dated, like the famous chemistry on "Have I Got News For You". Yes, it was there, but it ain't no more! He is scathing on the laziness of comedians doing a weekly topical show at the Comedy Store. I stopped going to comedy shows because they failed to excite me any more and I don't think things have changed a lot since then. Perhaps most interesting is where he sees the current mirror of the energy and radicalism from the late seventies/early eighties' scene: spoken word, a performance form that goes under the sinister alias of poetry. A couple of reviews illustrate the power that contemporary spoken word has, and made me want to check it out, so it's fulfilled at least one part of its purpose.

Not for the humourless, but well worth a read if you've ever considered getting up on stage and literally making a fool of yourself. ■ Martin H

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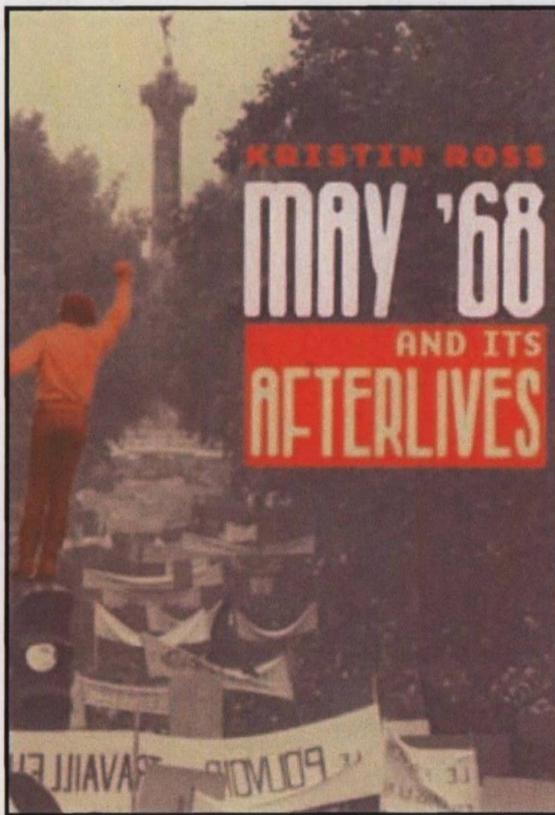
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Bullshit Detector

A Review of 'May '68 and its Afterlives' by Kristin Ross
University of Chicago Press, 2002. ISBN 0-226-727971- \$27.50

The events of May 1968 in Paris are one of the great legacies of the sixties. They show that no matter what concessions are made to create social peace (bigger cages, longer chains) revolution still has plenty to offer; and not just to groups of political nit-pickers. Whole swathes of people can get up and say 'Enough of this! We want to live!' Such inspiring examples, when too large to be ignored, have to be explained away. The rivers of ink which have been used to try and blot out this significance are the subject of May '68 and its Afterlives.

This is an academic book, and the author's not afraid to come out with lines like this: 'Liberation would play a central role in producing and circulating the tropes and images through which May came progressively to be transcoded.' (page 116) Thankfully, most of the book is

clearer than that. If this book has a sound, it's the sound of an axe being sharpened, rather than someone applauding their own cleverness. Ross has her axe out for accounts of May '68 which attempt to portray it as a high-spirited tea party rather than a revolutionary situation, or paint it as the growing pains of capitalism, not an attempt to destroy it. It's important because it reveals the agenda of those who focus on students in Paris in May and sweep under the carpet the unruly workers all across France - before and after May. All history runs the risk of getting tangled in myth, and it's very pleasing to see the process of deliberate falsification and its purpose laid bare. Make no mistake, the neo-Liberal fuckers are just as bad as the Stalinists.

Anarchists would do well to read this since the examination of the 'prehistory' may challenge a few myths of the 'Situationists paint great slogans on walls, and Paris erupts' type. But the greatest strength of this book is that it gives some sense of the liberation people felt, freed from being bounced between working and consuming, able to get on with living - a yawning gap opening up between the-world-as-it-is and the-world-as-it-could-be. My favourite example of this is the origins of those famous posters: the artists first produced some to sell to support the movement. These were taken off them and flyposted: art goes immediately from being just another commodity to something useful. The discussion of the political process during the ferment of May plays up the importance of equality, direct democracy and self-management. It also explains the role of capitalism's expert 'loyal opposition' the unions and Communist Party in the destruction of the movement and that of 'expert' historians and ex-militants (poachers turned gamekeepers) in making sure the idea of liberation stays dead. 'Anonymous militants, neither celebrities nor martyrs, people embedded at the time in the texture of everyday neighbourhood grassroots activity - these are the voices that by the mid 1980s had all but disappeared from any version of '68, eclipsed by those who had become the post facto stars, leaders and spokesmen for the movement.' (page 143)

This is not a study of the events of May themselves - there are no pictures of barricades - but it is a great mental detonator to encourage us to look at them and their meaning. Hopefully next time we'll remember that everything must change and that the privileges of experts - even experts of revolution or social change - are trouble waiting to happen.

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