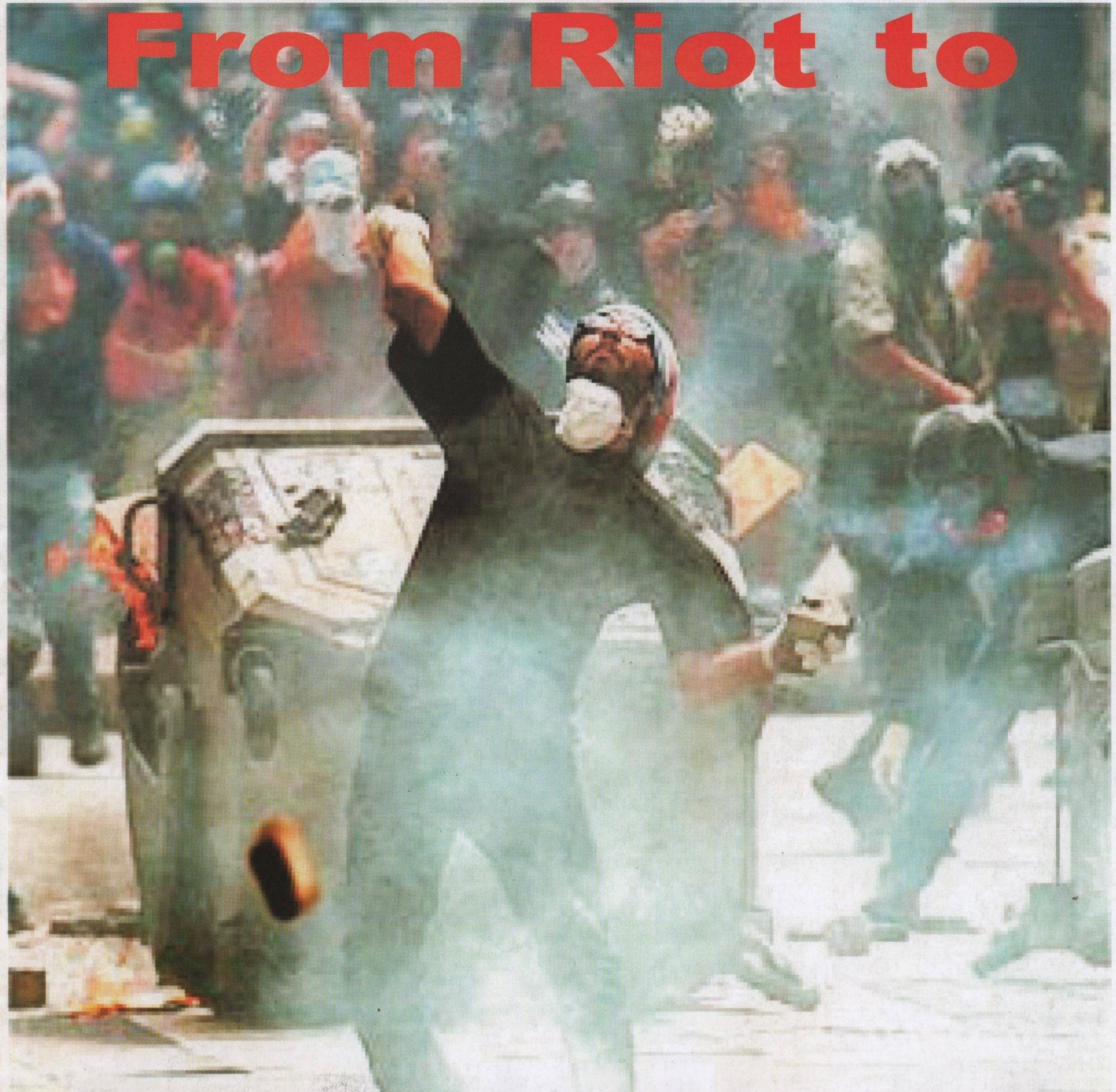


Black Flag



FOR ANARCHIST
RESISTANCE

From Riot to



Revolution?

Anti-Capitalism: Genoa, Brussels, New York, Argentina...

Black Flag



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

Welcome to issue 221 of **Black Flag!**

It has been a long time since the last one and a lot of exciting events have happened: Genoa, Argentina, the protests in New York and Brussels, a general strike in Nigeria — the list seems endless. This is why this issue is a bit cramped!

A recurring theme in this issue is the importance of applying anarchist ideas in working class struggle. As Alexander Berkman once observed “*there is a continuous warfare between capital and labour.*” For the last 20 years the victories in that war have been mostly one way. Are things changing? The number of work days lost to strike action have risen from 282,000 in 1998 to 354,000 for the first 10 months of 2001. Union membership is up, at 6.7 million. Two-day strikes on the rail network have already led New Labour ministers to talk of “*wreckers*” and the CBI to warn of “*Seventies-style industrial anarchy.*” The T&G is balloting for industrial action at MG Rover. The CWU has voted for strike action over the postal workers’ pay dispute.

The current wave of strikes at least poses for the anti-capitalist movement the reality of class struggle as the fundamental of an anti-capitalist project. Only when the “anti-globalisation” movement makes links with working class people in struggle can real anti-capitalism become possible. The direct action scene is doing this. It is the only way forward — an effective anti-capitalist politics has to root itself within the class struggle.

Black Flag aims to aid the development of such a politics and its practice. We need to strengthen the politics of class. Anarchists must argue that direct action (strikes, occupations, etc.) should be employed over pay and, for instance, health and safety, and as a weapon of solidarity. Those of us taking direct action should seek to argue for support demos and rallies, not only to draw other working class people into action alongside us but also to re-establish a militant presence in the public space.

Events in Argentina are a striking confirmation of this, as well as anarchist theory and practice. The “principles of anarchism” (to use Kropotkin’s words) have been reinvented yet again in working class struggle. The basic principle of anarchism and syndicalism, the mass assembly (of strikers, neighbours) is being successfully applied. Hopefully anarchists across the world can help these seeds of anarchy created in struggle to grow and bloom. Together, we can make the ruling class lament “*we would have got away with it too, if it wasn’t for those pesky kids!*”

Black Flag’s New Year resolution is to appear regularly, if (at the start) somewhat infrequently. Practically, this means that we aim to get Black Flag out twice a year, moving as quickly as possible to quarterly. This means that the deadline for the next issue is the 15th of August, 2002 so the next issue will be available at the Anarchist bookfair.

As always, any help with writing, production and distribution will be well received!

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Argentinean Embassy occupied by Anarchists

On the 10th of January, a group of protesters successfully occupied the Argentinean embassy and raised an anarchist flag on the building. The occupation ended with eight of the group being arrested, three of which were held in custody.

In early February the "Those Pesky Kids" appeared at Bow Streets Magistrate to answer bail for their role in the occupation at the Argentinean Embassy. At the previous hearing, the CPS had asked for 4 weeks in which to obtain the Attorney-General's permission to proceed with the prosecution.

At this hearing they admitted that they had not yet got the paperwork ready to send to the Attorney General. The defence lawyers asked for the case to be thrown out, and pointed out that "Those Pesky Kids" had already had their liberty curtailed for 4 weeks, with the bail condition that they do not go within 200metres of any diplomatic premises. The judge agreed to another 4 week adjournment to allow the CPS to obtain permission.

PRESS RELEASE

by *Those Pesky Kids*

A group of Anarchists are occupying the Argentinean Embassy in support of the peoples' rejection of their "leaders".

The occupation of the embassy is in solidarity with the insurrectionary events instigated by the majority of the Argentinean population. We wholeheartedly support the dreams and desires of the people as they reject the right of governments and corporations to rule them.

Once heralded as the golden child of economic liberalisation, the country has now plummeted into a state of poverty and chaos, saddled with US\$155 Billion debt and unemployment levels of 18%. The economic collapse in Argentina is due to the expansion of free-market liberalisation and the imposition of IMF enforced Structural Adjustment



Programs including the relentless privatisation of public services. These very same policies have caused ruin across the globe, from the privatisation of water in Bolivia to the chaos of Railtrack in Britain.

Instead of merely accepting the ruin wreaked by over a decade of IMF austerity measures and structural adjustment policies - policies that continue a centuries old system of profiteering and exploitation - people across Argentina have autonomously organised accountable and democratic self-governing assemblies to transform the country.

We have occupied this embassy to highlight the illegitimacy not just of the Argentinean government, but of all governments. The situation in Argentina shows both the failure of capitalism as a global system and the revolutionary strength of peoples' empowerment.

We endorse the peoples' cry of no leaders no governments!

We endorse peoples' liberation!

We endorse the creation of a new society, free from oppression and exploitation!

We endorse the continued destruction of capitalism!

La lucha sigue

Rebel workers at home!

Railway workers from Arriva, South-West Trains and ScotRail have staged a series of 24 and 48 hours strikes in support of pay claims and to defend fellow workers who they felt were being harshly disciplined.

South-West trains were hit hardest with barely 10% of trains running in the South - most of the lucrative commuter runs into London were cancelled - whilst nearly all of Arriva's northern trains were halted for 48 hours, and are likely to be cancelled again as the dispute (which has already cost £14 million) spreads. In Scotland, drivers are operating an overtime ban which has cut services by 25%.

For the first time in 26 years, staff at the British Film Institute have gone on strike. Intransigent management has forced staff from the MSF union to take industrial action over pay.

It began with the workers walking out for a half-day every Thursday the 26th of January until their demands are met. On the first day of the action, the vast majority of staff at the main BFI office in London took part leaving several floors deserted. Three weeks into the dispute, over 100 MSF staff at the British Film Institute walked out Staff "have had enough" and refused to bow to pressure from the MSF bureaucracy to compromise - the office union reps, on the other hand, were commended for their more militant stance. After the boss sent a patronising email to all the workers, threatening a grant freeze if strike action continued, staff responded by promising to have more people out next week - one union member claimed she "was prepared to walk out and starve to death" rather than cave in.

Other disputes in the UK include the usual Post Office/Consignia rumblings with threats of walkouts in the South-West over disciplinary measures, and the very real possibility of a nation wide stoppage over the plans to open the service up to competition, balloting is already underway.

Industrial action has also been taking place elsewhere: Airport workers have voted to strike at Manchester and Derry; Portsmouth dockers are on the verge of striking and possible lockout; actors have been on strike for two months; Belfast aerospace workers are currently being balloted on strike action, radiographers are currently out, and a whole host of localised disputes are continuing.

Freudian slips...

From *The Weakest Link*:

Anne Robinson: What French word did Karl Marx use to describe those who oppressed the working class?

Contestant: Trotskyists

The contestant got the question wrong because, obviously, Trotskyist is not a French word....

Ronnie

IWW ACTION IN SWANSEA

On 14th and 15th January 2002, GAP, third world labour exploiters/developed world consumer rip-offers, used the Swansea Job Centre to recruit staff to open a new store. Below is a report by an IWW member who went along as part of a planned anti-GAP protest by a number of groups.

"There is need for a job applicants' Union. Some who turned up at quarter to ten were interviewed long after people who turned up an hour later.

People who had said there would be detailed info about the bad points of GAP did not provide it, so that side of the plan fell down.

The IWW provided copies of their recruiting literature, "Every Worker Needs A Union" and some for shop employees called "Shopfloor" which were given to people coming out of the hotel after being interviewed. Only two refused to take a copy, most were definitely pro-Union.

The interviews were held in a Hotel, and some people who were not there for interviews also took leaflets. Everyone who took one was told about the www.iww.org website, and its History section, and Open Forum. Most said they would have a look. More photocopies had to be made for the second day.

Tea breaks were taken at the newly opened Community Resource Centre at 217 High Street in Swansea. The British IWW magazine *Bread and Roses* can now be read there, and they are starting a cybercafe. Perhaps some of those leafleted will take up IWW activity in Swansea."

IWW, PO Pox 4414, Poole, Dorset, BH15 3YL www.iww.org.uk



MMR

A Vaccine Too Far

As a parent of a 9 month old baby, sometime soon we're going to be asked to get her vaccinated. Before the latest scandal, we'd already decided that we didn't trust the MMR vaccine. There are some who don't trust any vaccine, but this is always a difficult call for a parent and I wouldn't criticise anyone's informed decision. However, what really gets my goat is the approach of the government. They lean heavily on GPs to force their patients to take it, up to the point of being chucked off GP lists, while babbling on about patient choice. Yet the only patient choice available to is to fork out hundreds of pounds and possibly travel hundreds of miles to get a single vaccine privately.

So, the upshot of Labour's mismanagement of the NHS is that there is now a growing number of measles cases in my area. The professionals on the TV and radio are all very assuring, but people don't believe them any more, not since they got so many other things wrong in the service of government. And of course the real killer is not just measles, it's the hypocrisy of Blair releasing patients details in a parliamentary spat while keeping mum about how his own children have passed this particular vaccination hurdle.

M.H.

FREED TRADE HALL

Saturday 2nd of February. Manchester's Free Trade Hall was taken back into public use, albeit briefly. Furious at the council's decision to sell this historic public space (it is on the site of the infamous Peterloo Massacre), protestors occupied for three hours and banners were unfurled protesting at the sale of the building to a private developer to be made into a £45 million luxury hotel.

The occupation of the Free Trade Hall was timed to tie in with opposition to capitalism around the world. The same weekend saw huge demonstrations in Munich, New York and Buenos Aires. In Munich nearly 900 people were arrested for protesting as more than 7000 people took to the streets to disrupt NATO's annual meeting. In New York almost 20,000 demonstrated against the World Economic Forum, with 40 arrests. In Argentina there was a huge "casserole" demonstration, with thousands of demonstrators beating pots and pans in a noise demo in the Buenos Aires' main square.

Housing Office Occupied

Around 30 disabled people from the Disabled Access Network (DAN) occupied Burnage housing office on Westcroft Road for 55 hours in protest over lack of suitable housing for disabled people. They left only once the council had an injunction against them.

DAN occupied the ground floor housing office after the City Council informed a wheelchair user (who has been on the waiting list for a ground floor flat for five years) that there were no vacant ground floor properties. Not missing an opportunity, DAN activists took advantage of this newly vacated ground floor building, occupying it.

They demanded a meeting with the housing director, which they got within three days of the demo. DAN are waiting to see if the council will agree to a plan and necessary tools to re-house all the disabled people waiting. DAN won't back down on their demands: "A few tweaks won't do. It needs a real plan looking at the problems and planning a tangible end to them."

Police Brutality at Sellafield

Following on from recent peaceful anti-nuclear protests in Plymouth and at the Faslane submarine base, around 200 peaceful protestors staged a blockade of the two main gates at Sellafield nuclear power plant on Thursday 14th Feb. Despite informing the authorities of their plan to protest, and three previously peaceful demonstrations at the plant, people were thrown to the ground, and police caused injuries as they tried to pull obviously chained together activists apart, while arresting those trying to intervene. The gate was blocked for three hours. Legal actions are being considered against the police.

Alka-Belter

German company Bayer have bought the research arm of failed Dr Frankenstein Aventis, making them the biggest GM research company in the UK. As Bayer launched itself on the New York stock exchange, activists from around the country blockaded their Newbury HQ.

The roads leading into the staff car parks were blocked, as were the main entrance and the rear doors. Banners were hung and leaflets were handed out to Bayer employees and to passers by. The blockade ended as planned. There were no arrests.

from the **Manchester Loombreaker**
<http://www.loombreaker.org.uk/>

Protesters 6 Glasgow Council 0

In March 2001, Glasgow City Council's plan to close the Govanhill Pool complex, was thwarted when members of the local community occupied the building. The occupation ended on August 7th 2001, when Sheriff Officers, supported by over 250 Polis, horses, dogs and a helicopter confronted hundreds of local people who had spontaneously come out onto the streets to fight for a facility at the heart of their community. Next day, the spirits of even the most ardent car hater would have been lifted by the sound of drivers sounding their horns as they crawled past the pool. Local people who had not previously been involved in the Campaign, stopped to chat to those of us who were sweeping up the debris, before pausing to shout "You should be ashamed of yourselves!" at the Polis on duty. A concerted attempt to crush the spirit of resistance in a Glasgow community had become an own goal for those in remote authority, one beamed to TV screens around the world.

This Campaign, the most diverse and imaginative that many people have experienced, now has a permanent hut outside the pool and continues to fight for the re-opening and development of this facility, as well as opposing other attacks on the community. The effects of the Campaign have been far reaching in terms of politicising people who

would not have described themselves as 'political'. Similarly it has enabled people to make the links between the fight in our our community and the war in Afghanistan for instance and to question the system of electoral democracy [sic].

A number of anarchists have been active and supported the Campaign in various ways, however, that is not to say that it has been without controversy. Concern about it essentially being a single issue campaign, which I would argue it is not; and the extent to which a small number of individuals were dominating the decision making process, are both examples of this. Anarchists have been at the forefront in raising the

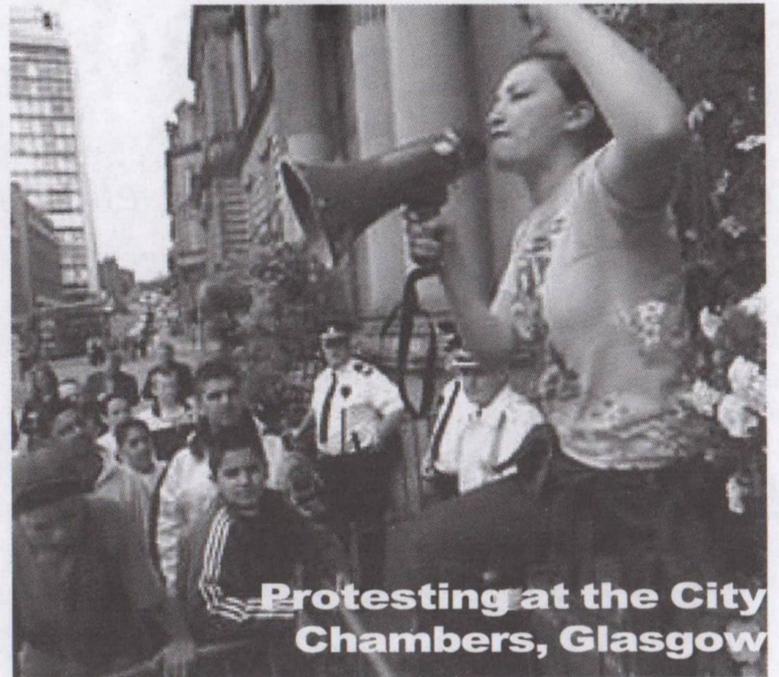
issue of how decision making happens within the Campaign and advocating a more democratic process. The influence of certain political parties, notably the Scottish Socialist Party (now incorporating the Socialist Worker Party / Platform), and whether the Campaign is in danger of becoming a Trotskyist front has also been raised.

I would argue that this is one of the most vibrant and inclusive campaigns

that has happened for years in Glasgow. As anarchists, we believe that people can self organise, spontaneously take collective action and be politicised by doing so. Surely this has happened in Govanhill and despite the Campaign's difficulties and challenges it presents, I would argue it deserves our continued support.

N.S.

More information
www.saveourpool.co.uk



Protesting at the City Chambers, Glasgow

THE GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

The morning I had been bored stiff at an uneventful anti-fascist march. The annual ritual in Glasgow on 24th November, coincides with St. Andrews Day, as a seeming pretext for fascists to emerge from the cesspits.

That over I jumped on a train to Drumgelloch, hoping to see my team - the non-sectarian good guys [Partick Thistle] put one over the rough 'Diamonds' of Airdrie. As soon I sat down I realised my journey was going to be eventful. Sitting very close to a bunch of casuals swilling' lager, in a 'hushed' carriage. Only the casuals were pontificating! I was treated - as a 'innocent bystander' to tales of how they: ICF types, had jumped Motherwell fans, caused trouble at Kilmarnock - presumably as Rangers fans. Today, Rangers weren't playing. After sussing out, overhearing their mobile phone calls that trouble was to be switched to the station next the ground because the

polis were mobilised, I got off in sunny Easterhouse. Fitba isn't worth being roughed up for!

This 'ICF team' while not obviously fascist, were their at the invitationj of Section B, a nazi salute wing of Airdrie football supporters, and at the previous meeting of the clubs, a posse of casuals called the 'North Glasgow Express' had appeared at the end of the game having taken a train ride up to Maryhill with the intention of causing trouble between actual supporters at the end of the game. A few weeks later there was the controversy at the Aberdeen v Rangers game, and the next Glasgow PTFC v AFC game on 2nd February, was heavily policed with the Section B scum ring-fenced along with 'decent' Airdrie fans.

As an anarchist who is 'fitba crazy' I side with the actual football lovers who detest such 'strategy of tension' crap from these sad macho bootboys.

Jim Mcfarlane.

Dead Dogma Sketch

(apologies to Monty Python)

A revolutionary goes into Marxism 2001

Revolutionary: 'Ello, I wish to register a complaint
(the SWP does not respond)

R: 'Ello, Stalinist?

SWP: What do you mean 'Stalinist'?

R: I'm sorry, I have a cold. I wish to make a complaint!

SWP: We don't have time for your contribution, sorry.

R: Never mind that, my lad. I wish to complain about this ideology what I embraced not half an hour ago at this very conference.

SWP: Oh yes, the, uh, the Russian Bolshevik... What's, uh... wrong with it?

R: I'll tell you what's wrong with it, my lad. Its dead, that's what's wrong with it!

SWP: No, no, its, uh, . . . its resting.

R: Look, matey, I know a dead ideology when I see one, I'm looking at one right now.

SWP: No no, its not dead, its resting! Remarkable ideology the Russian Bolshevik, idn't it, ay? Beautiful rhetoric.

R: The rhetoric don't enter into it. It's stone dead.

SWP: Nononononono, no, no, its resting!

R: All right then, if its resting, I'll wake it up!

(shouting at the meeting)

'Ello Mister Bolshevik! Do you know that Lenin and Trotsky advocated party dictatorship....

(SWP ignores point)

SWP: There, we replied to you.

R: No you didn't, that was you ignoring what I said.

SWP: We never!

R: Yes, you did!

SWP: We never, ever ignore anything...

R: (making the same point repeatedly)

Lenin and Trotsky eliminated workers democracy in the army and in the workplace. The Bolsheviks disbanded soviets with non-Bolshevik majorities. All before the start of the Civil War. Lenin and Trotsky both advocated party dictatorship. Moreover, they explicitly argued for it and against the idea of class dictatorship. This is your nine o'clock alarm call!

(raises points at meeting and watches them get ignored).

R: Now that's what I call a dead ideology.

SWP: No, no.... No, it was stunned by the counter-revolution!

R: STUNNED?!?

SWP: Yeah, counter-revolution stunned it, just as it was about to implement socialism, workers' power and democracy! The Russian Bolshevik stuns easily, comrade.

R: Um . . . now look ... now look mate, I've definitely 'ad enough of this. This ideology is definitely deceased and when I embraced it not 'alf an hour ago, you assured me that its total lack of freedom and democracy in 1921 was due to it being tired and shagged out following a prolonged civil war, yet these events occurred before it started.

SWP: Well, its... its, ah ... probably pining for 1917.

R: PININ' for 1917!?!?!?! What kind of talk is that? Look, why did it overthrow soviet democracy the moment it got rejected in the soviet elections in spring 1918? Why did it

abolish by decree elected soldier committees in March 1918? Why did it reject workers' self-management by factory committees and advocate one-man management with dictatorial powers in the spring of 1918?

SWP: The Russian Bolshevik prefers centralised power! Only that is true democracy—local elections, soldier councils and factory committees don't matter when you have a central government elected by the soviets. Remarkable ideology, id'nit, squire? Lovely rhetoric!

R: Look, I took the liberty of examining that ideology when I got home, and I discovered that the only reason that it was still in power in 1921 was that it had imposed a one party dictatorship, repressed all worker dissent, crushed waves of strikes and protests and, finally, suppressed the Kronstadt revolt (which was demanding free soviet elections).

Moreover, it justified party dictatorship and claimed it had to be used in every revolution.

(pause)

SWP: Well, o'course it had to do that! If it hadn't crushed those popular movements then the Whites would have won and no more soviet power. Give it another chance and VOOM! Socialism!

R: VOOM!?! Mate, this ideology wouldn't go "voom" if you put four million volts through it! Soviet Power without soviet elections? Socialism without workers management of production? Secret Police? It is "childish nonsense" to draw a distinction between dictatorship by the party and by the class? (Lenin) The "dictatorship of the proletariat is at the same time the dictatorship of the Communist Party."? (Zinoviev) The "revolutionary dictatorship of a proletarian party" is "an objective necessity"? (Trotsky) Its bleeding demised!

SWP: No no, its pining!

R: Its not pining! Its passed on! This ideology is dead! It has long ceased to be revolutionary (if it ever was)! Its expired and become a dictatorship! It's a stiff! Bereft of life, it rests in peace! Its analytical processes are now history! It shuffled away from the socialist movement, imposed party dictatorship, and justified it time and time again! This is an ex-socialist theory!

SWP: Well, I had better ignore what you are saying and keep repeating the dogma.

(he takes a quick peek to the Central Committee)

SWP: Sorry comrade, I've checked and your three minutes are up and we're right out of time.

R: I see. I see, I get the picture.

SWP: Fancy a copy of Socialist Worker?

(pause)

R: Pray, does it talk about anarchism, the real socialism from below?

SWP: Nnnnot really.

R: WELL IT'S HARDLY A BLOODY REPLACEMENT, IS IT?!?!?!?! I.M.

A serious report of Marxism 2001plus replies to Marxist distortions of anarchism can be found at: www.infoshop.org/texts/iso.html

What are their Names? [1]

Who are the men who really run this land....what are their names.....and on what streets do they live.....



deed (pieing, etc) can contribute to such insecurity, far from 'trickling down', to gushing in their faces!

Jim McFarlane
(from a downtrodden district of Glasgow)

If acid-burnt hippy, Crosby was seriously pondering this subject 30 years later it would be the Sunday Times rather than Class War which he would turn to as the source of information on the wealthiest.

Such is the confidence and bullishness of Britain's bourgeoisie that concerns as to whether such information should be disclosed is expressed in terms of respecting the privacy of "those in the public eye". So when Thornton Hall [2] is exposed as the wealthiest bourgeois enclave in Scotland, we are asked to empathise with respecting the private space of broadcasting wit, Fred MacAuley, sectarian bigot Andy Cameron and Chelsea discard Chris Sutton. Almost one in six of the wealthiest Scots hamlet, between Glasgow & East Kilbride, are said to be millionaires, but their names are sheltered behind the fascination with the famous.

Such is the growing inequality of wealth distribution, unchecked under Labour Government, that Britain boasts the biggest concentration of millionaires in Europe, as the paper writes "no other European Union states comes close". Only the tax haven of Monaco has a higher density of millionaires. Most are content to be domiciled in Britain with its 40% top tax bracket, a rate that makes even the Liberal Democrats & S.N.P. seem radical with their "tax the rich" 50% demand. There care of course, 'even greedier

Brits', officially based in Monaco, Grand Caymen, Switzerland or Spain.

74,000 people classed as British are millionaires amongst nearly 60 million 'citizens'. This is the same number as Germany, with 20 million more of a population. When you identify the numbers of the rich in these countries plus France, Italy, Spain and Scandinavia 283,000 'precious souls' meet this description.

Such has been the explosion in wealth amongst the top echelons - the people who give the lowest proportion of their income to charitable causes & who always 'merit' salary increases or payoffs unfettered by actual work - that to get on Britain's 1,000 richest people list you have to be worth £35 million in personal wealth.

No less than 509 of these richest 1,000 stay in London & the 'home counties' with only 20 in Wales & 17 up in Geordieland. Of Scotland's top 100, 68 live part of the time in their country of origin, while another 32 only visit to grouse shoot!

Very few of the 68 Scots are household names, outside the Business or Sports pages. From the latter you have 'cash strapped' Aberdeen F.C. chairman Stewart Milne at £65 million or cost-cutting John Boyle of Motherwell F.C. at £52 million. Soapy Brian Soutar from Stagecoach & his fellow moralist Ann Gloag have fallen to a mere £260 million in 6th place, two places below that of Rangers Supremo David Murray at a modest £300 million, while

ex-Celtic 'investor' Fergus McCann squeezes in at £45 million back in 56th place.

Eat the Rich!

Traditional wealth from robber-barns like the The Earl of Wemyss, Duke of Sutherland, The Marquess of Bute, The Duke of Roxburghe, The Earl of Rosebery, The Duke of Buccleuch, & Earl of Mansfield, maintain their privilege, sixty interlopers have risen up to the dizzy heights of the upper middle class. Only Sean Connery (£75m), Jackie Stewart (£70m) and Reo Stakis (£56m) are media-friendly super-rich.

To be focussed on such opulence is said to betray 'class envy'. No longer can people be expected "know their place" within the class structure. They have to buy-in to the belief that, through the lottery, starting their own small business, or other means less legal, that they can add to the 74,000.

Despite their confidence, lack of knowledge about such wealth, and the power that is associated, there is a brittle aspect to the world of the fat-cat. Anarchist revolutionaries should seek to expose, in factual as well as theoretical clarity, in each region of Britain and wider just who these people are, and on which leafy boulevards, with camera monitored security etc. do they drive down [3].

It is part of their capitalist project to make our lives insecure and to make us beholding and in awe of their position. As anarchists, committed to the abolition class society, our propaganda of word and

[1] Dave Crosby "If I could only remember my Name" 1971.

[2] 11th in list of postal districts with 15% concentration of millionaire letter boxes, and 2nd outside the home counties.

North-West readers should note that Burton at 16% and Windle Hill at 15% are similarly leafy northern outposts in Cheshire. Loudwater in Hertfordshire at 23% topped a survey excluding the foreign wealth occasionally domiciled in Kensington, Mayfair and parts of Edinburgh.

[3] The other top 10 areas within Scotland are Cults, Milltimber & Queens Road in Aberdeen; West Pollokshields/Dumbreck in Glasgow; Killearn, Kilmacolm & Mearns outside Glasgow, plus Murrayfield and Blackhall in Edinburgh.



Resistance sprouts in Brussels

A huge (50,000 plus) demonstration took place at the EU Summit in Laeken, held near Brussels, on December 14th, 2001. It was livened up by a large (and militant) anarchist block. There was also an anarchist 'manifestation' the next day, with around 5,000 anarchists from across Europe present.

Anarchists from various European groups produced an "International Anarchist Statement" which read:

"All of this resistance, all of the demands that the libertarian movement supports and promotes, through direct action and self-management, are part of a long-term fight to radically change society, to share wealth, establish equality and to build a libertarian self-managed democracy . . .

"We will go to Brussels to show our rejection of the capitalist Europe that the EU leaders are imposing on us. Brussels will retake the torch from Nice and Göteborg. Our fight for social justice, for a libertarian world based on justice and solidarity will not stop with Brussels. In June 2002 the summit will take place in Seville:

"A major March of social resistance will, from city to city, spread the fire of our anger, the cry of our needs and desire for another world from Brussels to Seville."

The protests are "advancing, creating a new world with each step" and "building an alternative together with others." Moreover, the protests are "drawing attention towards our collective fights . . . This is why our acts and demonstrations will go from Brussels to Seville, in a chain of social fights between these cities."

The statement presented a critique of EU society, raising various libertarian demands such as "ample development of public liberties and elementary rights," the "freedom of movement and of residence for all, without taking nationality into account," and the "abolition of all racist and xenophobe



European laws." Rejecting the "capitalist accumulation of wealth in the hands of a small minority," the anarchists "fight . . . to impose a real redistribution of wealth and advance towards achieving the principle of 'to each according to his/her needs, from each according to his/her means'" and "the self-management of all means of production and exchange." This struggle involved the establishment of "a counter-power . . . against Capital and State mechanisms" as a means to "extend and spread the rights of workers and the repressed to expropriate the bosses and shareholders, destroying their control over society." The statement stressed the need for "direct democracy and self-management" and a "truly federalist organisation based on direct action, equalitarian in both access to and use of power, anti-hierarchical and anti-bureaucratic."

The statement also called for the conversion "of military industries to civil and social uses," the "dismantling of armies" and "support for deserters throughout the world."

For the weekend the *Centre Libertaire* was at the hub for anarchists. The people connected to it - mainly, but not exclusively, Brussels *Alternative Libertaire* group - were the organisers of the demonstration on the 15th. They wanted a demo that was not negative (anti-this or that) but a positive manifestation of anarchist ideas and strength (a very welcome change!). Rather than take their message to the politicians, they planned a route through the city's working class areas. This was a success and the demo joined up with a street party at about 4.30pm to begin a procession through a different part of the city, with music blaring. This ended at the park that the anarchist demo had started in.

An inspiring, positive expression of anarchist ideas and one to be applied everywhere.

**Germany, Essen, i2002:
an international solidarity
conference for syndicalist
unionists from all over the world.**

i2002 conference will be held in the city of Essen (Germany) from August 29 to September 1, 2002. The aim of the conference is to exchange experience of workers' struggles and improve global communication and solidarity around those struggles. It is a follow-up to International Solidarity Conference 1999 held in San Francisco in 1999.

The conference is being organised by the German FAU-IWA and to attend participants must agree with the following four principles:

1. The class of those who are forced to sell their labour power (the working class) and the class of exploiters have nothing in common.

2. The working class must organise independently in order to fight the class of exploiters.

3. In this struggle the working class's most important weapon is direct action.

4. Only the workers themselves can do away with the global system of capitalist exploitation.

The i2002 conference aims discuss how to improve the co-ordination of union struggles world-wide, share experiences of self-organised struggle against capitalist exploitation and state control and make that experience available to other workers around the world.

If you are interested in taking part in the conference, please contact:

i2002
FAU-IWA
Wolfstr. 10 (Hh)
D-53 111 Bonn
Germany
e-mail: i2002@fau.org

Workers resisting McMerde!

The workers of the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis McDonalds restaurant in Paris had been on strike since October 24th against job insecurity, working conditions and repression against trade unionists. This, the longest strike ever taken against McDonalds (and in the fast food industry generally), ended on February 15th, after 115 days on strike, with a total victory for the strikers.

Thanks to their determination and unity in struggle, and the help of the solidarity committee, the strikers brought the manager and McDonalds corporation to its knees. This conflict will have repercussions over the world, particularly in the fast-food industry where part-time work reign and where anti-union repression is the norm:

***it is possible to struggle,
it is possible to win.***



White Supremacists Chased Out Of York, Pennsylvania

In January, the World Church of the Creator, National Alliance, Eastern Hammer Skins, Aryan Nations and National Socialist Movement were chased out of York by the spontaneous self-organised collective action of York working class residents (Black, Latino, White, Asian, Jewish, Women, Men, Young and Old) with the assistance of Anarchists and Anti-Racist Action. There was also a well-attended multi-racial unity rally by the NAACP and York City Human Relations Commission.

The White Supremacists were attempting to capitalise off racial tensions which have been brought out recently by the prosecution of York's mayor for his role in the 1969 race riots in that town. Mayor Robertson, then an officer on the York City police force and now forced to resign as Mayor, is accused of encouraging white kids to "kill as many n—rs as you can" during the riots, and giving them ammunition which was used to kill a black woman driving through a white neighbourhood.

The following is a report from Baltimore IndyMedia: Anti-racists showed up early morning in York, scouting locations and smashing all the white supremacist vehicles they could find with small scuffles with any white supremacists they could find.

The black bloc marched around for awhile, found some hammerskins in a parking lot and scuffled before the police divided the two groups. Everyone went around the corner and there the Nazis were held for about 3 hours during Hale's speech (which people opposed to Hale from York took up much of the space so that nazis couldn't attend, rumoured that it got so crowded the cops shut the meeting down and pushed everyone back to the street). People chanted and yelled, and a few people were arrested after some snowballs were thrown.

When the library emptied out, that's when we saw more National Alliance people like Bill Roper and Erica Hardwick. All this time the anti-racist side continues to swell as it is joined by the working class in all the diversity that is in York: black, white, Puerto Rican, Jewish, men, women, young and old.

When the white supremacists tried to leave as the police protected their exit, local kids led folks through an alley (York is a maze of alleys, they are everywhere), to confront the nazis. The nazis got beat on for awhile before the cops were able to come to their defence. They push everyone back (the bloc is now dissolved throughout the community), and police attacks and arbitrary arrests of black bloc and York locals continues to piss off the crowd and build solidarity. A black blocker had her arm broken (or at least severely injured) in this confrontation, but the anti-racists dished out more damage than they took.

At this point everyone is in the parking lot where the Hammerskins originally carpooled, and the police had abandoned it to protect the nazis. Many of the vehicles are adorned with confederate and other white power stickers in their windows, those windows don't last much longer as the black bloc begins to demolish them. The cops make several charges to clear the lot to allow nazis to get to their vandalised trucks. Again the cops continue arbitrary arrests even harassing the medics, which really turns the crowd against them. Most of the easy exits from the parking lot are blocked by clumps of protestors. Repeated efforts by the cops to clear a path through the crowd fail.

Eventually, the police have the nazis trying to escape down an alley. Local crews lead the black bloc the way through alleys to catch the nazis at the other end. At one of these alleyways one of the nazis tried to run down the crowd with his white pickup truck hitting at least one person (black bloc, sprained shoulder, he's doing well), possibly others, including a young local girl which again really pisses off the locals. The nazi flees back down the alley toward the parking lot, where the cops seize his truck.

Now whatever nazis could escape, try to going along different routes and protesters attack them everywhere they find them, alley to alley, street to street. Lots of busted windows and bloody nazi



Italian Anarchists protest against Militarism!

After their criminalisation during the G8 protests in Genoa, the Italian anarchists return! Over 3000 people gathered in Livorno (Leghorn), Italy, on February 2nd for a national Anarchist Demonstration against the militarism of all States.

The anti-militarist demo, called by Antimilitarist commission of the FAI (Italian Anarchist Federation), was relaxed and without incidents. Several anarchist organisations and Leghorn social forum took part in the protest to say "no" to war and militarism. The march showed solidarity with the Argentinean struggle against neo-liberalism by making an Italian "cacerolazo" with pots and pans.

The leading banner read: "Seattle, Genoa, Munchen : repression goes on "



faces. In one confrontation with another white pickup truck with white supremacist stickers, busted out windows and packed with nazis... after being attacked by a crowd, one of the nazis waves a gun and the crowd backs down.

Elsewhere nazis are harassed and chased out of the city. Literally, they were run out of town.

There were 25 arrests, mostly for disorderly conduct who were all released by the evening. Two people had bails set at \$500, which were paid, and another has a bail of \$25,000 and been charged with "assaulting a police horse".

The best part of it all is that they were run out of town by multi-racial working class crews spontaneously organised (though using the organised anarchist/anti-racist action presence as a seed to grow) kicked the nazis out of town.

'We lead by obeying'

A LETTER FROM CHIAPAS

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 1917 Emiliano Zapata's war-hardened 'land and liberty' army marched triumphantly through captured towns. On New Year's day 1994 the 'wind from below' swept through Chiapas as the EZLN, the new Zapatista army, took five towns and announced to the world that Revolution still lives. (It was also the first day of NAFTA.) Hundreds of estate owners fled and local people took back the land. Maize fields, coffee and banana plantations are now owned and worked communally and local people run autonomous schools and hospitals by grassroots democracy. The Zapatista slogan *mandar obediciendo*, 'to lead by obeying', reflects the communities' system of bottom-up decision making. 'Our goal is to govern ourselves,' people from the Zapatista community of Morelia explain, 'to be independent and autonomous of state and federal government. All decisions here are made at the General Assembly where every man and woman over 16 votes. We make all decisions together.'

In Zapatista Chiapas, where I've come as an international observer, 30 or 40 neighbouring autonomous villages, forming 'communities in resistance,' will join together freely to form an Autonomous Municipality. There are now 38 such Municipalities throughout eastern Chiapas comprised of over 1000 autonomous communities in resistance, the cells of the living revolution. In those I've visited the Zapatistas are so strong no government official or private business can set foot. Many set up autonomous schools where children, no longer punished, are encouraged to learn. Indigenous culture and languages are promoted. Local youths are picked by their community to learn to be teachers.

Healthy Autonomy

Health promoters are equally vital in the Zapatistas' fledgling health service. After studying courses like herbal medicine they return to their communities and share their knowledge freely, the idea being to promote life-long good health rather than wait till people fall ill and fill them with drugs. The autonomous clinic-hospitals I've visited were built by the communities.

People came from far and near to donate their labour. Vital facilities like the kitchen are staffed on a rota basis by unpaid volunteers from different communities. The caring dedication of these health workers is striking, though they stress how lack of resources, medicines and often basics like a reliable electricity supply are hindering efforts to improve general health. Some Zapatista communities are improving life quality by installing water and electricity supplies, often with help from groups from Mexico and abroad. Control of these projects stays with the community and the aim is for local people to learn the skills needed to maintain the systems. I've also visited a co-operative shoe making workshop, small village shops run on an unpaid shift basis, and a co-op craft shop run by the Women in Resistance Collective.

Through the Zapatista movement women have organised to greatly improve their situation. 'When it started everybody, men and women, began to



organise,' say the people of Morelia. 'Women left their homes to go to meetings. There was no time for housework. Men used to tell women they had no rights. Now we know that we all have rights. We are happier now because we all have the right to get out of the house, to work in the projects, to participate in the life of our town,' say the Morelian women.

Local, Global

Today we celebrate. New Year 2002 saw Zapatistas from surrounding communities hold a mass gathering in San Andres Sakamch'en in the Chiapas highlands to commemorate the '94 uprising and reaffirm their determination

'We need a world without exploitation,' she insists, and I find myself weeping at the end of her speech.

to defend their Autonomous Municipality. I spend the fiesta in a small community where, beneath a huge banner of balaclavaed Zapatista fighters swooping from the mountains to take the towns, there are folk songs and all-ages dancing, poems and street theatre, interspersed with speeches - not dry rhetoric but impassioned words from the heart. Many tell how the Zapatista struggle is part of a global struggle for change. Their fight's international aspect means a lot to these insurgentes. A woman talks of how they need an end to malaria, an end to the many curable diseases that along with poverty plague the indigenous communities. She also talks of all the animals, wild and

domestic, that live in that beautiful area, and how they need to protect them. 'We need a world without exploitation,' she insists, and I find myself weeping at the end of her speech.

Black Flag readers will appreciate that, as an observer not a journalist, and for security reasons I cannot name this or any other community I've visited, unless already in the public domain. Security? A pervasive myth says Zapatistas and Mexican

government have reached a peaceful agreement. The opposite is true. Chiapas is a conflict zone. Agreements called the San Andres Accords were reached between the Zapatistas and the last PRI-party federal government that would have meant indigenous legal control of their autonomous lands. From this the myth arises. But a new party, the Vicente Fox-led pro-business PAN, has taken power and Tweedledum has reneged on Tweedledee's deal. Fox refuses to ratify the San Andres Accords, instead passing a phoney 'Indigenous Rights' law which the Zapatistas condemn outright. Because of this, its refusal to release Zapatista prisoners and its refusal to end the

military occupation of Chiapas the Zapatistas have broken off all negotiations with the government. Now low intensity warfare is being waged against their communities.

Under Attack

Police, army and paramilitary harassment and attacks, divide and rule tactics, selective bribery, arrests, building new military/ commercial roads - all these are part of the ruling class strategy.

Thousands of indigenous people in Chiapas are refugees, driven off their land to survive on humanitarian handouts. Reading Zapatista press communiqués and talking to people in the know here it is evident the low-intensity war is heating up:

14 January. A 100-strong army contingent and two civilians enter the Culebra and Santa Rita communities - the first military incursion there for over two years - and surround the remote village of Laguna Suspiro, 'parading the violence of their weapons' and insisting the people leave their lands in return for government money. They march to the village centre and, with the men all at work in the fields, are met by a group of village women. The two bureaucrats say they've come to pay for the fruit stolen by the soldiers - and to buy all the communities' orchards and lands. 'Get lost,' the women answer. 'We don't want your money. We just want you and your soldiers to leave - forever.' After 40 minutes the soldiers and officials left.

16/17 Jan. Armed civilians and known paramilitaries kidnap five indigenous men from the part-Zapatista community of San Jeronimo Tulija, and torture them, trying to make them admit to an attack on a Telecom van taking material to a government project, before handing them over to the police who torture them again. With great difficulty and under death threats their lawyer tracked them down. The torture has been denounced by human rights groups and Amnesty International has demanded they be charged or released right away. The men are still in custody.

17 Jan. The Las Tazas community in the Autonomous Municipality of San Manuel denounces the entry of a Mexican Telephones helicopter. 'In this zone we don't allow business to carry out private work,' they say. 'These phones are for private lines. They are no use to the people. As long as the government refuses to implement the San Andres agreements we will not allow the passage of any more vehicles with this material, even if accompanied by security forces.'

18 Jan. A Zapatista communiqué in *La Jornada* announces the Zapatista Autonomous Council, is 'tired of soldiers entering our communities all the

time to harass and rob us. The government continues to impose its militarisation - they are trying to destroy the base communities that support the Autonomous Municipality. They haven't met our demands and are increasing military and police presence on our lands. The situation has worsened since the start of 2002. The communities are not able to live in peace.'

24 Jan Autonomous Municipality of San Juan de Libertad denounces harassment by federal army and police. The security forces are stationed beside



the communities and follow and intimidate their members.

26 Jan Paramilitaries parade with weapons in the disputed Roberto Barrios community.

30 Jan Paramilitaries denounced by human rights groups for invading the Progreso Agrerio community in northern Chiapas and threatening to take over communal land.

The PP Plan

There are regular reports of *paramilitares* and *pistoleros* intimidating and even killing people in struggle - the murder of lawyer Digna Ochoa being the most publicised case. The military have a huge presence in Chiapas and reports of harassment of Zapatista communities are increasing. There are lots of overtly political prisoners and more information is coming through of the Plan Puebla Panama - another Columbia Plan which must necessitate a ruling-class attack on the Zapatista communities' control of land. This Plan, initiated by the USA, Mexican and Central American governments, aims to generate major capitalist development from Puebla city in south central Mexico right down to Panama. Peasants will be driven from their lands and into *maquiladoras*, sweatshop factories run on tax concessions and cheap labour. New

highways and railways are being driven in to open these natural resource-rich remote areas to exploitation - including tourism. With their control of land and territory the Zapatista communities are a major obstacle to this major capitalist plan. The Mexican ruling class has been unable to destroy the Zapatistas militarily due to their massive national and international support. Hence the low-intensity war. But the courage and determination of these people in struggle is an inspiration. The grassroots Revolution continues. And news comes from Guatemala.

Land and Liberty

In Chiapas the presence of Guatemala is tangible. The border appears particularly artificial. The territories of the ancient Mayas stretched from Mexico into Guatemala, and their descendants still live in these lands, suffering state repression and resisting it. The background to today's struggles in Guatemala is the murderous war of extermination waged against the indigenous peoples in the 1980s and early '90s. In one Zapatista community I met a European guy who'd spent months helping to exhume bodies from Guatemalan mass graves. The state and paramilitary forces there, he said, killed 200,000 people. Now an urgent appeal is circulating in Chiapas' San Cristobal. It's from the Guatemalan United Peasants' Committee - landless peasants have taken over and occupied five *fincas* - big estates - in the Morales Izabal area. 'There are constant human rights violations against the people who live in the communities in the occupied estates,' says their appeal. 'Paramilitary groups armed by the region's estate owners are mainly responsible, with the complicity of the police and the army. There have been two murders on one estate and at Christmas three people including a comrade of our association were shot dead in Lanquin, another of

the occupied *fincas*.' Therefore 'there is an essential need for international observers to accompany us on all the occupied estates. So far international observers from various countries in Europe have accompanied us. But right now, given the situation and lack of people available to work with us in our struggle for land, there is an urgent necessity for more observers.'

The Original Earth

What the Peasants' Committee seeks is 'a permanent international presence on all occupied estates so we don't have to mourn future victims. So far the presence of international observers or "accompaniers" has had an excellent effect in deterring the violence against us. There can be no doubt that those responsible for this violence are directing their attention to the places and times where there are no international observers.' Despite repression the peasants continue to fight for their original earth. 'In the future,' says the United Peasants' Committee, 'it is likely there will be land occupations in other communities and regions.' Several people I've met in Chiapas have gone to Guatemala to join the international observers on the occupied estates. I only hope that international solidarity can help prevent more murders and massacres and help the courageous direct action of the peasants to win back the land for the people. Even a letter or e-mail of support can greatly help.

Zapata Vive!

I only saw it on video in a Zapatista community but watched in amazement as peasants raised machetes and crashed them onto police riot shields. The people of San Salvador Ateneco in Texcoco are determined to stop their land being turned into a tourist airport and weren't going to let police stop their march through Mexico City (see photo.) Earlier this year they captured government vehicles surveying for the airport and paraded them in triumph through their village. Now they're forging links with striking teachers, students and workers and have asked the Zapatistas for help.

In Chiapas in January I went to a site where Zapatistas from four Autonomous Municipalities defended the communal store from further attack by coffee-growers' heavies who had taken over the building by assaulting locals and international observers. Now the main road store is continuously guarded. Throughout Chiapas people are refusing to pay electricity bills. The spirit is strong. It has to be. Zapatista communities at Roberto Barrios are preparing to resist a Plan-linked luxury

Anarchists in New York

January 31st to February 3rd saw anti-WEF protests in New York. The World Economic Forum (WEF) is, essentially, a dining club for the world's ruling class. It held its annual meeting in New York rather than in the resort town of Davos, Switzerland due, they claimed, to events on September 11th. Over 20 000 people took part in protests.

The protests disproved the claims of some in the media that the anti-capitalist/anti-globalisation movement had collapsed post-9/11. Clearly, it had not and the anti-WEF protests showed that activists in the US are defying the state's authoritarian agenda at home. "I think it's inappropriate to keep your mouth shut," stated Payal Parekh. "These protests show that people in New York and around the country are not going to be repressed into accepting a police state."

Anarcho-pagan and leading activist Starhawk concurred: "in a climate in which the police are widely seen as heroes and the very thought of protest is suspect, getting that many people out on the streets has to be seen as a victory. We reclaimed some political space, asserted our right to dissent, and hugely raised the social costs for the World Economic Forum. We forced the incipient police state to reveal itself, and actually changed the tone of the news coverage so in the end, New Yorkers were asking whether the Forum had any business coming to

town, and whether it was the kind of thing we want to support, anyway." She stressed that the actions had "mobilised people in spite of a climate of public fear and official hostility that's hard to imagine unless you experienced it."

The protests were organised, in the main, by anarchists. David Graeber of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (ACC): "this was perhaps the first action [in North America] that was entirely put



together by the 'bad' protesters". Eric Laursen of the Another World is Possible (AWIP) Coalition argued that the protests had "showed the success of organising a mass action, even after 9-11, without resorting to leaders, bosses or hierarchies." Both speakers are alluding to the decision, both explicit and implicit, of major American unions and NGOs to not significantly mobilise for protests against the WEF. That left the bulk of organising work to groups like AWIP and the ACC, which emerged

tourist development with road and exclusive golf course planned for the north Lanacondon jungle area, near famously beautiful falls. On 26 January the area saw paramilitaries openly parading with weapons and a local *catechista* (a revolutionary lay preacher) has received death threats for speaking out against the Plan Pueblo Panama. In the face of such adversity the Zapatistas continue to find their own ways of meeting their needs and of communally inventing their own solutions.

I think of the New Year speeches of these people with a new world in their hearts, the woman whose words made me weep, and the man who proclaimed 'We are constructing our own independence, our own way of governing ourselves. We don't need the government.' *No*. But they do need our help and support.

The machetes are sharp. *No pasaran!*

Some quotes taken from the excellent book *Never Again A World Without Us (Voices Of Mayan Women In Chiapas)* by Teresa Ortiz, EPICA 2001.

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Donations for autonomous schools & hospitals to:

Chiapaslink, Box 79, 82 Colston Street, BRISTOL BS1 5BB.

Guatemalan land seizures, support and updates:

COMITE DE UNIDAD CAMPESINA (UNITED PEASANTS' C'TTEE)
31 Ave. 'A' 14-46 Zona 7, Ciudad de Plata, 01007 Ciudad de Guatemala, C.A. GUATEMALA.

E-mail: cuc@guate.net Fax/Tel: (00 502) 594 9574

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from the anarchist-oriented New York City Direct Action Network. In the words of Starhawk:

“it was a victory for anarchists: it showed that we have the courage to go where the more liberal groups are afraid to go, it showed that we have the maturity and sophistication to adjust our tactics to the situation at hand, and that a big mobilisation can be organised non-hierarchically. It stole the thunder of the parasitic sectarian groups that always attempt to position themselves as leaders of the movement, and put the anarchists out in front.”

While this may mean that the anti-WEF may, like J18, be relegated to the footnotes of future histories of anti-globalisation movement written by liberals and leftists, anarchists should be proud of its success. The liberals bailed and anarchists took up the slack.

The anti-WEF protests dispel the myth that anarchists are parasitic on the wider movement. As Graeber argues, “the way you usually read about globalisation protests in the media — even the progressive media — there are ‘good’ protesters (labour unions or NGOs like Public Citizen and Global Exchange) and then there are ‘bad’ protesters — scary, window-smashing anarchist kids whose senseless ‘violence’ only acts to bring down police repression and undercut the good protesters’ message. This was always a ridiculous dichotomy, but the January protests in New York surrounding the World Economic Forum ought to lay this myth to rest.”

The protests have provoked a healthy discussion within the North American movement on the lessons to be gained for future events. One key area of discussion is on organisation. The Curious George Brigade collective, for example, argues that while “any anarchist should be happy with the infrastructure in place during the anti-WEF convergence” in terms “of the decentralisation of the spaces and projects, the quality of the work and mutual aid,” the ACC’s flaw was that it never completely committed to radical decentralisation as a strategy” and “it fell back on centralisation.” They argue that “our growth will be retarded until



No matter how many times people may make bad jokes about “anarchists organising?!?”, the fact is that over 20,000 people came to an anarchist organised event.

we successfully transcend Seattle-style tactical centralisation based in spokes councils, rigid overarching plans and leader types. As the anti-WEF convergence in NYC has shown us, we can successfully organise the infrastructure of a mass demo along the lines of decentralisation. Tactics must now follow.”

However, they do not explain how to co-ordinate the autonomous actions they see as essential. Other activists see this problem. One, Chuck0, argues that “the spokescouncil, as used in the anti-globalisation movement, is a democratic anarchistic way of making decisions that anarchists should support . . . there are many criticisms that can be made about spokescouncils, especially the way that cliques of protest organisers can sometimes use them to steer and agenda.” He stressed that “the best antidote to that” is not rejecting organisation but “making sure that more people understand how spokescouncils work.”

Another area of discussion revolves around the decision to avoid confrontation by organising legally. In Starhawk’s words, the victory “was won at a cost . . . the price we paid was getting a legal permit for the march. The New York organisers of the march were mostly anarchists who ordinarily would be as likely to organise a Republican fundraiser as a legal, permitted march . . . I believe they made the right political decision. There was simply no possible way to take stronger actions in that climate of fear and hostility without first establishing some arena for broader public support to be shown. But the march was undeniably frustrating. The

police succeeding in controlling our space, from the very beginning.” Unsurprisingly, the police broke the agreements they had made, attacking and arresting the peaceful protestors at will (undoubtedly taking advantage of the concern of activists not to allow the media to frame the movement as another al-Qaeda come to terrorise an already traumatised community).

The frustration of this is noticeable from participant discussion. As Graeber argues, “Anarchy and direct action are not about transgressing laws simply for the sake of it, but ultimately about creating spaces that can stand outside of power,

autonomous zones in which one can begin experimenting with things like direct democracy. It’s about a vision for what a truly free society might look like. But in order to do this, one must transgress the law. At least, this is what we discovered as soon as anyone applied for a permit. The moment you start submitting to the logic of the state, everything changes.”

Lastly, there is the media. The UK media barely covered the NYC protests, if at all (in the US, the media reported 2,000 protestors!). For all their denouncing of “violent” protestors, it seems apparent that peaceful protest is not newsworthy in their eyes. If “violence” is obscuring the issues, then why are these issues not covered without it? Their hypocrisy is clear. As Graeber notes, “Nightline had taped an elaborate segment which, for once, actually would have discussed the central issues of the globalisation movement. But producers cancelled the show because of the lack of ‘violence’ in the news — even after police preemptively swept up 150 activists the next day for the crime of walking down the street. The prisoners were held for days, and as they emerged from jail, nursing broken fingers and black eyes, almost all had exactly the same reaction: We tried being nice. Now we know where that gets us.”

The anti-WEF protests give anarchists across the world much to be proud of and much to discuss. We need to learn from the successes and failures of our comrades around the world.

John Mckie

www.infoshop.org
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Revolt in Italy

Huge strikes and demonstrations have taken place in Italy. The spark for this wave of militancy has been the Prime Minister's attempts to steamroller through changes to the law which would reduce pensions and make workers easier to sack. A phenomenal 600,000 workers have taken to the streets - including 60,000 in Milan and 50,000 in Bologna. Workers in the following sectors have been out on strike - tram, bus, metro workers, national railway, ferry, port and airline.

200,000 march in Rome against racist law

Rome, Saturday 19th January. Approximately two hundred thousand marched through the streets of central Rome from Piazza Esedra to Piazza Navona to protest the proposed Bossi/Fini Law, a law which is clearly racist, and which could signal the start of an attack on general labour rights and conditions with possible future ramifications for ALL workers in Italy.

The march was entirely peaceful and was composed of scores of different organisations of all shades of left including a sizeable anarchist section which included representation from the Federation of Anarchist Communists (FdCA), Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) and USI/AIT (Italian Syndicalist Union).

Also present were members of the various grass-roots labour unions, such as UNICOBAS, COBAS, RdB and CUB and large numbers of immigrants from all over the world many of whom sported "No Borders - No Nations" banners.

Anti-Authoritarian unions strike in Italy

Over 150 000 workers on strike came from all over Italy to demonstrate in Rome on 15th February against the Berlusconi government's attempts to worsen labour's rules and workers' rights. Workers from all sectors participated and there is a growing demand for a further strike to be declared by all the Italian unions.

The demonstration was organised by all the Italian base-unions. This was a very important day for the base-unions as a common platform was created despite of the many differences existing between the unions. UNICOBAS, COBAS, CUB, SLAI-Cobas, USI-AIT and others have organised together and called out all workers in the struggle against the government. Equally, it is a great success for all those libertarian activists inside the unions who have constantly tried to build a common platform for class-struggle syndicalism.

Striking all over the world...

Workers fight privatisation with solidarity in South Korea

February 26 saw tens of thousands of auto and heavy industry workers joining a strike by others in the rail and power industry, spreading labour unrest intended to halt South Korea's privatisation program.

Ignoring government warnings, workers at South Korea's biggest car company, Hyundai Motor Co., and other firms, downed tools in support of a state sector union campaign against the government sell-off.

The strike forced the cancellation of an estimated 60 percent of rail services, but the government has mobilised non-union workers to keep power stations open.

Unsurprisingly, the media and employers are going on the offensive. The government has declared the two-day-old strike illegal and ordered the arrest of 36 union leaders. Dozens of union activists have taken refuge at Myongdong Cathedral in Seoul or gone into hiding. The newspapers urged the government to take action. Five employers associations issued a joint statement urging "firm action including the use of police against illegal strikes."

Around 8,000 state employees are blockaded by riot police in two Seoul university campuses with hundreds of unionists with steel pipes on guard ahead of planned rallies. The school authorities at the universities camped asked police to drive the striking workers out of the campuses. Police helicopters dropped leaflets on the campuses urging the unionists to go back to work.

The union federations are divided, with the FKTU holding talks with the government, while the KCTU warning it would call out more workers if the government rejected demands to stop privatisation, cut working hours and increase pay.

In addition, many members of the traditional unions joined the protest, disappointed by CGIL-CISL-UIL decision to cancel a similar strike.

The Blair-Berlusconi's statement about more flexibility in the European working market has been received with surprise and rage by the traditional unions. Opposition is growing. Workers' struggles are struggles for everybody's rights.

Nigeria paralysed by general strike

A general strike in Nigeria paralysed most of the country's main cities and brought commercial life to a standstill in January this year.

Offices and banks shut down, petrol stations closed and streets were empty as workers protested at a rise in fuel prices. In the district of Ikorodu, youths burned tyres and tried to block roads. In Lagos, usually one of Africa's most congested cities, the streets were deserted and shops were closed. There were clashes between police and protesters. The stoppage also shut down most provincial cities.

The price of petrol and diesel has long been one of Nigeria's hottest political issues. The country has large oil reserves and its production costs are low, so Nigerians have come to see cheap petrol as their right. The strike was called by the Nigerian Labour Congress, Nigeria's collective trade union body, after it failed to reach a compromise in a dispute with the government over a recent 18% rise in the price of fuel.

The unions ignored the government's declaration that the protest was illegal. Earlier, Nigerian police had detained the country's main union leader in the capital and used tear gas to break up a demonstration outside government offices. The union leader Adams Oshiomhole and about a dozen of his supporters were charged with "unlawful assembly and inciting the general public against the government."

The government is taking a hard line due to the success of the last general strikes in mid-2000 which forced the government to back down over fuel prices. This time the government tightened security throughout the country ahead of the strike. The Governor of Kaduna State told reporters that "definite steps have been taken and will be reinforced to ensure the safety of lives and property." The Federal government secretary warned that security forces had been ordered to deal "appropriately" with potential lawbreakers.



AFTER SEPTEMBER 11TH

"It is the moment of the boomerang, the third stage of violence; it comes back and hits us, and no more than on the other occasions can we understand that it is our own violence. The 'liberals' are dumbfounded; they recognise that we were not polite enough with the natives, that it would have been fairer and more prudent to grant them certain rights as far as possible; they asked for something better than to be admitted in batches and without sponsors into that very exclusive club-our species: and now this barbaric and mad outbreak spares them no more than the bad colons."

Jean Paul Sartre, preface to Franz Fanon's **The Wretched of the Earth**, 1961.

In all the liberal hand-wringing after the attacks on Washington and New York on September 11th there is much that was initially claimed for the West that must now be denied. The war on Afghanistan was, we were told, to be a war against terror. The war against terror cost over 3,700 civilian lives- lives squandered in the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas by the US and its allies as a means of breaking support for the Taliban. None of this is anything new. In 1935 the RAF bombed villages in Burma to break support for an uprising. In the same year it bombed villages in north-western India to stem revolt. In his *A History of Bombing* (Granta 2000), Sven Lindquist quotes the Swedish poet Bergman: "We blow it to bits. We civilise with explosions. Here lie the civilised, in long quiet rows." During the Spanish civil war, the Germans dropped millions of bombs on Republican-held towns and villages. Guernica was destroyed. The air attack on Guernica was described at the time as "the most gruesome episode in the history of modern warfare." The firebombing of German cities in order to break the "morale of enemy civilian population" throughout the 1939-45 period put paid to that notion. In 1942, 37,000 tonnes of bombs were dropped on Germany in night raids calculated to kill 1,000,000 civilians, seriously injure another 1,000,000, and leave 25,000,000 homeless. After the war, the scientist Freeman Dyson, who had worked as an operations analyst during the war, wrote that the Nazis had "sat in their offices, writing memoranda and calculating how to murder people efficiently, just like me. The main difference was that they were sent to jail or hanged as war criminals, while I went free."

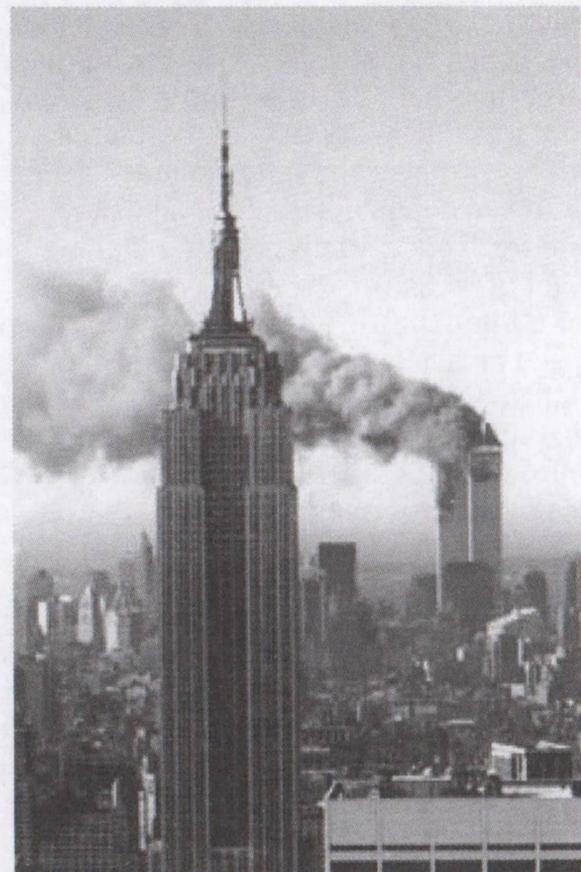
With war, the obscene becomes the norm. After Dresden -Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Two hundred thousand died after the first atom bomb was dropped without warning on Hiroshima. In 1948, through air raids, mass arrests and arbitrary executions, France put down a

revolt in Madagascar at the cost of 89,000 lives. The US "liberated" Korea in the same manner. In its failures in Vietnam, the US dropped 8,000,000 tons of bombs (the equivalent of 640 Hiroshimas.) On and on - Iraq bombed "to the Stone Age" in the name of freedom and in Afghanistan, the war against terror relies on the oldest trick in war - terror! As for the notion that the war in Afghanistan represented some "defence" of civilised values -the concentration camps erected at Guantanamo Bay make that lie dead as soon as uttered. In order to legitimate their own inhumanity, the US and its allies have to render their victims less than human. Masked, bowed, chained. So much for the "values of the free world."

While it ought to be possible for consistent anti-imperialists to condemn the September 11th attacks on the basis that the means involved profane the ends, it cannot be denied that the

the war against terror relies on the oldest trick in war - terror!

Pentagon and the World Trade Centre are symbols of US imperialism - at its most flagrant in the case of the Trade Centre towers. Nor can it be the case that condemnation from the likes of George Bush and Colin Powell - staunch adherents of the pursuit of "collateral damage" can be accepted as anything other than self-serving-moral judgements from a pack of blood-daubed amorality. It is difficult not to disagree with bin-Laden's 1996 comments (published in the Australian Call of Islam journal) "As for the accusation of terrorising the innocent, the children, and the women, these are in the category "accusing others with their own affliction in order to fool the masses." The evidence overwhelmingly shows America and Israel killing the weaker men, women and children in the



Muslim world and elsewhere...America continues to claim that it is upholding the banner of freedom and humanity, whilst these deeds which they did, you would find that the most ravenous of animals would not descend to."

September 11th and the war against the Taliban pose a problem for the secular left (including the anarchist movement) at an existential level in that - like the growth of support for the British National Party within sections of the white working class - the rise of political Islam holds a mirror up to the left's redundancy. The broken promises of the left's anti-imperialism - which never amounted to much beyond a few newspaper headlines - have left Muslim

youth to look elsewhere for the prospect of social change. If young men from Brixton and Croydon and Tipton choose to go to Afghanistan to take up arms against US imperialism it is in part because the promise of equality of socialism has been replaced by the promise of Islam, the promise, as the Islamic scholar Imam Mohammed al-Asi articulates it (Crescent International newspaper January 1-15 2002) of "Allah's divine society on earth, in which the norm is common care, mutual responsibility, complementary love and interactive co-operation." In part also because, as the Muslim journalist Faisal Bodi makes clear, most Muslims, faced with poverty and continued repression and discrimination feel "they no longer have any contract with the state worth honouring." There is a third reason,

though, the most clear and the most damning of all- and it is writ large in the spectacle of September 11th - the left has forgotten that to bring about a desired goal it is necessary not solely to dream but also-to act. The left's pseudo-Gramscian delusion that social change requires above all else a battle at the level of ideas is exposed by the fact that for all its capturing of much of the space of academia, its social impact is almost non-existent. We might want to characterise suicide bombings as the politics of despair, we might want to decry the atrocity of September 11th, but our criticism would cut deeper if we had at any stage in the last 20 years displayed a capacity for action which matched our capacity for endless reams of invariably unreadable propaganda.

Jean Paul Sartre, writing of the level of violence deployed by anti-colonial militants in the Algerian struggle for independence, recognised that "We find our humanity on this side of death and despair, they find it beyond torture and death. We have sown wind; they are the whirlwind. Sons of violence, at every instant they draw their humanity from it: we were human beings at their expense, they are making themselves human beings at ours." If we believe it is possible to pursue methods of collective struggle for emancipation that are both more effective and less nihilistic than the actions of al-Qaida, then we have a duty to act-to demonstrate through practice.

Whatever else was displayed to the "sons of violence" of the Middle East through September 11th, al-Qaida's willingness to act in pursuit of its ends was undeniable. Perhaps also we need to bear in mind that the forms of collective struggle we seek to pursue are more effective-given the sheer military superiority of the US and European forces-if carried out by those of us who live and work in the cities "this side of death and despair," and that to those on the other side of that line, actions such as September 11th appear as the only option left. What use the traditional models of secular resistance if they end in the massacres inflicted on militant populations in Indonesia, Chile, Argentina, Chechnya etc.?

In his 1955 work *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus explored the question of suicide - "judging whether life is or is not worth living." He notes that "dying voluntarily implies you have recognised...the absence of any profound reason for living, the insane character of that daily agitation and the uselessness of suffering." The question posed, though, is more complicated. "One kills oneself because life is not

worth living, that is certainly a truth - yet an unfruitful one because it is a truism. But does that insult to existence, that flat denial in which it is plunged come from the fact that it has no meaning? Does its absurdity require one to escape it through hope or suicide-that is what must be clarified, hunted down and elucidated, while brushing aside all the rest." And here is the crux of it - that the despair which is the essence of everyday life in Chechnya, in Gaza, (and given the universality which is at the heart of Islam in the concept of the ummah, a despair felt as much in Tipton or Saudi Arabia as in the refugee camps of the Palestinian people) has politicised the rejection of the absurdity of life through the act of suicide, such that the militants of Hamas and al-Qaida fuse hope and suicide in the same act, in that through their death they seek to push forward a struggle against the absurdity and despair of their lives and the lives of those around them.

If we want to substitute for this "logic to the point of death" a politics based on what Camus called "a lucid invitation to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert" we have necessarily to be able to pursue the logic to the point of death even if our

Outside the real struggle between classes the demands for equality and freedom are meaningless.

deaths are not to be our means to an end we will never enjoy. We have to recognise that revolutionary politics involves the need to act, to act beyond the limits of the state and the laws of the state and that acting to "live and to create" ought, to be effective, involve an absolute refusal of "this life" on the terms offered even if the refusal is a collective act of refusal, of revolution, rather than an act of self-destruction. We do not need to embrace the methods of al-Qaida to acknowledge the need to ask ourselves why kids from Birmingham and Luton see their revolt as authentic and ours as not worth a passing thought. With the Taliban more of an attraction for working class Muslims and the BNP more of an attraction for working class whites the question could not require more urgent examination! From the state's view point, things could not be better - simulacra of revolt become substitutes for real efforts at social transformation, and the system of exploitation goes on the same.

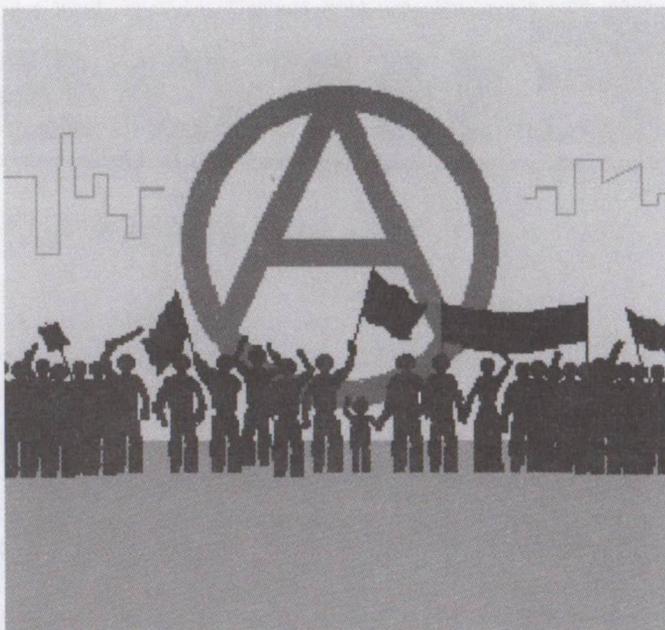
In relation to winning back working class Muslims, on one level the solution could not be clearer. It ought

to start with organising effective solidarity with those Islamic activists targeted for internment and extend to organising effective solidarity with that struggle which is, by all parties' definition at the heart of it - the struggle of the Palestinian people. The left in Europe and the US has been a disgrace in terms of its refusal to mobilise active solidarity with the secular forces which initially took the lead in pursuit of the Palestinian cause-the left elements of Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. If those elements are now marginalised in favour of the tactics of militant despair, it is in part because their arguments for a secular internationalism were met with indifference and outright rejection by the Western left. The situation now could not be much worse. As Edward Said has recently outlined "The result today is that Palestinians are locked up in 220 ghettos controlled by the army; American-supplied Apache helicopters, Merkava tanks, and F16s mow down people, houses, olive groves and fields on a daily basis; schools and universities as well as businesses and civil institutions are totally disrupted; hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed and tens of thousands injured; Israel's assassinations of

Palestinian leaders continues; unemployment stands at about 50 percent-and all this while General Anthony Zinni drones on about Palestinian "violence" to the wretched Arafat, who can't even leave his office in Ramallah because he is imprisoned there by Israeli tanks, while his several tattered security forces scamper about trying to survive the destruction of their offices and barracks. To make matters worse, the Palestinian Islamists have played into Israel's relentless propaganda mill and its ever-ready military by occasional bursts of wantonly barbaric suicide bombings." (Al-Ahram weekly 10-16 January 2002)

If the existing forces of resistance to occupation have nothing to offer beyond their own bankruptcy, then new players and a new strategy are, obviously, needed. A new secular nationalist current is, rising to the demands of the day, beginning to cohere. In mid-December 2001 a collective statement was issued calling for Palestinian unity and resistance and the unconditional end of Israeli military occupation. It was signed by, amongst others, Haider Abdel-Shafi, Mustafa

Barghouti, writers Hassan Khadr and Mahmoud Darwoush and Edward Said. As Said observes, "However else this declaration may have been read, the fact that so many prominent independents with, for the most part, functioning health, educational, professional and labour organisations at their base have said these things was lost neither on other Palestinians (who saw it as the most trenchant critique yet of the Arafat regime) nor on the Israeli military." If we want to rebuild a tradition, now - if we are honest - completely abandoned in practice, of active, militant opposition



and deed) than the cooper of Barcelona" enlisted in the syndicalists. For Kropotkin, there could be no real anarchist movement outside the working class, outside the "discontent of the people." Kropotkin's recognition of the need for a working class constituency for anarchist-communist ideas to have any meaning came not from any idealisation of "the worker" but from the knowledge that "Being exploited today at the bottom of the social ladder, it is to his advantage to demand equality. He has never ceased demanding it, he has fought for it and

anarchism cannot win an audience by abstract propaganda, being based on self-emancipation it has to demonstrate its relevance through practice

to imperialism, we could do worse than start by seeking to demonstrate real, engaged solidarity with the actions of this new secular nationalist opposition forming in Palestine and the Palestinian Diaspora.

Forging such solidarity though, only addresses half the problem. It is not solely our failure to demonstrate meaningful solidarity with struggles on the international stage which has been shown up by the events of September 11th and after. It is the fact that our politics - which are stated as being for working class self-emancipation through extra-parliamentary self-activity - a politics then, of resistance, and active struggle for social change-have no resonance within working class communities in the UK. Most working class people have never heard of the various "class struggle anarchist" groups currently in existence - those few who have don't take us seriously - they don't take us seriously because we don't take either them or ourselves seriously either - we talk of the working class but our political activity usually involves stunts in coalition with various here - today middle class protest groups - to stop the city or stop Oxford Street or hold a cycle rally in Finsbury Park. Except in name, we are, for the most part neither of, nor active within, working class communities. If we fail to see this as an issue, should we be surprised if the most alienated of "our" class look elsewhere for their solutions?

In March 1902, Peter Kropotkin wrote a letter to the anarchist historian Max Nettlau, addressing the problem of the

social composition of the anarchist movement. Martin Millar sums up the content of the letter in the following terms: "Kropotkin tried to show that a blind expansion of the anarchist ranks with youthful individual rebels would not necessarily strengthen the movement, but, on the contrary might weaken it. Rather than looking for the proper individualism among intellectuals, who were too frequently concerned ultimately with destructive egoism and bourgeois hedonism, Kropotkin argued for increased emphasis on the masses. He reiterated his cherished faith in the necessity of a working class-motivated revolutionary constituency." (Millar, Kropotkin's Selected Writings, MIT Press, 1969.)

What Kropotkin actually wrote was even blunter: "A narrow and selfish individualism . . . cannot inspire anyone. It does not offer anything great and inspiring . . . I myself have always been a communist . . . I have always preached active participation in the workers movement." Kropotkin refers to Pouget's decision to stop publishing the anarchist weekly *Pere Peinard* and to start instead the populist *La Voix du Peuple* as "perfectly right. After having worked on the elaboration of the idea, he works on diffusing it, on instilling anarchist and revolutionary ideas in the milieu which, alone, will take arms and make the revolution." He refers to the fact that the syndicalist movement in Barcelona has over a hundred thousand workers involved and states that the bourgeois rebel who writes "touching articles on Ravanchol and the right of theft is already more of a slave (in mind

will fight for it again." Outside the real struggle between classes the demands for equality and freedom are meaningless. Moreover, outside of the force of the working class they are incapable of realisation.

Kropotkin notes too that "Force only comes from practical experience in life"- that anarchism cannot win an audience by abstract propaganda, being based on self-emancipation it has to demonstrate its relevance through practice. All of this was clear to Kropotkin a hundred years ago, when anarchists numbered hundreds of thousands in the labour movement. Today, our complete irrelevance to the everyday life of people in Oldham, Moss Side, Harlesden - our divorce from working class reality and working class communities everywhere - could not be more apparent. Our response-business as usual - so long as we get scare-mongering write-ups in the *Evening Standard* and prime time coverage because we've broken a window in Oxford Street or dressed like clowns outside a city bank. If that is the mark of our ambition, irrelevance is what we deserve. Recent events have shown that the "enemy within" is seen" by both working class dissidents and the state as political Islam on the one hand and the far right on the other. After September 11th, unless we realise that outside the "discontent of the people" we count for nothing and that revolutionary politics moreover, has to involve a commitment to act, irrelevance will be our fate for years to come.

Nick S.

The Eurostate

The moves towards European political integration and the introduction of the Euro have caused some excitement within the liberal left. For the likes of Will Hutton and Hugo Young, political commentators at *The Observer* and *The Guardian* respectively, European monetary unity is unequivocally "a good thing" both in practice and symbolically.

The "revolutionary" left are less enthusiastic -and occasionally trot out suggestions for a "Europe from below" in opposition to the "bosses' Europe" - all very laudable and unexceptionable. Within the anarchist movement generally and the autonomist left there has been a recognition also that what is really at issue in any process of "integration" is who is excluded from the political community which results - that part of the process of integration involves the creation of a Fortress Europe predicated on-not the exclusion but the permanent illegality of non-European labour- refugees, "economic migrants," reduced to fugitives who provide a permanent source of cheap, casual "illegal" labour which is in part the fuel for the new Euro-engine. The "social rights" of European labour are guaranteed by the permanent exploitation of the "excluded." Any "unity from below" must therefore address the need for solidarity and support for those "excluded."

Inherent in the creation of any new market is the need for a "new" form of state to oversee it. Money, as Doug Henwood has remarked is "far from being the neutral lubricant of classical theory, or the politically neutralisable one of Keynesian theory, is fundamentally about compulsion and command." (*Wall Street*, Verso 1997) The prelude to European monetary union has been a decade of cuts and austerity measures imposed upon the European working class, and the imposition of "flexibility of labour" through unemployment and "welfare reform." Crucially, but unremarked by the liberal left, with the Euro comes the Euro state. In June 1990, a European Drug Intelligence Unit was set up under the intergovernmental TREVI framework. It was renamed the Europol Drugs Unit by TREVI ministers in 1991

and subsequently the European Council of EC governments agreed that, as part of the implementation of the Maastricht treaty, it was essential to create a European police network - with cross-border operational powers - Europol. The EU governments signed the Europol convention in July 1995 and it came into force finally in October 1998, with Europol officially operational in June 1999. Europol combines intelligence and operational functions. (for a detailed examination of these Ben Hayes' *The Activities and Development of Europol* - available from **Statewatch** at PO Box 1516, London N16 0EW for £10, is essential.)

Europol has two key intelligence functions: to facilitate bilateral and multilateral exchanges of data and to create a central EU intelligence database. Europol's structure resembles that of the UK National Crime Intelligence Service. It relies on the NCIS -equivalents in member states to supply it with intelligence information. Europol works to specific themes-or analysis work files - as of 2001 these

concerned-illegal immigration from Iraq, illegal immigration from a "specific province" in China, Islamic terrorism in the E, outlaw motorcycle gangs, Latin American drug smuggling groups, counterfeiting, eco-terrorism and crime

committed by West African national in the EU. Analysis files can contain information on actual and potential suspects, witnesses, victims, contacts, associates, informants, membership details etc. Convention regulations allow Europol to hold 53 specific types of personal data-including data on sexual life, political opinions and beliefs, racial origin, religious beliefs. This information is stalled on the Europol computer system (which has already cost over £27 million).

Operational activities in relation to cross-border activities have been primarily by way of ongoing surveillance and operational support. The EU Mutual Legal Assistance Convention, signed in June 2000,



provides a framework for police and judicial co-operation, including the interception of telecommunications, joint investigation teams, custodial transfers etc. By November 2000, Europol was able to co-ordinate the operation of joint investigation teams and will be empowered to "ask the competent authorities of the Member States to initiate, conduct or co-ordinate investigations in specific cases."

Europol's mandate initially concerned only international drugs trafficking. It has been extended to cover trafficking in nuclear and radioactive substances, illegal immigrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and the catch-all "terrorism." At a special "summit-security" meeting of EU justice and home affairs ministers after the Gothenberg demonstrations it was proposed that "Europol be tasked with producing analyses of violent disturbances, offences and groups." Europol officials have argued for the fullest extension of their mandate, away from dealing with certain named forms of criminality towards an acceptance of its competence in relation to any criminal activities it encounters in the course of its activities. In short, Europol is being geared towards a proactive policing role, and included in its sights will be anti-fascists, anti-capitalists and supporters of national liberation struggles. After September 11th EU justice ministers agreed to the creation of a team of counter-terrorist specialists in Europol to which member states are invited to appoint liaison officers from their police and intelligence services. EU member states are to agree a list of "proscribed" organisations. In February 2001 a Europol seminar on counter-terrorism held in Madrid had already agreed a proposal from Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy to set up a joint investigation scheme on "anarchist terrorism" and proposed a common EU



strategy on paying informers in third countries. The General Secretariat of the Council has refused to release any documents relating to this seminar under EU rules on public access. After September 11th the European Commission brought forward a proposal for an EU Framework Decision on terrorism which would extend to protests and "urban violence."

Alongside Europol, the proposed EU public prosecutions office -Eurojust - is about to become operationally effective. The Eurojust unit will comprise of " a prosecutor, magistrate or police officer of equivalent competence" appointed by each member state and supported by a permanent staff. It will work alongside Europol officers in joint teams building prosecutions around ongoing investigations. Since 1999, this work has also been supported by the creation of a European Police Chief's Operational Task Force, covering all areas of police policy, but geared essentially to "operational aspects." The German interior ministry recently proposed that Europol should have access to the "Eurodac" data base, which is intended to contain the fingerprints of every asylum seeker and "irregular" or illegal immigrant over the age of 14 who enters the EU. Europol is also to be linked to a 24-hour cybercrime network created under ministerial agreement at the G8 summit. The EU member states have also agreed on the creation of a European Police College.

Europol is envisaged as a European FBI -its realisation is almost complete and it is beyond doubt that effective anticapitalist resistance is likely to be in its sights. This being the case, we have to operate with the knowledge that we are being policed on a European-wide basis and raise our game accordingly. We should avoid the temptation to retreat from public political life. Policing and surveillance are intended to enforce the our emigration from the public sphere so that dissent becomes covert - and in practice ceases to be a political activity at all - a matter of private life wherein ideal are consumed but never engaged in practice. The only effective answer to the European wide policing of protest is to seek to widen the space of protest-to involve more in refusing to accept the logic of the Euro, of international capital as the only game in town -to spread resistance, so that our Europe from below links the banlieue of Paris with the slums of Berlin, and the unemployed of Lisbon with the dockers of Marseille. We should not seek to go "underground" to avoid the scope of the Eurostate, but to become lost within the anger of the working people of Europe, without whose political support and militancy our politics of a Europe from below are meaningless in any event.

Nick S.

The Criminalisation of dissent:

Anarchists to be targeted as "terrorists" alongside Al Qaeda by Europol

Europol has produced a *Situation and Trends* report on terrorist activity in the European Union. As well as listing the usual groups (ETA, the Real IRA and Al Qaeda) two categories point to an attempt to marginalise and demonise radical dissent.

One new category added in 2001 was "eco-terrorism." Significantly, the report gives no examples, so blurring the distinction between activity that might be termed a criminal offence and a "terrorist" offence. It simply states that "Radical environmentalists and animal rights movements have maintained a limited campaign. Nevertheless, the material damage they caused was extensive". No definition is given nor is one planned. The absence of detail ensures that, if convenient, the state can label any action as terrorism in order to demonise green activists.

"Anarchist terrorism" is the second new category. In February 2001 an Europol seminar on counter-terrorism held in Madrid agreed on a proposal by Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy to set up a joint investigation team on this subject and after Genoa Europol set up an "analysis file" on "anarchist terrorism" which in turn fed through into this Situation report. In a German newspaper in August Europol's Director said the "Black Block" could be seen as "terrorist or pre-terrorist".

The report says that "anarchist terrorism" could be a symptom of the possible "resurrection of left wing terrorism" and refers to a series of terrorist attacks "in the southern part of the Union." In fact, all the incidents listed are from Italy. However, the report argues that "left wing and anarchist websites in northern European countries cover this [Italian] situation in depth" and so "the possibility" exists "of the resurrection of the left wing and anarchist terrorist groups" EU-wide as the "southern terrorist activity might function as an example."

Blast from the past

Looking at these "examples," the legacy of the 1970s is clear. The technique used as part of the "strategy of tension" is repeated, with anarchists or "left-

wingers" listed as suspects for terrorist acts committed by right-wingers with state collusion. For example, a bomb explosion in July 2001 outside the Palazzo di giustizia in Venice after the G8 summit is included under "anarchist terrorism." Although anarchists or left-wingers were originally blamed, the investigating magistrate ordered the arrest of a right-winger, in January 2001 (a second suspect is also a right-winger).

In 2000 and 2001 two trials concerning explosions during the so-called "years of lead" originally blamed on anarchists resulted in convictions for right-wingers acting with state collusion. The similarities are obvious.

Criminalising protest?

This demonisation of anarchists is a clear strategy. Anarchists in Italy have been blamed for a spate of minor bomb attacks over the last few years, with links to groups in Spain, Portugal and Greece alleged by the Italian state. After the Genoa protests, anarchists were blamed by the Italian authorities for the violence. State repression followed against the anarchist movement which led to nationwide raids involving detentions,



After the Genoa protests, anarchists were blamed by the Italian authorities for the violence. State repression followed against the anarchist movement.

searches and a number of person being placed under investigation.

In Spain, the authorities have been conducting an ongoing campaign to criminalise Basque political organisations advocating autonomy (including youth organisations and prisoner support groups) by claiming that they are part of ETA. Such groups were included in the EU list of terrorist organisations attached to the "Common position on the application of specific measures to combat terrorism" on the basis of information indicating that a decision by a competent authority regarding these groups in relation to terrorist offences has been taken

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From Riot to Revolution

"We have seen how the Revolution began with popular risings ever since the first months of 1789. To make a revolution it is not, however, enough that there should be such risings — more or less successful. It is necessary that after the risings there should be left something new in the institutions, would permit new forms of life to be elaborated and established." Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*

Anarchism is often portrayed by historians and others as somewhat utopian, having no real idea of how to get from capitalism to a free society. Lenin, for example, asserted that anarchists "*while advocating the destruction of the state machine, have absolutely no idea of what the proletariat will put in its place.*" The truth is, of course, different. Anarchists see the initial framework of an anarchist society as being created under statism and capitalism when working class people organise themselves to resist oppression and exploitation. In summary, the very process of collective class struggle would create the basis of anarchism.

Therefore, anarchists do not abstractly compare a free society with the current one. Rather, we see an organic connection between what is and what could be. An anarchist society would be based on the working class's own combat organisations,

as created in their struggles within, but against, capitalism and the state.

In this sense, anarchy is not some distant goal but rather an aspect of current struggles against domination, oppression and exploitation (i.e. the class struggle). Anarchism draws upon the autonomous self-activity and spontaneity of working class people in struggle to inform both its political theory and its vision of a free society. Means and ends are linked, with direct action being the means of generating combative working class organisations and preparing people to directly manage their own personal and collective interests. The struggle against hierarchy is the school of anarchy. It teaches us not only how to be anarchists but also gives us a glimpse of what an anarchist society would be like, what its initial framework could be and the experience of managing our

own activities which is required for such a society to function successfully.

Anarchy in Action?

The events in Argentina speak for themselves. Popular risings there have been in abundance. After two-and-half-decades of IMF-backed free-market reforms, more than 40% of the 38 million population live below the poverty line and 100 children die daily from hunger and disease. People have had enough. Millions of people have challenged the state of siege. People are fighting on the streets, standing up to those who express and exploit them. In Cordoba, a car-making centre north-west of Buenos

Aires, workers protesting at government plans to reduce wages and apply other austerity measures, occupied and set fire to the town hall. Various governments have collapsed but in the lives of the working class, nothing changed — except for feelings of victory. In the streets the confrontations continued. The power they express, the power of mass direct action, inspires and will not be easily forgotten.

There are currently 30 assemblies in Buenos Aires and many others all over the country. According to the anarchists of the Argentine Libertarian Federation, the assemblies "*meetings are open and anyone who wishes can participate,*" and common to all assemblies is the "*non-delegation of power, self-management, [and a] horizontal structure.*" In the French Revolution, the people of Paris formed the directly democratic community assemblies called "*sections.*" Kropotkin pointed to these as examples of both the popular institutions required to make a revolution ("*the districts of Paris laid the foundations of a new,*

free, social organisation") and "*the principles of anarchism.*" It was by means of these popular assemblies that "*the masses, accustoming themselves to act without receiving orders from the national representatives, were practising what was to be*

Anarchy is not some distant goal but rather an aspect of current struggles . . . The struggle against hierarchy is the school of anarchy. It teaches us not only how to be anarchists but also gives us a glimpse of what an anarchist society would be like.

described later as *Direct Self-Government.*" A similar process is at work in Argentina. As one assembly moderator put it, "*here, no one is in charge, we are going to take turns.*"

Other forms of popular power are developing. The unemployed workers movement has played a key role in many of the revolts. It has been building for the last five years and in the last year it has helped force the government to introduce policies to aid the unemployed. Its tactics are to paralyse transportation by blocking off major highways in order to make their demands. They are called *piqueteros* ("*the picketers*"). Any agreements made are discussed by the participants directly. They do not delegate leaders to negotiate with the government. They make it come to the blockades and the people there discuss what they should demand and what they should accept. They have the same healthy "*distrust*

The question is, what comes next? Will riot become revolution? The answer to this question depends on what forms of popular self-organisation are being created. And such forms of working class power are being created.

The most exciting thing is the largely spontaneous appearance of "*popular assemblies*" after the insurrection last year. These self-managed assemblies are neighbourhood based on and run by huge mass meetings of thousands.

of all execute power" which Kropotkin praised the Parisian Sections for!

There are attempts by workers to organise themselves. Throughout Argentina strikes have occurred. Committees of struggle and to co-ordinate the protests have been created. Occupations have started. In Río Turbio, the mine workers have occupied the mines. In Neuquén, the workers have occupied ceramics factory of Zanón, where a workers congress was held in December.

This congress saw almost 400 ceramics workers, teachers, unemployed workers and students meet to discuss the current events. The main organisers were the ceramics workers union (SOENC), the teachers' union of Río Negro (UNTER), a militant unemployed workers' organisation (MTD) and the teachers of ATEN Centenario. Members and delegations of several other organisations of the region also participated. After intense discussion on a multitude of issues, including the next measures to be taken in their struggle and the need for co-ordination of current struggles, a declaration was agreed. This stated that the ceramics workers of Zanón "*struggle for the nationalisation and the reopening of the plant under worker control*" and are "*mobilising together with the unemployed workers of Neuquén . . . and with the teachers and government employees.*" They aim to intensify "*the co-ordination and unity between struggles with the aim of setting up a Regional Co-ordination*" as a step towards the unification of "*the struggles on a national level*". They called made "*an urgent call for an immediate congregation of the National Assembly of Employed and Unemployed Workers with a 1 in 20 representation, just as was voted in the last Picketers' Assembly in La Matanza.*" This would seek to unite all those "*that are struggling through democratically elected representatives voted in Assemblies within the workplace.*"

On Saturday, February 16, such an assembly was created when thousands of workers, unemployed and members of the popular assemblies, met in the Plaza de Mayo square in Buenos Aires.

Clearly, Bakunin's prediction that the "*future social organisation must be made solely from the bottom up, by the free association or federation of workers, firstly in their unions, then in the communes, regions, nations and finally in a great federation, international and universal*" is taking shape. The ideas of anarchism are being applied by those in struggle. This is to be expected, as those ideas are just generalisations derived from past working class struggles!

Anarchists in Action

The anarchist group **Organizacion Socialista Libertaria** (OSL), the strongest current of organised anarchism in Argentina, is playing an important role in the struggles. According to one of their messages, "*anarchist militants have been battling the police since the morning in the Plaza de Mayo*" while the OSL have joined in marches to Plaza de Mayo together with other social organisations.

The OSL are encouraging the process of working class community self-organisation, with "*each militant discussing in his or her neighbourhood the best way to establish a minimal territorial organisation with the goal of defeating the state of siege.*" While "*governmental secret services are continuing to spread fear, paranoia and battles between one neighbourhood and another,*" the OSL have "*decided to start an ideological debate with others in those neighbourhoods where self-managed peoples' organisations are present. It is in these areas where we will call on the other organisations to study what has happened and to develop a way of acting which will*



Battle for Buenos Aires:

First hand account from the Plaza de Mayo

Andreas Rockstein

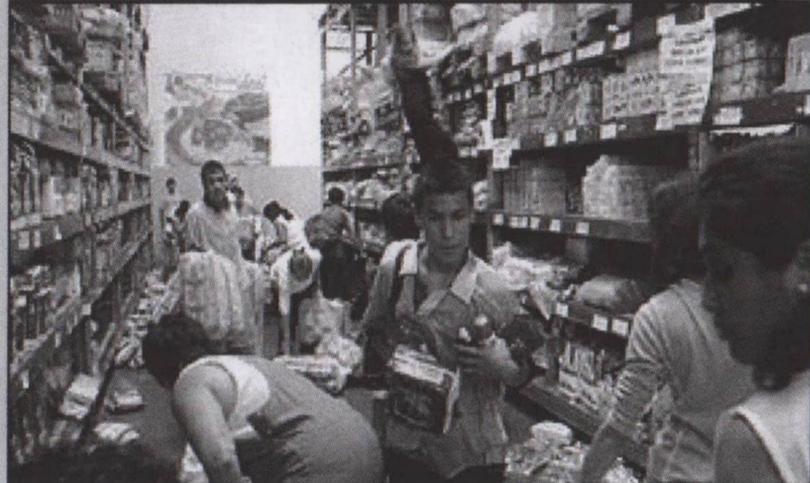
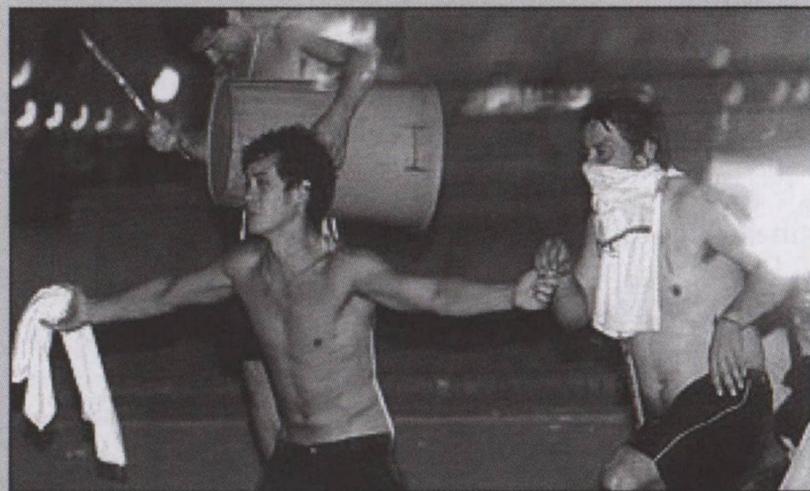
Comrades, I have made it back from the battle.

I am way too tired to write a complete report . . . I will however say that this was far beyond anything I have seen before (way beyond Quebec, Gothenburg, Genoa, etc.). We tried to fight our way to the Plaza de Mayo (where the presidential palace is). Hardest fighting I've ever seen. As the OSL said, it was step by step, meter by meter. Rocks against an unholy amount of gas, rubber bullets, tanks, water hoses, you name it. The cops on occasion ran out.

We carried forward our barricades all we could, we got to the corner of the Plaza. I truly thought we would take the presidential palace, and thus fought like it was truly the last battle. Unfortunately, we did not make it. But we fought for 7 hours straight, back and forth. Unbelievable intensity. Amongst the people fighting there was all sorts, from a couple thousand leftists (from our march, which was attacked after only 1 block), to young people who were simply pissed, old workers (people in their 50s and 60s with bandannas and rocks), people in suits and ties straight from work, *everyone*.

Banks and multinationals were completely destroyed, and very many were completely set alight. Barricades of fire quite literally everywhere (hundreds). As we advanced we blocked every single side street in order to not be attacked from behind. Eventually the looting began, and it was unlike anything I've ever seen. At one point all sorts of fancy candy was flying through the air (I was sitting across the street and it quite literally rained on me)

I am exhausted . . .



allow us to reorganise against the terror of the State and to organise self-management, or at least, the seeds towards it."

They are also involved in the unions, attending meetings called by the CTA trade union federation to decide on its actions. They are aware that the Trade Union leadership "did not want to go out and agitate as they were afraid the situation could get out of their hands." The key will be to encourage any attempts by workers to organise independently of their leaders.

The importance of anarchists getting involved in the struggle is clear. As they put it:

"We must throw ourselves fully towards building people's organisation, because if we the people are not capable of giving ourselves the society which we want and need, ex-President Menem is there waiting to be called, as a replacement part so that nothing changes."

The need for anarchists to argue for their ideas is important. A process of revolutionary self-education is occurring in Argentina, as in any revolution (as Kropotkin stressed, "by degrees, the revolutionary education of the people was being accomplished by the revolution itself"). For example, one neighbourhood assembly participant notes that she was "very surprised because there are people participating who otherwise never left their homes. My 70-year-old neighbour had never taken part in anything, but now she has such an extremist stance that it is truly astonishing."

However, self-education and self-liberation through struggle is a process, a process that anarchists can aid. As can be seen from many demonstrations, the protests have a nationalist tinge to them. This is to be expected, as the current crisis is the result of foreign domination (aided and abetted by the local ruling class, of course). It would be a tragedy if this working class revolt gets sidelined into boosting Argentinean capital within the national market. Equally, many of the protestors will be demanding that capitalism works correctly rather than seeking its end. Anarchists must clearly argue that crisis is inevitable under this system and, equally as important, that local ruling elites as just as bad as foreign ones and so nationalism is no solution. Anarchists must do all they can to argue that only working class self-management can create a decent society and encourage the struggle towards that end.

This struggle gives those involved a sense of their own power (both as individuals and as a class). It also gives them experience of managing their own lives and of organising their own struggles. This is a good foundation for building a strong anarchist movement in

Argentina. In case we forget, one hundred years ago anarchism played the leading role in the labour movement there. The current events are producing organisations with a distinctly libertarian nature. Could these be the basis of a regenerated working class anarchist movement like the old FORA anarcho-syndicalist union federation? If so, it will not happen automatically, it will require the anarchists to take an active part in working class struggle and organisation. As can be seen, the OSL is doing precisely that.

Towards revolution?

As anarchists have long argued, the class struggle creates the framework of a free society. This process is at work in Argentina. How can the transformation of riot into revolution be helped? While this task can only be the work of those who take part in it, a few words of general advice can be drawn from history — the first steps have already been taken!

The practical bases of an alternative are already falling into place. The embryo of popular power, of a free society, is being created in the community and workplace assemblies. Self-management must be encouraged within them and any attempts to delegate power resisted. These organs must be strengthened and federated. As in every struggle, co-ordination and solidarity must be ensured.

Many neighbourhoods are organising popular general assemblies to decide how to carry the struggle forward. Their federation is essential. As Kropotkin argued, the French popular assemblies "sought for unity of action, not in subjection to a Central Committee, but in a federative union." This was "made from below upward, by the federation of the district organisations; it spring up in a revolutionary way, from popular initiative." The Argentinean ones have started to do the same, with some assemblies already choosing delegates who participate in weekly inter-neighbourhood plenary sessions (some of which draw some 4,000 people). Only by federating together the popular organs of self-management can the state be abolished.

The hypocrisy of democratic capitalism...

With popular self-management spreading across Argentina, the ruling class is becoming concerned. Their arguments against the popular assemblies are insightful as regards the nature of bourgeois democracy. The newspaper *La Nación* denounced the movement of the assemblies in two editorials. On February 14, it declared that "although the rise of these assemblies appears as a consequence of the public being sick and tired of the untrustworthy conduct of the political class, we must also take into account that such mechanisms of popular deliberation present a danger, since because of their very nature they can develop into something like that sinister model of power, the 'soviets'". The article continues: "It is not a bad thing that people want to express themselves. . . But it is important to point out that it is one thing to engage in noisy protest and it is something completely different to take government decisions that touch on public interest and the common good."

So the public interest and the common good is undermined when the public create and participate in "mechanisms of popular deliberation." Obviously the "public interest" escapes the understanding of the public who, by some miracle of social chemistry, are capable of picking their shepherds while being unable to look after their own interests! *La Nación* is generous, of course, allowing the public to "express themselves" — as long they do not threaten the rule of politicians, bureaucrats and capitalists!

The editorial of February 17 continues on this wonderfully self-contradictory theme. It accuses the movement of assemblies of organising an "undercover coup d'etat" and insists that "it is necessary for Argentineans to calm down and recognise that a country cannot work in a state of permanent popular deliberation." Why not, we wonder? It continues: "It is not reasonable that [a neighbourhood assembly] meets to declare the illegitimacy of the president of the Nation, to declare null and void the mandates of all members of parliament without exception and to demand the resignation of all members of the [Supreme] Court." Proudhon argued in 1848 that "besides universal suffrage and as a consequence of universal suffrage, we want implementation of the binding mandate. Politicians balk at it! Which means that in their eyes, the people, in electing representatives, do not appoint mandatories but rather abjure their sovereignty! That is assuredly not socialism: it is not even democracy." Some things never change!

La Nación exposes the real nature of capitalist democracy. "Participation" by the public in public affairs is limited to voting every few years. If the people start to actually take affairs into their own hands, then it's the end of democracy — it is a coup! The hypocrisy of capitalist democracy can be seen now the masses of working class people have said enough is enough and have started to take matters into their own hands through mass assemblies and mandated and accountable committees!

Argentina first hand

I just had a wonderful time hitching through a 150km section of northern Argentina which is controlled by activists who have kicked the police and army out. The piqueteros are amazing. They've used non-violent direct action to liberate a town of 30,000 people, shutdown oil refineries, and generally kick ass. Also down here the workers have started taking over and running the factories themselves without bosses or the owners. Also they have all these directly democratic assemblies which are co-ordinating all the protests against the economic system, but also they want to scrap representative democracy... there are some amazing things happening in south America. Who knows if it will become a revolution, but it's the closest thing I've ever seen to one.
from a friend with protest.net



**Anarchy in Action:
A popular assembly in Argentina**

Consumer goods have been expropriated by the people. The next stage is the expropriation of the means of production — the fields, factories and workshops — by workplace assemblies. They must be placed under workers' self-management and federations of workers' assemblies created (to co-ordinate struggle and self-managed production). Any attempt to nationalise them (as the Leninists propose) must be opposed in favour of socialisation — replacing private capitalism with state capitalism is no solution. Only socialisation under

the current system by combining economic and social self-organisation. The assemblies and their federations must have the real power to ensure they become expressions of the will of the working class and to provide a framework by which collective decisions, direct action, solidarity and self-defence can be organised. Secondly, to aid the creation and distribution of goods. A step in this direction would be the community assemblies setting up consumer co-operatives to facilitate the distribution of goods and their encouragement and

this would simply be a top-down joining of various bureaucratic committees and not a real expression of popular self-rule. Any National Assembly must be an organ for working class struggle, simply co-ordinating and executing the decisions of the base assemblies. Only this can make the popular slogan "all the politicians out" a reality.

Any attempt to centralise power must be resisted as it will disempower the grass-root assemblies and kill the revolt. The seemingly widespread call for a "Constituent Assembly" is basically a call for a left wing bourgeois government and for the popular assemblies to be put under its control. It must be opposed as it is the death of grassroots self-management. The ruling class may try to recuperate the current struggle by means of elections to such a body, side-tracking the revolt into parliamentary channels. The left, by standing "revolutionary" candidates, will aid this process of transferring the focus of the struggle away from mass self-activity and self-organisation onto "leaders" working within capitalist institutions. This will undermine the autonomy and power of the grassroots organisations. Equally, the left's calls for a "workers' government" must also be opposed as this will simply replace working class power and self-management with party power. To delegate power into the hands of a few party leaders will not and cannot solve the current crisis or create socialism, which can be created only from below by the people themselves.

There is a need to co-ordinate struggle, but this must be based on bottom-up, federal, organisations. A call for a "People's Assembly," based on mandated delegates from the community and workplace assemblies is

The embryo of popular power, of a free society, is being created in the community and workplace assemblies.

workers' self-management will see capitalism ended.

An awareness of this need is developing. At the Zanón congress, a 22 year old worker from the plant stated that the each centimetre of the plant, each tile that was piled within the long corridors stood for "the millions that we produced, and everything that the province gave to Zanón, and now that Zanón doesn't want to be responsible for it, it's going to be ours." That perspective has to be generalised and turned from a defensive strategy to an offensive one.

The building of federations between the community and workplace assemblies is essential. This is for three reasons. Firstly, to build working class power to resist and finally overthrow

support of workers expropriating their workplaces. Thirdly, to create a possible framework in which to socialise the means of life and place them under true common ownership and control.

In a nutshell: **All power to the community and workplace assemblies!**

The call for and subsequent creation of a "National Assembly of Employed and Unemployed Workers" is a positive one, as long as it is made up of mandated and recallable delegates and is complemented by local and regional federations of assemblies. Without constructive building from the bottom-up, any national assembly will be artificial, simply a mouthpiece for various would-be politicians and new bosses. Nor can it be a grouping of existing unions and party committees as

paramount — as is the awareness that popular organisations must not surrender their self-rule and become mere ciphers, stepping stones for a political party to take power. Any working class assemblies (and their councils) must be autonomous, free from the control of any political party or organisation (including anarchist!). All power to the assemblies must *not* become transformed into “all power to the Party through the assemblies.” Decisions must reflect the debate in the assemblies, not in the small, restricted, leadership of a political party!

Only self-organisation and direct action from below will ensure that this mass protest does not simply result in a new gang of thieves being placed in power. Only when the working class has organised itself from below upwards will it be in a position to dispense once and for all with bosses and politicians. The struggle against capitalism is building the framework of the free society that will replace it. The job of anarchists is to encourage these processes and show how they can form an alternative to capitalism.

As in every revolution, the “principles of anarchism” are being born from the class struggle, the deeds of working class people fighting for a better life. Argentina is no exception

and as can be seen, the embryos of popular self-management as being created. We have a lot to learn from these experiences. The current protests not only reinforces the validity of anarchist ideas, it also allows us to improve these ideas just as anarchists learned from past working class revolts.

The role of the unemployed workers movement is important, suggesting that anarchists should seriously look at creating similar groups here. Equally, the importance of the community assemblies is obvious. Anarchists have long argued for this and we should apply this principle in “community unionism.” These would be similar to the anti-poll tax unions and such groups as Haringey Solidarity Group and the Govanhill Pool protests in Glasgow. Equally, the need for a libertarian presence in the workplace is essential. This may involve pronged strategy of rank and file groups within existing unions plus dual unions to link up activists across industries. Lastly, the anarchist movement needs to discuss strategy and tactics in an open forum as in the conferences at Bradford, Glasgow and London.

The events in Argentina also shows the direction the anti-globalisation movement must take — it must apply its principles of direct action, solidarity,

self-managed self-organisation within everyday life and struggles. While mass demonstrations like those of Genoa are essential, they cannot replace the need to build strong roots in our communities and workplaces. Without this grassroots activity, the anti-globalisation movement will wither, just as a flower cut off from its roots. Demonstrations by themselves will not end capitalism or its imposed, top-down, globalisation. Only when the bulk of the population take direct action, organise themselves and fight for their freedom will real change occur. As Argentina shows.

The power of the working class in revolt is clear — it has managed to bring down numerous politicians. The question is, will it be able to bring down all governments and all bosses? That remains to be seen. The possible framework of a free society can be seen, will the Argentinean anarchists be able to encourage these first steps and help them become organs of working class power? Hopefully. As the OSL say:

“we will be there with our conviction that a different way of living is possible and that is what we are fighting for!”

IM

Looking back at Genoa...

Of all the anti-summit demonstrations, Genoa was by far the biggest and the most rooted in the host country.

Unlike many others the Italians outnumbered all the foreign contingents, and there was a presence of striking metalworkers, who, we heard, at their strike rallies around Italy had been shouting “everyone to Genoa!” The Genovese firemen had also gone on strike after being told to participate in the security arrangements and they had refused point blank. There was a lot of resentment at the invasiveness of the G8 summit in the town, which had to be seen to be believed. The eight foot metal fences closing off the centre, with residents having to show passes to enter or leave, and the military occupation of the city must have been a factor in the friendliness of the residents towards the demonstrators, giving us water, directions, and waving communist flags and their knickers at us. (Although to be realistic, the people who were against the demonstration were more likely to leave town for the weekend.)

The solidarity with immigrants demonstration on the Thursday was an important political advance, with sixty thousand people attending. It had been strongly requested that the demo be peaceful for the safety of the immigrants on the march and this was stuck to by everybody.

After the massive police carnage on Friday the Black Bloc argument seemed to obscure everything else. There has probably been far too much time wasted on the topic, but having been vilified and accused of causing the destruction of the demonstration and the murder of a young man some accusations have to be responded to. Firstly, destroying the city without rhyme or reason. There was random and senseless trashing of phone boxes etc. which it would be nice to blame on police provocateurs but was (unfortunately) probably caused by genuine demonstrators with no sense of discrimination. However the issue of senseless trashing seems a bit over the top. It was normal to see a street of untouched shops and then a bank completely burned out. Personally if a major riot happened in my area and burned all the banks I

would be very happy, and not resent at all having to get a bus to a cashpoint. The revolution will cause a lot of disruption to banking services, hopefully permanently. I think that bricking a bank as a means of expressing your alienation is a million times better than shooting up in front of the TV, beating people up outside nightclubs and similar more ‘normal’ ways of expressing it. It will not make the revolution, but nothing you do on a demonstration will make it so this criticism is a bit of a red herring.

Secondly, people on the demo did not stick to their colour coded roles. A lot of burning of cars, fighting hand to hand with the police etc. was done by non-Black Bloc people, especially on the section of the Tutti Bianche demonstration which actively tried to break through the police lines. With people moving around all day, a lot of people started out with one demonstration and then joined up with another later.

The Black Bloc in Prague seems to have been a lot more effective because they had their own route, something which was denied them in Genoa. They were also able to push

the police back and get within sight of the conference. This success kept everybody focused, with no energy dissipated on smashing up traffic lights or whatever. In Genoa, with the police much better armed and on the offensive, it was near impossible to even hold a position, never mind push forward. The Black Bloc was broken up and dispersed very early on and this probably contributed to people doing stupid things out of pent up adrenaline and having no constructive focus. It is worth pointing out that, despite what is now widely viewed as successful action by the Black Bloc in Prague, there was a hysterical denunciation of them by the umbrella group, likening fighting with the police to racial attacks on foreigners! Interestingly the newspapers in Genoa, including the leftie ones, seemed to arbitrarily assign the nationality of the Black Bloc to whatever country they particularly didn't like -- Germans, Basques, whatever.

The tactic of dressing completely in black was originally developed to prevent people being identified breaking things, picked up later and being convicted on video evidence. In Genoa, however, the state wasn't using this kind of strategy and so dressing in black was unnecessary and maybe counter productive as it helped identify the Black Bloc to the police and, more importantly, made it more separate from other demonstrators. A lot of people would respond to this point by saying something like 'Not dress in black?? But we're the Black Bloc! That's what we do!' This kind of reply means that the Black Bloc in some ways isn't a tactic, it is something else, an identity, a uniform, a pose.

It shouldn't need to be said again and again that the police went out to attack the demonstration, to stop it interfering with the summit, that they succeeded and that **this** was the cause of the death(s) and injuries, **not** the actions of the Black Bloc or anyone else. But it has to. Although many political and tactical cockups were made by a lot of groups, the police action and the defeat of the demonstration would have been about the same whatever we did because the state has the power at its disposal to kill if it really wants to and it used it.

The demonstration in Genoa was a huge and heterogeneous collection of people with sometimes completely conflicting aims, all together in a militarily occupied city with 25,000 psychopathic police and an unknown number of undercovers. Genoa wasn't a safe place for people with kids, old people, or whoever couldn't run. In fact Genoa wasn't a safe place for anyone, except the ones who were behind the fence. So yes, smashing a bank next to peaceful protesters might make them more likely to be beaten up by the police, and this is selfish. But the police could just as easily beat up those peaceful protesters when there was no bank smashing going on for miles and they did, many, many times. So yes, there needs to be discussion about respecting the wishes and protecting the safety of other demonstrators, but to think that if no one had been 'violent' there would have been no problems is moronic. The police were under orders to kick the shit out of everyone and they did.

A big percentage of the demonstrators in Genoa were straightforward social democrats, going to the protests because they are increasingly sidelined in the political system. Others were nationalists of various persuasions. It was shocking to see the grip that institutionalised leftism still has over young people in Italy, with Refundazione Comunista playing their allotted divisive and recuperative role to the letter. This isn't to deny that many Refundazione footsoldiers got seriously beaten by the police, and some joined in the fighting, but their leadership and stewards were pivotal in the demonisation process.

Yes the demonstration in Genoa was detached from a wider working class struggle but so is everything at the moment - from a strike to a prison revolt, all struggles are pretty isolated. In the dire political climate we are in we need first of all to find ways to come together. Genoa for all its faults was three hundred thousand people saying they did not support things as they are and were prepared to go up against tear gas and tanks to say so.

Mara



Genoa for all its faults was three hundred thousand people saying they did not support things as they are and were prepared to go up against tear gas and tanks to say so.



Genoa: beyond the hype

In General:

I think the success of the direct action blockade in Seattle, the success of J-18 in London, and the success of the rioting in Prague was down to the fact that the prole mob held the element of surprise, of initiative.

The State in Genoa successfully adapted to all direct action tactics. A blockade was useless against the fortress-city. Ya Basta! found the police violence too much for their non-violent self defence. While the Black Bloc was broken up both by being surrounded in their sleeping areas in some cases and in others by surprise attack. Others opted for symbolic tokenistic protest or for marching as a rally part of another direct action altogether (1). Of course rioters have no answer for live ammunition once that particular Rubicon is crossed. Furthermore the State violence, in particular the raid on Diaz school, has had the effect of intimidating people away from similar summit protest actions.

On the plus side there was a massive reaction from many Italians, with large protests in most cities and seemingly many more people arriving for Saturday's march. The police violence appears to have undermined the legitimacy of the Italian government. Reports suggest that a similar situation is to be found in Sweden in regard to the State violence at the Gothenburg demonstrations.

Slightly more cynically it was certainly an education for many people in the reality of State power (State violence/State control as the song says) and just how much the paper that says 'democracy' and 'rule of law' is worth. Today the capitalist complacency, the P.R. exercise surrounding summit meetings has well and truly been disrupted.

However we need to recognise the improbability of closing down conferences of this nature in the future when the full forces of the State are deployed to protect them, as was the case in Genoa. Certainly these major mobilisations need new tactics, or modification of existing tactics, but should we not be putting these energies

in to somewhere else where we might now achieve more. Such as local action against specific things effecting the community and also international mobilisations but perhaps now directed at other targets (i.e. in support of a particular local action), or a move back to the J-18 tactic of simultaneous actions across the world. In any case I think summit protests will probably continue thus so does the question of how we as anarchists respond to them.

Certainly I think one thing sorely lacking in Genoa was any attempt to propagandise the multitude of activists there – this despite the provision of space for info-shops in the G.S.F. convergence centre. Don't get angry at the liberals and lefties, get organised and convince. The only way to defeat these essentially pro-capitalist elements is to wage 'a battle of ideas' in favour of libertarian ideals.

Clearly the answer to the question "where do we go from here?" is to put down roots into the wider non-activist

community and turn what has been a protest movement into a social movement. Summit protests have probably had their day, given that there will be no more fluke shutting down of conferences. Nonetheless while they exist we should be there using the opportunity to spread anarchist ideas.

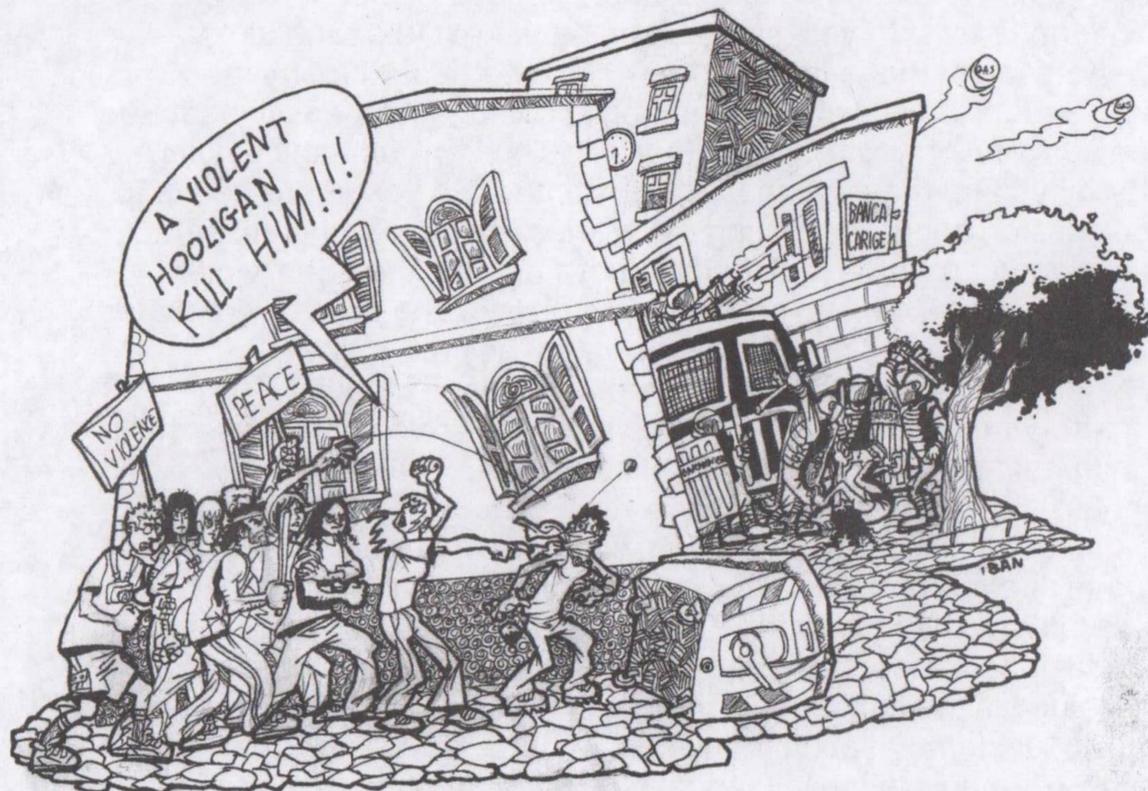
Reform or Revolution, to Protest or to take Action.

There is of course a major political division within the "Seattle", "anti-globalisation", "anti-capitalist", "Summit-protest", call it what you will, movement.

On the one hand you have N.G.O.'s, leftist parties, and Trade Union bureaucracies, aiming to, through "peaceful protest" (2) put pressure on governments to introduce reforms, or to give a place at the negotiating table/in the management of capitalism to the reformist leaders so they can introduce reforms. To do this you have to appear 'reasonable', i.e. 'reasonable' within a Statist and Capitalist paradigm. In other words what 'peaceful protest' translates as is ineffective marching, essentially lobbying en masse.

On the other hand you have people, anarchists and radical environmentalists, who see each protest as a step towards the transformation of society, through raising awareness and empowering people through direct action. Obviously the radicals pose a threat to the reformists. Both because they can gain influence at the reformists expense and because they refuse to play by Capitalism's rules. Not helping are fairly blatant attempts to divide the movement by politicians and the corporate media.

I'm now going to look at which approach is actually the more effective. The strength of reformism is that it seems likely that a few changes could



be achieved far more easily than a total revolutionary change. Actually this is often not the case, for example, the Green Party's idea of having a guaranteed minimum income supplied by the state to every citizen, with this income to be set above poverty levels. Of course if this was introduced the

amount of taxation necessary to pay for it would be such that it would produce massive capital flight, there would be no incentive for businesses to invest or operate at all in the country and it is highly likely that a lot less people would work also.

So some reforms are unworkable cause they go against the logic of capitalism.

Others actually make little difference, take for example Votes for Women. Which incidentally only came about, at least in Britain, through a massive campaign of illegal direct action and property damage. This legislative change changed women's lives and the status of women very little. Likewise aiming to see an end to the debt ignores that the money this would free into the hands of "Third World" elites would most probably be spent on the same things the loans were spent on in the first place, i.e.

ostentatious consumption, arms, and industrial and infrastructural projects benefiting a tiny minority of the population. Indeed members of some of these dynasties have personal fortunes which could pay off their states debt.

One aspect of the reformist approach is getting their people in there to manage Capitalism (e.g. in government, in a consultative role at World Bank meetings). The recent German experience gives us a perfect illustration of the futility of this. The German Green party in government is managing capitalism, German industry needs nuclear power, German business needs war, thus the German Green party, if it wants to be in government must accept nuclear power and N.A.T.O.. The very things the removal of which was central to it's agenda of reforms. (3)

A government of a capitalist society cannot go against the logic of capitalism. Thus what appears a lot easier to achieve than a total social revolution is often actually unattainable.

Why then is the existence of pseudo-protestors dominating post-Genoa commentary? This is for a number of reasons.

Firstly, recent Italian history. (4)
Secondly, genuine confusion.

For example, I have seen one report questioning how can we believe that the Black Bloc were anarchists 'cause they had a marching band with them!, I happen to like marching bands!, maybe they mean something else in different cultures, and this is perhaps a product of the self imposed isolation of radical elements in Genoa.

Thirdly, it does seem that Black Bloc property destruction did get out of hand, whether this was the product of State agents or pissed up youths is anyone's guess. But the presence or non-presence of State agents is a very different issue than the portrayal of the Black Bloc as an instrument of the State.

Fourthly, politically motivated disinformation put out by various Leninist parties, such as the Socialist Worker's Party and Italy's Communist

Refoundation Party.

I'm going to deal with issues internal to the Black Bloc first.

It is important to that any tactic apart from it's intrinsic value or lack of value is only as good as how it is put into effect, who puts it into effect and where it is put into effect. The Black Bloc originated in Germany in the 1980's as a bloc with the intent of overcoming lefty and liberal dominance of protest movements (and the legalistic ineffectiveness that comes with it) and taking direct action against the police and neo-nazis rather than accepting their violence or perversely asking the State to do something about it. It was pioneered in Germany by Marxist Autonomen (5).

It was later imported to the United States with a slightly different intent,

Clearly the answer to the question "where do we go from here?" is to put down roots into the wider non-activist community and turn what has been a protest movement into a social movement.



Unattainable that is through reformist means, a campaign of direct action was, and is, hampering the nuclear industry, and of course it could have been hampering it a lot more if less energy had been wasted on the legalistic respectable avenues the system holds out for us. Similarly a campaign of direct action could prevent the participation of any state in a war.

The Black Bloc an instrument of the State?

There were pseudo-protestors in Seattle, Prague and Barcelona, in fact we could be as absolutely sure before hand that there would be similar in Genoa as we could be sure that there would be baton charges, tear gas, armoured personnel carriers and the other accruements of state repression.

that of overcoming the situation where anarchists had little public face at demonstrations as left/liberal groups had a tendency to ban them from speaking platforms consequently the appearance of a bloc of people all dressed in black marching together was a sort of advertisement for those people's ideas.

In the United States the Black Bloc then has meant a range of tactics depending on whatever event, for instance, I think it was primarily in North America where the property destruction tactic was added on (but not exclusively so).

For the benefit of the confused I should stress that a bloc simply means a gathering of people at a demonstration with similar intent, the black bloc is not an organisation, and the black bloc at one event may mean something different from at another event (generally speaking though it tends to be the most militant section of the crowd).

The black bloc in general is not exclusively anarchist, it was not an anarchist idea and anarchists do not have a monopoly on militant direct action therefore the presence of Maoists, Basque Nationalists or whatever does not represent some sort of corruption of the Black Bloc.

Furthermore it appears most anarchists in Genoa were with syndicalist rank and file unions and not with the Black Bloc.

Obviously it is preferable to think that some of the stupider actions were carried out by police agents but we actually do not know that (I will address this issue later).

As I understand it, the idea behind property destruction is twofold: Firstly

some people see this as a way to court publicity, which it certainly does – incident free demonstrations are rarely covered. I do not think we should be trying to get the corporate media to do our job for us as it will only be hostile.

That said anarchism has a far higher public profile now, than before the likes of Seattle, and J-18, largely down to property destruction, which is fair enough, but if this continues it will be a public profile of anarchism equals property destruction and nothing more.

Secondly, it is seen as a empowering direct action (the same as shutting down a conference), using physical force against symbols of capitalism.

Personally I think if it ever had a use, its use value is over. This is certainly true if we are in a situation where the property destruction is at an event which had a clear target of far greater symbolic importance, where the area is residential rather than a central business district and in a situation where something starts with banks and so on being trashed but ends up with traffic lights being trashed. This being the case in Genoa.

The most important thing to remember is a good deal of the property destruction in Genoa happened not in an area like the City of London, where the banks or whatever have as their customers other businesses but in a working class residential area where I think for a few days people had a very hard time trying to find a working A.T.M. (plus cars burnt etc..).

This is just counter-productive, about as counter-productive as I can imagine, the amenities of a community being smashed up. If we cannot be sure that property destruction (which I'm not much in favour of in the first place)

will be properly targeted and not degenerate completely into rioting vandalism it needs to be knocked on the head completely.

Moving on to co-ordination it is clear from events in Genoa that being 'the most militant section of the crowd' (or the Black Bloc) is not enough, the lack of a greater unifying element coupled with the lack of prior organisation enabled the State to splinter the Bloc in the long march to the Red Zone. As well as this it led to a situation where people pissed off at the actions of others in the Bloc fucked off and it also allowed stupid actions to take place.

This I feel was a problem which primarily occurred 'cause of the long distances involved, the lack of decent maps and the complete isolation of the Black Bloc from the Genoa Social Forum. Whereas in Prague there appears to have been no more organisation but a lot less isolation and a lot less city to cross, so the Bloc had it's own path and a more or less immediate target for it's energies.

A stewarding section to direct the path of the Bloc and prevent stupidities would have helped a lot, as would have the local movement providing an organisational focus (6), and a 'spokescouncil' in effect weeks prior to the days of the events itself e.g. discussion between delegates of groups and organisations sending people to the protest. In other words a lot more co-ordination.

The Lefty Lie Machine.

The first thing it is important to remember is that of all the factions at Genoa only the White Overalls and the Black Bloc attempted to address the problem of police violence, others

seemed content to assume that peaceful protestors meant peaceful police, or seemed content to marshal their followers into a situation where they would inevitably be the victims of state repression and then content to blame another section of protestors for the inevitable.

The second thing it is important to remember is that authoritarian left wing groups have a long track record of crying 'provocation', 'state agent' at people whose actions or ideas are a threat to their bids for power. The (Irish) Socialist Worker no.156 baldly asserts "There is now overwhelming evidence That the Black Bloc was given free rein to do anything it wanted in Genoa." This is so obviously



absurd it amazes me to think that anyone could think the reading public (albeit the Socialist Worker reading public) so uninformed as to believe it. Needless to say, none, that's it none, zero, zilch, sweet fuck all, of this "overwhelming evidence" is actually produced for inspection by Socialist Worker.

Given that this crap is actually being regurgitated by the so-called alternative press and not just the corporate media, perhaps, scary though the thought is, it is being believed. So let's examine the claims.

"Free rein to do anything they wanted" remarkably the state and media have managed to keep silent the story of how the Black Bloc fought their way into the Red Zone, hospitalised half of Italy's police force (and I think half of Italy's police force were there) and guillotined several world leaders. "Free rein" I think the S.W.P. imagining that a free rein for protestors includes the use of live ammunition gives us the clearest indication yet that the policing policy of a future S.W.P. run workers utopia will greatly resemble that pioneered by their idols.

The only "overwhelming evidence" I have seen is "overwhelming evidence" of the death of a young man, who was most likely a Black Blocker, given his actions, politics, lifestyle and clothing.

Looking back at history they say that: "Small anarchist groups were occasionally infiltrated by neo-fascists and the secret services who tried to persuade, bribe or black mail them into carrying out their own acts of low-level terrorism."

This manages to ignore that the "left-wing terrorism" in this period was overwhelmingly Marxist-Leninist in political content, e.g. the Red Brigades. Furthermore far from low-level this included the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, the Prime Minister, and "terrorism" is completely rejected by most anarchists. (7)

Furthermore the Black Bloc tactic has nothing to do with "terrorism", as the S.W.P. well know, as they, like all good Trotskyists, know the difference between individualist terrorism and mass action.

The British Socialist Worker criticizes the police for not taking action against potential Black Bloc people prior to Friday's action and basically give the impression that it was entirely composed of police agents, or infiltrated to the extent that it might as well have been. This rag goes on to deliver a stunningly brilliant criticism of masking up, it apparently makes you an easy target for infiltrators, such as the massive amount of police and fascists

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within the Black Bloc (again no evidence is produced), of course not masking up makes you an easy target for gas and cameras, but this simple fact seems to have eluded the vanguard.

Ironically another group of Marxists has claimed on Indymedia that part of the Russian-Ukrainian delegation invited over, and funded, by ATTAC, who the International Socialist Tendency (i.e. the S.W.P. abroad) marched with, included leaders from the 'Red-Brown' movement which is basically the Russian version of the International Third Position/National Bolshevism/Strasserite Nazis, these were not infiltrators but were perfectly open, above ground, and prominent in the delegation! Interestingly there were no denials of this post on Indymedia, just responses from people supportive of the 'Red-Browns'. Incidentally some of the "Red-Browns" in question apparently included Putin supporters, invited by ATTAC, who condemn the "violence" of the Black Bloc!

Actually other Socialist Worker reports would seem to contradict this

"Black Bloc"="agents of the state acting with impunity" 'analysis'.

"We learned that the streets around it had been absolutely devastated, with hand to hand fighting between the Black and Blue Blocs." (Blue Bloc meaning police) (8).

The Fake Black Bloc.

Three observations: One there may be genuine confusion and disagreement, for example (and all of the following happened): Credito Italiano, a credit union, no actually it's a bank. An independent cinema, no actually it's a porn cinema. A multinational oil company, no actually it's a small shop... Smashing traffic lights, a police agent? Or someone who thinks if you smash traffic lights tomorrow there will be traffic jams thereby taking up resources which could be used against us. Smashing bus shelters, a police agent? Or someone trying to spread glass across the road so as to hinder the movement of rubber tyred police vehicles. Moving bins into the middle of the road, senseless destruction or barricade making?

Just a little illustration of the fact that two eyewitnesses may be looking at the same thing but seeing something very different.

Again the main problem was where the property destruction was happening and the fact that there was a far more important target, i.e. the Red Zone.

The Second observation. There have been reports of an absence of anarchist graffiti where some of the decidedly un-cool property damage had taken place, whereas elsewhere there was thrashed banks adorned with anarchist graffiti.

- Does this suggest - Police agents? Fascists? Or perhaps just non-anarchist rioters!!!! Yes they do exist. Where was the heaviest fighting and most of this property damage such as cheap cars being used for barricades - the White Overalls march! Where there was only a small number of Black Bloc, the main body being elsewhere. Allow me to quote from someone who was on that march "Then barricades would be built, with dumpsters, cars, anything at hand"(my emphasis). The front lines would retreat nursing wounds and poisoned eyes. The more seriously injured would be carried to ambulances. One man was carried by with blood splurting from his eye where a canister had hit him. New people rushed to the front, while others tore up the pavement for ammunition. A tall Irish man fell back saying "We almost got through, we almost did it, we just need a few more people!"

Another surge, everybody rushed forward on 2 or 3 different streets. Some riot cops got stranded in their retreat

and hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The people fighting are not necessarily in black, some are masked. Some have helmets. It is not the Black Block, and there are no agent provocateurs. This is a militant energy driven by people who have said — "Ya Basta!, fuck the police, rage, energy, resolve." (9)

The assurance that there are no agent provocateurs involved in this situation is interesting isn't it?

The third observation, a comment on the June 18th disturbances in London, from the pages of Organise! The magazine of the Anarchist Federation, "Some idiots just attacked anyone/thing in the City, regardless" (10).

Finally if you are saying that little evidence exists to justify the hullabaloo about police agents, then can this be construed as a stubborn defence of the Black Bloc? Hardly, for that means that the extremely stupid damage which took place and furthermore the disorganisation which meant that Black Bloc was divided and parts ended up mixed in with other blocs and so on was the responsibility of the Black Bloc and not the police!

We cannot expect what amounts to a mob riot to be 'picture perfect' and if we want more than a mob riot we need to organise accordingly. Equally we cannot expect the State to be peaceful. But most importantly we cannot expect people to agree with us if we don't try to convince them, and I saw little of that attempted in Genoa.

T.D.

Footnotes

1. i.e. the base unions and much of the Italian Anarchist movement whose orientation was toward a march in support of the strike wave.
2. In inverted commas because this often precludes any direct action, non-violent or otherwise and also because I think you will find most genuine pacifists on the other side of this division.
3. It has NOT ended nuclear power but is committed to it's phased withdrawal over 20 years, and to exploring the use of alternative sources of energy. Should these alternatives restrict the "competitiveness" of German business we should expect nuclear power to remain, likewise, if we go along with the Green party hope is the only defence against a Chernobyl in those twenty years for they have set the police on anti-nuclear direct actionists. In any case the massive expenditure produced by the policing of blockades of nuclear transports effectively forced this reform onto the government's agenda.
4. Which I will not be addressing in this essay as I have dealt with it previously; see "Italy: Strategy of Tension" (available at http://struggle.ws/freearth/fe3_italy.html) on far-right terror and state collusion in Italy in the 1960s and 70s to promote a law and order agenda and provide a pretext for a clampdown on dissent and worker's struggle.
5. Who do have similarities with Anarchism but contrary to what you have read in the lefty and corporate press are not Anarchists.
6. i.e. them having done the planning in the months before hand rather than planning being done by internationals in the days before hand.
7. There may have been anarchist "terrorism" in this period of Italian history, I say may 'cause I'm not sure and open minded enough to include it as a possibility however it was completely overshadowed by the Leninist and Fascist variety!
8. from 'Belfast with Sunshine' <http://www.struggle.ws/global/redjoe.html>
9. from 'Death and Terror in Genoa' <http://www.stuggle.ws/global/genoa/ramor.html>
10. Organise!, issue 52

The Criminalisation of Dissent (continued)

"irrespective of whether it concerns the instigation of investigations or prosecution". Thus, the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" is

only an anarchism rooted in working class life and struggle can survive state repression.

dispensed with, and the fact that numerous arrests in connection with terrorist activities have been overturned on appeal is ignored.

In 2000 the Spanish government hardened its anti-terrorist legislation by converting *kale borroka* (street struggle/violence) into a terrorist offence. It also passed measures aimed at the Basque nationalist movement, allowing the state to transform criticism of the government's anti-terrorist policy, or any claim for increased Basque sovereignty (even if it is conducted through the democratic system), into collusion with ETA.

Conclusion

As Tony Bunyan, **Statewatch** editor, commented:

"The exclusion of right-wing bombing attacks in Italy - let alone violent and murderous attacks on migrants in several EU countries by racists - suggests that the inclusion of 'anarchist terrorism' and 'eco-terrorism' in this EU Situation report is aimed at criminalising the radical left and expanding the concept of terrorism"

Clearly the inclusion of "anarchist terrorism", solely on the basis of evidence from Italy, raises important questions both for civil liberties and the anarchist movement. The similarities the 1970s are clear and we to learn the lessons of history.

The conversion of public order offences/violence into terrorist crimes if they have are political has clear implications for all protests and social movements if this was adopted EU-wide.

It would allow the state to link any form of mass protest with "terrorism" and to describe as "terrorist" (by association) any activist in the EU. Thus the invention of "anarchist terrorism" is useful for the state.

These developments suggest that anarchists need to be open about what we do. This means promoting ourselves, our ideas and our work clearly, so pre-empting any attempts to criminalise our movement. That the state has decided to invent a new form of crime suggests that the anarchist influence in the anti-capitalist movement is seen as a threat — a threat that needs to be combated before it sinks roots within wider community and workplace struggles and organisations. Ironically for the state, its attempts to criminalise anarchism will just accelerate this on-going process as history shows that only an anarchism rooted in working class life and struggle can survive state repression.

John McKie

Based on a report by **Statewatch**, PO
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www.statewatch.org

Revolt of the 'beautiful people'?

On the face of it - at least pre "9/11" as Americans call it - the recent wave of anti-capitalist set-pieces have been projected as a new era for anarchy in action.

However, appearance can be deceptive. For anarchism, as compared to a manifestation which has anarchic chic, there are major problems adjusting to the 'late capitalist' world of the early 21st century.

We can draw inspiration and practical lessons which may apply to many aspects of revolutionary situations: witness the preoccupation of 'Saorsa' elsewhere in this illustrious magazine. But as far identifying the potential in terms of applying anarchist ideas in everyday life, now, in 2002, we need to first of all recognise the obstacles: economic and cultural. After this is done we can counter-balance these against aspects which, to some extent favour our politics.

The birth of the 'cool'

I am a co-founder, and contributor to both Counter-Information [1] broadsheet and Here and Now [2] magazine over a period of 15 years [3], and well into middle-age myself. Therefore, from experience, I am well aware that for the vast majority of young people who come into contact with the anarchist world to do so as part of a rites of passage before accepting the limitations of existence of 'life' under capitalism. Anarchy is part of a lifestyle of rebellion against convention: family, obligation, and is interfused with an idea of the 'cool'.

For those with some perception - often intuitively - that what passes for normal everyday existence is in reality, alienation, commodity fetishism: a sense of anarchy is part of the cultural insulation necessary to live differently. What is 'cool' under capitalism is revealed as being suckered by brand loyalty to products: pop and technology, which channel aspirations in reified directions. A first step outside this consciousness is creating a new identity. For some, being 'radical' or 'revolutionary' is a dead-end in this journey of consciousness, in that, they become prey to secular hierarchical cults and accept the comfort of a ready-made national or international brand of socialism.

In this age of environmental crisis, and post-Soviet global politics, it has become more possible to bypass such dead-ends. In the 90s, anti-road struggles and other environmental

campaigns became theatres for direct action where involvement engendered both empowerment and the reality of conflict with the authorities. That is until the millennium when anti-globalisation struggles erupted.

Global Spectacle

Ostensibly anarchic, with 'autonomist' overtones in Europe especially, the confrontations have had unforeseen consequences. Undoubtedly,

the profile of anti-capitalist ideas has been raised in spectacular fashion. At the same time, the need of the mass media to engage in limited dialogue with this new movement has led to a gross

distortion. Amongst English-speakers at least, ideologues of somehow 'regulated' capitalism like Monbiot [4] and elements in Globalise Resistance manipulated by the S.W.P. [5] have hampered the anti-globalist current.

But why we may ask, if it was so vibrant would this result? As in 1968-70, existing libertarian/revolutionary organisations and imprecise networks have been unable to respond or set the agenda to the extent to which the secular cults have. 'Steal our clothing' they may have done again, but why are budding anti-capitalists so gullible?

There are four reasons which spring to mind. Firstly, with full-time 'professional' cadres, the capacity to conceal, be devious etc., and link with existing institutions (Scottish Socialist Party most notably) it is difficult to 'compete' on a level plainfield. To some extent it is a contradiction to imagine 'competition'

as far identifying the potential in terms of applying anarchist ideas in everyday life, now, in 2002, we need to first of all recognise the obstacles

between authoritarian masked organised cults and libertarian organisations - without the latter becoming 'horizontal parties'. Secondly, while the anarchic has been a key element of anti-globalism, anarchism has either been diluted or easily side-lined, again most notably in English-speaking protests. By adopting a 'light' approach in keeping with the times, perception of attention spans, hostility to theory etc. the autonomists and anarchists at the heart of anti-globalisation struggles fail to provide a bedrock of insulation against the pervasive threat of cults and liberal puppets.

Thirdly, the anti-globalisation movement is beset by association with the spectacle. In the 80s locally based anarchist groups were active periodically around environmental, anti-fascist and other causes, seeking to make an impact in a city or a large neighbourhood. As computer networks replaced 'boring' meetings, so too did the orientation to local impact. Exceptions remain such as Brighton and Haringay, and to some extent Edinburgh etc. but in most urban areas, anarchist groups have largely been superseded by occasional networks of 'cool' club go-ers who congeal together before and after worldwide anti-globalisation confrontations, or symbolic celebratory ceremonies (Mayday) thus mirroring the spectacle they purport to oppose.

Finally, even the most intense anti-globalisation or environmental protest fails to make much of a dent in the cultural world of the young or 'young at heart'. Unlike "11/9", the death of 'Princess Di' or the Armagh bomb (in northern Ireland), there isn't a cataclysmic event which permeates public consciousness to the point

continued on page 32

Let's cut ourselves free from AUTHORITY



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PRISONERS

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL UPDATE

On December 18 2001 federal district court judge William Yohn reversed the death sentence that placed Mumia Abu Jamal on death row since his frame up in 1982. Yohn rejected a mountain of evidence proving Mumia's innocence-including a statement from Arnold Beverey confessing to the killing of Philadelphia cop Daniel Faulkner. Democratic Party DA Lynne Abraham immediately announced an appeal. Yohn ordered a new sentencing hearing within 180 days. As the DA's office fears, this could allow Mumia to place before a jury the evidence of concocted ballistics, coerced "eyewitness" testimony and a manufactured confession that led to the original conviction.

There is a real danger that with the threat of execution lifted, the campaign around Mumia will begin to demobilise. Mumia has always refused to allow the threat of execution to silence him. He has been the "voice of the voiceless" always ready to speak out on behalf of the oppressed and exploited. As the US state steps up its war on "terror" both Mumia and the hundreds of other political prisoners buried in America's jails face the threat of isolation and increased victimisation by the prison system. It is vital now to step up the campaign on behalf of Mumia and his comrades behind bars. The battle isn't over until Mumia walks free. Substituting the "slow death" of life imprisonment for the imposition of the death penalty cannot be claimed as a victory. We need to keep active, take the campaign out into the trade union movement and into those working class communities Mumia has sought always to defend.

RAY GILBERT

In December 1981 Ray Gilbert was found guilty of murder and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Twenty one years on, he's still inside- currently in the Close Supervision Centre at Woodhill. Ray refuses to admit his guilt and has fought his conviction and often enough the prison system itself-since the day he was sent down.

Alongside John Kamara, Ray Gilbert was convicted of the murder of Liverpool bookie John Suffield. Ray was a mixed race kid from Toxteth, 22 years old, with a speech impediment, and a history of involvement in petty crime. There was no evidence against him at the time of his arrest. He wasn't picked out on an ID parade, there was no fingerprint evidence, no blood samples connected him to the crime. Until she was threatened with prosecution, Ray's girlfriend gave him an alibi. Ray was held for two days and two nights in custody without representation. Under pressure, he signed a confession. A renowned psychologist, Olive Tunstall, reviewing the confession, has said that the confession should be treated as unreliable on the basis of "Mr Gilbert's personal vulnerability at the time, and his youth, limited education, abnormal personality, stammer...and a profound fear of being physically assaulted emanating from early childhood experiences." In his statement, Ray also implicated John Kamara. John served twenty years in prison until the Court of Appeal overturned his conviction. In setting the conviction aside, the Court of Appeal implied that at least part of Ray's confession must be untrue. Yet Ray Gilbert remains inside.

There is other evidence, ignored at the time, which points to Ray's innocence. John Suffield had bought a pint of milk and a newspaper and placed it on a shelf within the shop. This suggests that the prosecution claim that Ray and an accomplice waited outside for Suffield and then bundled him into the shop is wide of the mark, and that the killer or killers might have been in the shop when Suffield arrived to open up. Evidence that a customer had threatened to return to sort Suffield out the day before the murder was also not properly pursued. It didn't help that

Ray pleaded guilty, or that he made a similar admission in 1982, after his conviction, admitting guilt, but exonerating John Kamara. Ray explains that he was under pressure while on remand and then while held in local jails after conviction, by the associates of the real murderer, to stick with his confession or put himself and his family at risk. From the moment he was able to escape the influence of these associates, Ray denied his guilt, and has done ever since, even though his refusal to admit guilt has meant that he's remained in jail for five years over his tariff.

Ray Gilbert has refused the easy option-he's fought for his innocence and refused to concede and inch to the prison system. He deserves our support. Write to Ray Gilbert (H10111) at HMP Woodhill, Tattenhae Street Milton Keynes MK4 4DA.

Write to **Home Secretary** David Blunkett raising your concern that the Parole Board refuses to release Ray Gilbert because he refuses to admit his guilt at Home Office, 50 Queen Annes Gate London SW1H 9AT

Write to **Criminal Cases Review Commission**, Alpha Tower, Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1TT, raising your concerns re the conviction and asking them to look at the new evidence, including Olive Tunstall's report, in Ray's case.

MARTIN WARD

Martin Ward died on remand at Woodhill prison on 19th February 2001. The inquest into his death ended on 15th February 2002 with a verdict of death by natural causes contributed to by neglect. The inquest revealed that an agency nurse visiting Martin found him hyperventilating, coughing up blood, and suffering from acute stomach pain. Despite this he was refused permission to see a doctor, and as a result did not receive the medical treatment that would have saved his life. There have been seven suspicious deaths at Woodhill in the last year. Our prisons are not just dumping grounds and cages for working class people, more and more frequently, they're becoming our graveyards as well.

The **Irish Deaths in Custody Campaign** is calling for an independent public inquiry into Martin Ward's death. Contact them at PO Box 29644 London E2 8TS Tel: 07931 844969

Anarchist Political Prisoner could be facing 25 years to life

We received word from Rob 'Ruckus' Middaugh, an Anarchist Political Prisoner in the United States informing us that additional federal charges are going to be placed against him. These charges are in addition to the previous charges relating from the Long Beach attacks by the police during a May Day march in 2001, where he was arrested and convicted to 3 years for assault on a police officer. Apparently the FBI had an arrest warrant issued against Rob for an incident in Sacramento. He did not mention what that action was but what we do know is that the charges are the following: Forcibly assaulting a police officer (federal charge), wearing a mask with intent to commit a crime, and weapons related charge (both state charge).

With these new charges, Middaugh could be facing 25 years to life due to what is known as the 3-strikes law in the state of California. Under this law, certain crimes are considered strikeable offences. When three or more of these crimes are committed by an individual that person can/will be sent to prison for 25 years to life.

All charges that Robert Middaugh has received have been during political action. The first strike was during the protest against the Democratic National Convention where he was accused of being the leader of the Black Block. The second strike was during the Long Beach incident where he and 100 other anarchists were arrested during an attack by police on May Day. These new charges could add his third strike. No news has been received as to when his trial will happen but we will keep everyone informed as soon as we here.

We encourage everyone to write to Rob and let him know he is supported!!!!

You can write to Robert Middaugh at: Robert Middaugh T41137, PO Box 5000, Delano, CA 93216

For more information relating to Rob's case or the support for PP/POW's, Please write to:

LA-ABCF
PO BOX 3671
Anaheim, CA 92803
LA_blackcross@yahoo.com

Evgeni Novozhilov

In Soviet times, mental hospitals were one of the main institutions used to crack down on dissidence. Now anarchist sympathiser and human rights activist Evgeni Novozhilov has been sent to a mental hospital in Krasnodar, on the false charge of practising a "hoax about an act of terror".

What he actually did was to say during a telephone conversation to an acquaintance that "I feel so bad that I would hijack a plane and crash it to a skyscraper". This was when he was suffering a serious phase of the chronic skin disease *piodermia*, which had made it impossible to him to leave home for more than two years since March 1999.

In 20th March 1999 Evgeni managed to get some facts about the reality of the Chechen war published in the regional press. This was both the first and last time this occurred as Krasnodar region is amongst the most repressive and chauvinist areas of Russia. Since then he was a marked man, with the FSB (formerly the KGB) tapping all of his telephone conversations.

He has been imprisoned since 16th of November, under charges which would have been treated like a joke until the global anti-terrorist hysteria generated after September 11th. When being diagnosed as requiring forced treatment in a mental hospital, it is not the charges which count but what kind of "care" doctors see as necessary so there is no idea when he could be released.

Upper-class careerists on Soros's payroll, in other words the regional human rights organisations, have refused to give any support to Evgeni. Thus the task to organise defence and support has been left solely to relatives and local anarchists from Autonomous Action.

Read more about the case on the website of the support campaign:

<http://www.anarchia.by.ru>

You may send letters to Evgeni through his mother, by writing to:

Evgeni Novozhilov
ul. Ignatova 51, kv. 105
350061 Krasnodar Russia

Evgeni speaks English, German and Swedish.

Setting A Precedent?

Last year saw an interesting legal case which could have a significant impact on individuals and organisations corresponding with prisoners in the UK.

Following a legal challenge by prisoner John Shelley and the Prisoners Advice Service HMP Full Sutton withdrew its blanket ban on prisoners receiving publications from Haven Distribution. They conceded that such a ban would infringe prisoners rights to freedom of expression, which are protected by Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

In an archaic organisation like the Prison Service however, such an admission does not necessarily set a precedent. At HMP Whitemoor Mark Barnsley was recently allowed a copy of issue 82 of *Class War* sent by a friend, yet two weeks later when sent the same newspaper by the publisher, it was refused! Mark's legal team is currently appealing this decision.

As long as individual officers and some prisons believe no one is watching, they will do whatever they think they can get away with. Prisoners, and their supporters therefore have to constantly prepared to fight their corner.

If Article 10 can be used as a tool in this fight, we would be churlish to turn down the opportunity.

Paul Marsh.

Haven Distribution is a free service providing educational publications to prisoners. They can be contacted at Haven Distribution, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX.

Other groups supporting prisoners include:

Class War Prisoners, Po Box 467, London E8 3QX

Brighton ABC, Po Box 74, Brighton, BN1 4ZQ

Prisoners Advice Service, 16 Baldwin Gardens, London EC1.

Revolt of the 'beautiful people'?

(continued)

where a momentary shift of perception threatens post-modern inertia.

'It pays to be cynical'

The modern secular era has given way to post-modern consciousness: the hallmarks of which are cynicism, selfishness and lack of solidarity. While libertarian struggle provides an antidote to this malaise it can only achieve so much whilst attempting to combat recuperation, incorporation and distortion against the forces of capitalism and false enemies of the capitalist nation state. The domination of the mass media to the detriment of community, the change in patterns of work and other social changes in the last 30 years in particular have created a world where consumption is paramount. Rebellion gives way much more readily amongst the vast majority to cynical ambivalence. Get out of the system as much for yourself, and as you acquire 'responsibility' for your 'loved ones'. You become complicit in the media parlour game of following reputations being built and then eroded, in exhibiting selfish endeavour in TV ratings exercises, and in feeling a sense of know-how and cynical insulation against any commitment that isn't gratuitous.

Any anarchist engagement beyond glorifying our own marginality, must seek therefore to counterpose an ethical alternative to such cynical selfishness. Everyday this cynical accommodation is momentarily shattered amongst many of us by outrage against events in everyday life: usually associated with unfeeling selfishness and ignorance. Many who are affected deeply by such outrage and affront to their sense of humanity at this point turn to the comforts of new-style religion or

become trapped in a quagmire of intellectual superiority and detachment.

Trumpeting direct action isn't enough. More than that, it just doesn't cut it! Propaganda aimed at the mass of the population will 'wash over' any consciousness unless it engages on issues that concern those with any lingering ability to be appalled at 'the standards' which people accept. Not ethics in an abstract sense: but expressed through undermining what passes as the 'normal' in an alienated, largely urban and suburban environment. Of course doing voluntary 'good deeds' such as youth work could follow from such concerns, and as anarchists, indicative of a tiny minority, propaganda which comments on an anti-selfish outlook has the problem of linking such insight to action that doesn't confine itself to the palliative.

Engagement in the modern era has to be built around such a concern in everyday life, for anarchist alternatives to grow in credibility. It has to have a local dimension and organised alternatives in different aspects of life [6], exposing through propaganda the highstreet/exploitation/brand-name monopoly basis of capitalism, as well as arriving at coherent strategies and libertarian directions for the global which provide a basis to resist the systemic and authoritarian distortions which are omnipresent. Forums to engage in theory and discussion - beyond the level of watching direct action video footage - are also a necessary feature at a city level (as well as the internet!) if a renewal of anarchism is to take place relevant and able to resist the lure of the modern.

Jim McFarlane



[1] Since 1985 the Central Scottish based collective [c/o 17 W. Montgomery Pl., EH7 5HA] has produced free broadsheets distributed to groups throughout the world with over half of its 12,000 or so print run devoted to local distribution. But as 2001 progressed the group has been unable to operate without the inspiration of a temporarily absent key member, raising fears on my part as to the cult of personality and how such collectives are prone to such contradictions.

[2] Here and Now, also arising in 1985, attracting ex-Solidarity and neo-situationist writers, limped along for 13 years producing 18 issues (in suspension rather than dissolution), co-produced in Scotland and West Yorkshire. Many of the articles in the back-issues are still worth a read: enquiries via, hereandnowscot@email.com

[3] For a comparative analysis of a different era see my article "A Public Nuisance: Tales of adventure and a spirit of revolt - Glasgow Anarchists 1974 to 1986 in Edinburgh Review 83 1990; Ewan Davidson The Absolute Game in the same issue; John T. Caldwell "Come Dungeons Dark" Luath Press 1988, and "With Fate Conspire" Northern Herald 1999 on 'old style' Glasgow revolutionary egoism.

[4] see the critique of Monbiot's politics "Capitalist 'Anti-Capitalism': Whatever next?"

[5] e.g., "Monopolise Resistance?" by SchNews, www.schnews.org.uk

[6] Many slightly older libertarian revolutionaries now in employment are joining the I.W.W., paying only £1 a month on top of existing dues. www.iww.org.uk

Under the x-ray

Tony Blair shrieks and whines when people complain about the treatment of prisoners from the 'Glorious Afghan Policing Operation'. Unlike some, he doesn't come out and say 'they're getting what they deserve', typically he hides behind twisting of words. If they are being manacled, it's being done humanely: the Americans say so, and the sun shines out of their arse, so it must be true. No logic or meaning seems to intrude between Tony's ears. He 'believes' in freedom, so these people are being treated freely.

At least the Americans have the nerve to be openly hypocritical, changing their terms to justify what they want to do next: first it's a war so you can kill people; then it's a crime so the people you capture have no rights. It's a new

world, and all those old-fashioned ideas about prisoners-of-war, refugees etc just don't hold water (that is, they're an inconvenience). Maintaining an empire needs a few tricky side-steps to hide the reality of what's going on, and no doubt there'll be enough servants to dress things up nicely: the velvet glove, indeed.

Our rulers may be able to delude themselves that they care about our rights, but they will still use 'any means necessary' to hold onto their power. We have to point out that power is the name of the game, even if it's being described as justice. We must reserve our rights to call things by their true names.

john

Rank And File Or Broad Left?:

A Short History of The Building Workers Group

Brian Higgins' history of the BWG is an inspiring and passionate account of militant trade unionists working in the construction industry. More than merely a straight forward history, it forms a lucid and persuasive argument in favour of general Rank and File workplace organisation and agitation.

The BWG, formed in 1974, have maintained a consistently confrontational and combative stance against the sustained capitalist attack on trade union activity and organisation that has taken place over the last twenty five years. Against this backdrop of union marginalisation and the entrenched authoritarian and reformist nature of the orthodox union leadership and structure, the essential question posed in this pamphlet is: Is it possible to build and maintain a genuinely Rank and File revolutionary union movement that is entirely independent of official bureaucratic leadership, cynical Trot/SWP manipulation and the usual broad left traits of corruption and capitulation?.

Although we read of many bitter setbacks (and stitch ups!) in the course of the BWG's history, the answer must be a resounding yes!, and the pamphlet can be regarded as a kind of 'call-to-arms' to encourage and foster truly democratic Rank and File organisation in all areas of modern industry.

To any readers still uncertain about the extent of broad left union cynicism and corruption, Higgins' account of UCATT/TGWU's persistently reformist and authoritarian character, (as they gradually lurched to the right), will surely leave them in no doubt about the fundamental redundancy of standard broad left unionism. In fact, UCATT and the TGWU emerge quite shamefully, and we encounter all of the depressing and familiar old features, including ballot-rigging, gross financial corruption, cynical cover-ups and a basic erosion of workplace union democracy.

Among the many struggles instigated and supported by the BWG over the years, the conflict with Laing Homes

was one of the most significant. Blacklisted because of their basic militancy, BWG bricklayers and supporters were sacked from a site in Surbiton in October 1985 on the instructions of Laing Homes. There followed a determined fight back by the 'Laing's Lock Out Committee', including the use of flying pickets to disrupt production on many different sites, that resulted in a Feb 1986 High Court injunction. Although eventually forced to call of the dispute in the face of death threats and the TGWU/UCATT's predictable refusal to give the struggle 'official' recognition, the BWG's actions served to inspire many individuals with their open defiance of antiunion/Rank and File intimidation. Symbolic of this feeling of solidarity was the pledge by Islington DLO workers to blockade Pentonville prison with their bin lorries if Higgins and comrades were imprisoned!. More than simply a series of struggles to improve

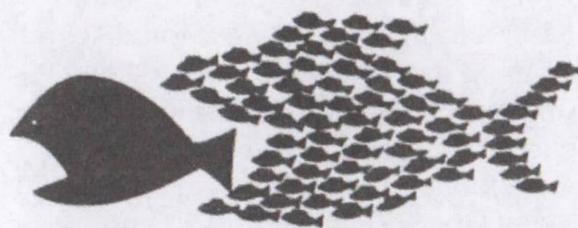
pay and conditions (crucial as this obviously is), the BWG have maintained a revolutionary working class stance in their opposition to full-time union leaders and hierarchical union structure, and this is perhaps the crucial point to make from a libertarian socialist/anarchist perspective. If anarchism strives to become a revolutionary working class movement, as opposed to a transitory middle class fantasy impoverished by a disdain

for workplace agitation and a denial of the class struggle, then anarcho-syndicalism is the most effective organisational method towards the ultimate goal of worker's self-management within a stateless society.

However, industrial agitation should never be the sole area for the general libertarian struggle, as the anarchist agenda must be applied to all areas of our lives as individuals within our communities. That said, Rank and File organisation remains a crucially important aspect of class solidarity against the machinations of the parliamentary left and the ruling class.

Higgins' stresses the fact that Rank and File struggles should not aim at

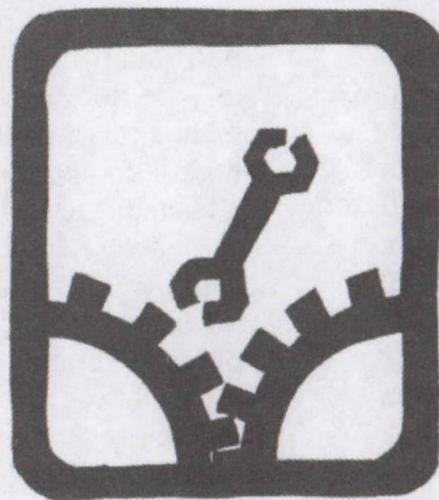
merely gaining short-term concessions, but also seek to address a host of diverse issues and injustices from a libertarian socialist perspective.



Towards the end of the pamphlet we see a specific example of how the BWG attempted to place their struggle within the context of the wider socialist agenda for a free society. During UCATT's National Delegate Conference in Killarney last summer, (staged there as it was far from the mainland 'hotbed' areas of industrial agitation!), the BWG/Northampton UCATT branch put forward a resolution in favour of a 32 County Irish Republic, free from British State partition, division and oppression. The resolution received a respectable 25% vote at the Congress, but as Higgins points out, the important thing was trying to establish the basic democratic political right to debate such issues without fear of intimidation from full-time union bureaucrats and hierarchical Executive Committees.

Therefore, this is a very interesting and highly readable pamphlet that should be seen by all anarchists/libertarian socialists who are interested in Rank and File workplace agitation and industrial organisation. At a time when New Labour's contempt for working class union activity is becoming ever more apparent (with Blair recently admitting that British Law is "the most restrictive on trade unions in the Western world") the relevance of RPM no 8 in offering a glimmer of light within a general malaise should be obvious. This pamphlet hopefully shows that Rank and File militancy is not going away, but will continue to be a thorn in the side of both New Labour and broad left union bureaucrats.

Chris



**WORK RATE TOO FAST
(APPLY RESISTANCE)**

“The ecstasy of resistance”

On Fire:

The Battle of Genoa and the anti-capitalist movement

One-Off Press
ISBN 1 902593 54 5
Distributed through AK Press
and Active Distribution



This is an excellent book. It contains sixteen eye-witness accounts and analyses of the protests at Genoa earlier this year. All shades of opinion within the libertarian wing of anti-capitalist are contained in it and so is a diverse but always interesting (and at times, moving) account of ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things in difficult circumstances. That is in itself enough to recommend it. These are the accounts of the people who want to make history rather than the interpretations of journalists (mainstream or so-called “radical” or “revolutionary”) and the specialists in ideology (again, mainstream or “revolutionary”). As such, the accounts of those involved in the Black Block should be read by all. Combined with the personal accounts is some excellent political analysis. All in all, a wonderful account and analysis of what contributor calls “the ecstasy of resistance.”

Needless to say, it will be impossible to cover all the issues raised, never mind all the lessons that can be gained

“if breaking windows and fighting back when the cops attack is ‘violence,’ then give me a new word, a word a thousand times stronger, to use when the cops are beating non-resisting people into comas.”

from these accounts. I would suggest that the following can be considered among the most important.

Firstly, the need to (to use Jazz’s words) get “out into workplaces and communities, getting beyond the narrow activist base and its marginalised periphery. . . Politics has to be made real to everyday life . . . and not just dependent on six monthly spectacles for a political fix.” Only once the movement has strengthened the links it has been building with working class struggle and life can we actually start to transform society for

the better. Until then, events like Genoa may inspire by they will never transform (as participants are aware, of course. As one says, “we were not in Genoa to destroy capitalism, so that kind of criticism misses the point. What happened in Genoa was a generalised riot, not an anti-capitalist insurrection”). In Genoa, many (most?) Italian anarchists (including the two national federations) worked with the base unions (COBAS) and striking workers and marched with them. The way RTS and other groups here are linking up with workers in struggle is the way forward.

Secondly, organisation is important. The need for organisation comes through clearly from the accounts. While, of course, organisation is generated spontaneously through struggle, it means reinventing the wheel every time there is a demo (and, of course, it does not address what we do between demos). As such, Massimo de Angelis makes a valid (and extremely old anarchist point) when he argues that “not even the slogan on T-shirts in Genoa was entirely correct: another world is not only possible. Rather, we

are already patiently and with effort building another world — with all its contradictions, limitations and ambiguities — through the form of our networks.”

This clearly ties in the first point. We do have to build the new world in the shell of the old is we want to end capitalism.

Thirdly, communication between activists is essential. As numerous contributors argue, by (for example) Black Blockers and pacifists talking to each other then there will be less likelihood that the cops and media can use splitting tactics. As Starhawk put it, we “have to communicate. We can no longer afford to wage parallel but disconnected struggles at the same demonstrations. We need to clearly state our intentions and goals for each action, and ask others to support

them.” But, as she stresses, “agreements are only agreements when everyone participates in making them.” As such equality, solidarity and respect are essential and that, of course, flows naturally from point two (the need to

build the new world, as far as possible, today in our struggles). It may be difficult, but its essential.

Fourthly, the question of police violence in Genoa. As two contributors argue, the “police

could carry out such a brutal act openly . . . means that they do not expect to be held accountable for their actions.

Which means that they had support from higher up, more powerful politicians . . . That those politicians also do not expect to be condemned . . . means that they too have support from higher up, ultimately, from Berlusconi . . . That Berlusconi could support such acts means that he must be certain of support from other international powers” (Brian S). As Starhawk rightly puts it, blaming the Black Block misses the point (as the State wants). The Black Block was “not the source of the problem in Genoa. The problem was state, police and Fascist violence.” In Genoa “we encountered a carefully orchestrated political campaign of state terrorism.” The police planned to attack the march and blaming the Black Block (as liberals and trots have done) has effectively let the state off the hook.

Fifthly, the book helps others to understand those who take part in the Black Block tactic. It clearly shows that the Block in Genoa was not exclusively anarchist and that its roots lie in the German Autonomists and not anarchism. It also allows its participants to refute some of the charges against them (such as being “elitist,” being “responsible” for the police violence, being police agents and so on). It helps to push the debate on tactics forward by allowing people to understand where others are coming from.

Lastly, the importance of (in Starhawk’s words) “staying on the streets.” The very fact the state went to

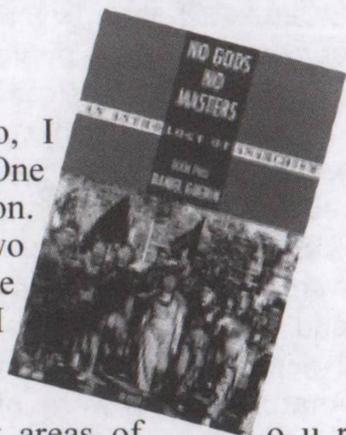


No Gods No Masters

Book 2
Daniel Guérin
AK Press

Some time ago, I reviewed Book One of this collection. Book Two redresses some of the criticisms I made of Book One, in that it covers different areas of our history, warts and all, up to the end of the Spanish revolution. Once again, the comparative wealth of material available in French on anarchism shows through. For example, Emile Henry is placed into context as a social anarchist driven to desperate measures by the repression after the Paris Commune.

Briefly, the book covers the ideas and life of Malatesta, the French syndicalists, Voline, Makhno and the Russian Revolution, and the Spanish revolution with a particular emphasis on Durruti.



All of these are well covered, though Guérin does not mention the Platform and the polemics between that group and other anarchists, nor does anything much more than touch upon the synthesis ideas developed by Voline as his response to the Russian crisis.

The most annoying part is Guérin's attempt to portray the Russian Bolshevik leaders as genuine revolutionaries, despite the evidence he himself presents. Trotsky in particular is damned as a ruthless butcher, in terms of his exchanges with Voline, his attitude towards insurgent Ukraine, and his massacre of the revolutionary workers at Kronstadt. Guérin may well have been taking a softer line on them because of the continuing strength of French Marxism at the time he wrote it, but it's a bit too much really. Of course Lenin and Trotsky were sincere, and Lenin at least believed in the revolution, but almost all political actors are sincere. Hitler and Franco were sincere. It doesn't make them right. Anarchists were, on the whole, spelling out how the Bolshevik experiment would fail, and in what ways, long before it did. As early as 1921,

Berkman was referring to it as state capitalism, while it took opportunistic Leninists decades longer to come up with this criticism, and even then it was selectively applied.

Most people likely to read this book will be familiar with the Spanish revolution, but perhaps more background could have been given on the foundation of the CNT, and the semana tragica in 1909, and how this led to the pistolismo of the employers and the anarchist response in which Durruti played his part.

Both sides are given of the controversy over the CNT-FAI members who joined the government. This is particularly useful as it nails the lie that anarcho-syndicalists have not learned any lessons from this episode, and generally went along with the collaborationist line. The inclusion of the IWA resolution criticising the CNT for this is particularly telling. Guérin inspired many of the anarchist communist organisations which repeat this lie, it seems that some of them do not go so far as to read his books!

MH



such lengths to attack the anti-globalisation demonstrations (and to split the movement) shows that we are a threat to the status quo. While the leaders of the world may like to dismiss it as "an anarchist travelling circus" the fact is that these demos, regardless of their limitations, do show that people are resisting and that there is an alternative to capitalism. Particularly in these days of war, we must stay on the streets and show that there is only one war worth fighting — the class war.

This book is, it is to be hoped, the start of a process in which we can discuss our ideas, our tactics, our movement and actions. We are clearly considered as a threat, hence the attempts to spilt the movement along the lines of "violence" and "non-violence" by the state (although, as Starhawk says, "if breaking windows and fighting back when the cops attack is 'violence,' then give me a new word, a word a thousand times stronger, to

use when the cops are beating non-resisting people into comas."). We cannot let them succeed, particular as the events in Genoa show that state violence was pre-planned and would have occurred even if the Black Block did not exist.

Ultimately, in order to build a militant anti-capitalist movement we need to make it relevant to the class who keep the global system going by its labour and which has the power to end it. The class which most anarchists are members of, the working class. This may well be a harder task than participating in a Black Block at demonstrations but until every workplace, community and school is a black block in terms of militancy, solidarity and politics an alternative to capitalism will never be on the cards.

Dare to dream, yes, but also dare to put that dream into practice!

I.M.

News from the Kate Sharpley Library

We have just (late January) mailed out the latest issue of our bulletin. This one contains pieces on Paris '68, Anarchy in north London and the strategy of tension in Italy as well as the usual news, requests and announcements.

Speaking of announcements, our energetic publishing programme, uncovering lost or hidden areas of anarchist history, strides on. Want to do some grubbing among the anarchism's roots? That will be Anselme Bellegarrigue's **World's first Anarchist Manifesto** (first English translation of a text from 1850: 1-873605-82-X. £5 or £2 to individuals). Wonder what our comrades had to say about nineteenth century colonialism (the capitalist globalisation of its day)? Try Nicoll's Stanley's **Exploits, or, Civilising Africa**. 1873605978 £5 (or £1.50 to individuals). New pamphlets are coming out regularly and a catalogue is available showing everything we have in print, and other goodies that we distribute; for a free copy send an SAE to: KSL, BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX KSL, PMB 820, 2425 Channing Way, Berkeley CA 94704, USA

Monopolise Resistance? How Globalise Resistance would hijack revolt

A pamphlet by Schnews and others.
Available from www.schnews.org.uk or
PO Box 2600, Brighton BN2 0EF

This pamphlet is aimed at those people attracted to what is loosely called the "anti-capitalist movement", and specifically at warning them off the politics and tactics of the left generally, and particularly the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). In this it succeeds admirably, including reasoned arguments about why the successes of the ill-defined "anti-capitalist movement" are based on the exact opposite of the SWP's politics. The tone is open, presumably so as not to put people off, and the movement's (and by implication the groups who produced the pamphlet) failings are admitted.

For most of Black Flag's readers, the arguments will all sound familiar. For many of the younger generation, who perhaps have been involved in direct action that the left steers clear of, or haven't been to University, these experiences are probably becoming well-rehearsed as the SWP latch on to whatever will get them members that week. The left always present issues and arguments that they want you to engage with, thus making themselves the focus of attention. Even if you go into the arguments and win it with respect to their intended audience, they still gain, because their importance is overstated, and the real issue is lost to sight.

There are the obvious failings in a short pamphlet that some arguments do need more elaboration. I've been an anarchist for nearly 20 years, I know why we generally don't talk to the bourgeois press (and what goes wrong when anarchists do) - someone who's new won't. But that's inevitable in such a short work.

A more niggling gripe is the one about unions being only for the middle classes and graduates, it's not true, though the more general points about how the unions have become businesses themselves and failed their members remain valid. Unlike the SWP, I don't see union hierarchies as potential allies. Union members, on the other hand, usually are. However, tactically, active rank and file members aren't going to go into partnership with a movement that states it is anti-union.

My major gripe, though, is that the pamphlet implicitly poses a question,

one that has yet to be faced up to:

organisation. The reason the SWP's front (and to a lesser extent

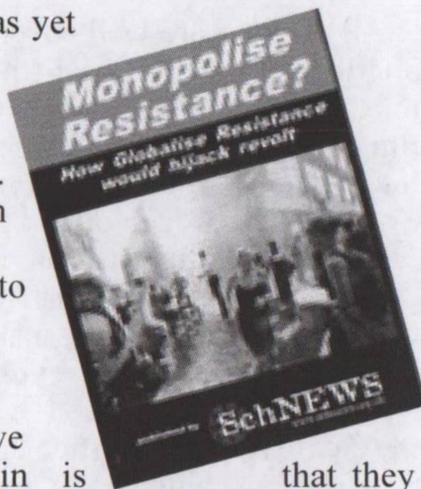
Workers Power) have muscled in is that they are organised. Anarchists / anti-capitalists / etc. are not, nor are they likely to be as one organisation as there are too many differences to make organisation possible.

There is also an implicit criticism of the existing British anarchist organisations, which the authors do not mention, and who have all failed to attract interest from the new wave of direct action after the poll tax. An article in the last Do Or Die complained that the "anarcho-punk generation" had not told them that the underlying problem was capitalism, and they'd had to work it out for themselves. I would hate that the lessons learned about organisation during the 80s would have to be rediscovered, too.

So, what do we do about it? I personally don't think there can be one organisation for all, but I do think there is a need for a culture of organisation. Yes, doing those dull admin tasks is boring, but nowhere near as boring as SWP biography sessions masquerading as public meetings. So, the SWP organised a train to Genoa and public meetings afterwards - why didn't anyone else? Did no one think of it, or did they expect someone else to do it? What about organising speaking tours of people from struggles both here and abroad? Co-ordinated actions seem to happen easily enough (no disrespect to all the work that goes into them), why nothing else?

So, in summary, a good read to reconfirm your prejudices about Britain's biggest reformist group, but a big question left hanging.

M.H.



Anarchism and the Black Revolution

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin has made an appeal for help in publishing the third edition of his classic book "Anarchism and the Black Revolution." Originally written in and smuggled out of the federal penitentiary in Marion, Illinois (USA), it quickly became influential with many young people, prisoners, and activists.

He is asking for the help of Anarchists who were influenced by the book, and would like to see a new edition. He needs to raise some of the thousands of dollars to self-print it after the manuscript is completed this Spring or early Summer. He asks comrades to:

1. Hold benefit concerts, t-shirt sales, and other events. Beg friends and others for money
2. Publicise his request in newspapers, newsletters or online.
3. pre-order the book, it will have a list price of \$12.95, and will be \$10.00 for volume sales of 10 copies or more. If you or your collective send in hundreds or thousands of dollars, he will consider it a volume sale and in send a bunch of book off to you when printed.
4. Write letters to Anarchist publishing houses that you know of to buy copies. Your letters might even convince one of them to print the book, so all he has to do is write it.
5. Invite Lorenzo to bookfairs all over the world to sell books and publicise the printing. This is very important to let people know about the new publishing of the book, as well as let them know for his need of money now and pre-order deal.

Please contact Lorenzo at:

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
The Rest of the News
P.O. Box 19962

Kalamazoo,
MI. 49019-0962

komboa@yahoo.com,

(or Komboa@hotmail.com, if that mailbox is full)

Now in print

Readers will be interested to know that both Jose Peirats' classic work **The CNT in the Spanish Revolution** and the excellent **We, the Anarchists: A Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) 1927-1937** by Stuart Christie (both reviewed in previous issues Black Flag) are now available in book form from the Meltzer Press:

The Meltzer Press, PO Box 35, Hastings East Sussex, TN34 2UX

contacts

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tele: 0161 231 8177

Anarchist Federation
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Class War Federation
PO Box 467
London E8 3QX

INDUSTRIAL

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Communications
Workers' Network (SF)**
PO Box 29, SWPDO
Manchester M15 5HW

**Public Service
Workers'
Network (SF)**
PO Box 1681
London N8 7LE

**Industrial Workers
of the World (Britain)**
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Dorest, BH15 3YL

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**Autonomous Centre
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5HA

Glasgow Anarchists
c/o Black Flag
e-mail:
anarcho@geocities.com

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Aberystwyth, Dyfed

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**Workers' Solidarity
Movement**
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Dublin 8
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Leeds LS6 1UN

Liverpool Anarchists
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Liverpool L69 6EE

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Saltley
Birmingham B8 3DP

Worcester Anarchists
c/o PO Box 3241
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WHY WE ARE NOT MAKING DEMANDS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Anti-Capitalist Convergence - New York City

The ACC is not making any demands of the politicians, bankers and CEOs gathering for the World Economic Forum in New York... we not 'protesting'...

The Anti-Capitalist Convergence is a gathering of collectives, affinity groups, and individuals inspired by the principle of direct action. Direct action means that if there are problems in the world, one does not go appealing to the authorities to solve them for us, one does not go begging - or even demanding - that those in power stop doing things that create those problems. Because those who believe in direct action do not recognise that authority, and wish to put an end to that power. Direct action means taking action for ourselves, either to create our own solutions...

... or, if we must confront our rulers, by putting our bodies on the line to stop them from doing what they're doing. It is, at the same time, a form of action and a form of education, because we are acting in the world, but by doing so, we are also showing people everywhere that there is an alternative to passive acquiescence - that it is possible for communities to take power over their own lives, to intervene in history, and to do it in a form which itself provides a vision of the kind of world in which we would really like to live.

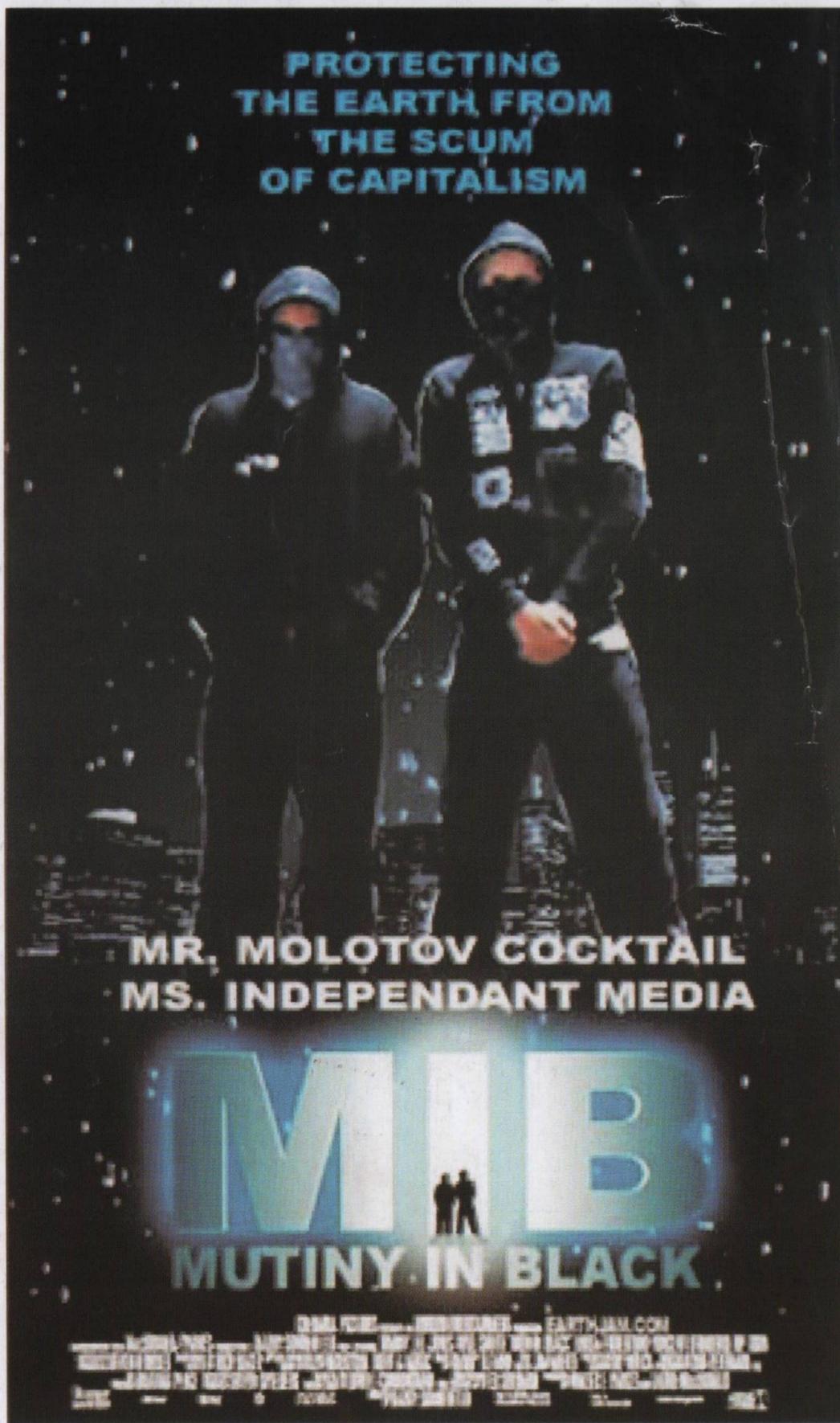
Therefore we are not even saying "we demand the right to live in freedom and dignity", because freedom and dignity is not something our rulers can ever grant us. It is their very existence, as rulers, that makes freedom and dignity impossible.

All this is only possible if we refuse to live in fear. As anarchists, we recognise

that the power of our rulers can only be maintained by terror; both governments and terrorists are ultimately playing the same game: the manipulation of ordinary people's sense of fear and insecurity for political gain. We, on the other hand, stand in absolute rejection of any politics of terror. That is why we are taking action now, in New York City, despite the obvious risks... By standing up and taking action anyway, despite all the police and military force and manipulation of the press

and public opinion we know are being marshalled against us, we are sending a message to the world that it is not necessary to be ruled by fear: we refuse to bow down to terror, just as we refuse to terrorise anyone else.

What, then, do we want?
We are anarchists because we believe it would be possible to have a society without rulers; one based on principles of self-organisation, voluntary association, and mutual aid.



We believe that capitalism cannot be reformed, and no system built on marshalling the powers of greed and fear to drive people to organise their lives around the endless production and accumulation of commodities, no society which measures its success by the total amount of merchandise it manages produce, could ever lead to human happiness - in fact, could ever lead to anything other than a world in which even the most successful are mired in loneliness and alienation... We believe it is possible, instead, for communities and individuals to take control over their own lives, and create a new world in which the desire for the endless maximisation of profit could be replaced by a desire for the full self-realisation of human beings: a world in which everyone can have the security of knowing their basic needs will be met, and therefore will be free to contribute to society as they see fit, in sustainable harmony with the earth and natural world; a world which would involve pleasures, challenges, and forms of joy and fulfilment that at present we could hardly imagine.

And if that it is possible - (and can anyone say with certainty that it is not?) - could there be anything more important than working to bring that world in to being?

...
http://www.accnyc.org/issues_wefdmands.html

We have reprinted this press release as it is an excellent introduction to anarchist ideas and practice. More analysis of anti-capitalist events from Genoa to Brussels to New York is contained within...