

resistance

anarchist bulletin

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Bah, Humbug!



CHRISTMAS: THE WORSHIP OF AUTHORITY AND MONEY

IT'S THAT TIME of year again. For some, it is the time to celebrate the major event in their religion and to worship the authority they call God.

Many others have rejected this meaning of the celebration. Instead they rush frantically around amassing huge debts and gorging themselves in endless rounds of Christmas parties.

It is not surprising that people want to do something out of their routine at this time of year. The summer is far away and the dark and cold seem to have us permanently in their grip. But instead of celebrating what we truly value about our lives and our world, we offer ourselves as sacrifices to alien powers that we could well do without- religion and capitalism.

Religion is still a powerful force in the world. Both Blair and Bush make no secret of the importance of religion in their politics. Many of Blair's important behind the scenes advisors and confidantes are strongly motivated by religion. It's not just Christians, these include Jews such as Michael Levy, the key to Blair's fundraising, and a Hindu steel magnate. Bush's whole political programme and his main support is influenced by the Religious Right. We only have to look around at recent events

to see the devastating impact religious belief can have when people claim that "God is on their side": September 11th and suicide bombs, the continuing bloodshed in Palestine/Israel, massacres between Hindus and Muslims in India and the war in Iraq itself which Bush is seeing very much as a Christian crusade.

Some will argue that this is not the 'true' meaning of the religion. But it's not just a question of what you decide God's message is. The main problem is that you have given up power over your own life to a "higher" authority. The Alpha course, funded largely by millionaire banker Ken Costa, is currently marketing Christianity like the latest model mobile phone with notable effect. The reason for the appeal is significant. As one convert said after attending an Alpha course, "***I don't have to sort my own life out anymore. Someone else is doing it for me.***" Philip Pullman's popular Dark Materials trilogy sums up the problem with religion. God is called "The Authority" and is kept alive by the rich and powerful so that they can keep control over the world. The only way for people to free themselves is to kill this "Authority".

So what's the alternative?

Instead of church and God, many choose the shopping mall and money, even though most realise that having yet another pair of trainers or designer T-shirt is not going to make them feel any better about their lives. Retail therapy is a short-lived relief. Many are also quite aware that Christmas shopping is a pointless waste of money. Do you think your friends and family really want a hamster that sings Merry Christmas or a pair of leopard skin boxer shorts? But somehow we get caught up in the trap of consumerism, helpless to escape. Stores target people with credit deals and many people will end up work-

ing for months before the debt is paid off. Capitalism is not that different from religion; you have given up control of your life to something beyond yourself.

Anarchism rejects both the God of authority and the God of money. Neither will do anything for our frustration at work, our discomfort in the overcrowded train or our anger at the dangerous stupidity of politicians. In fact, it is these powers that have caused the problems in the first place. The only power to change the way we live lies in our own hands. Take it and Use it! ★

BUSH TOPPLED!



See *A warm welcome for Bush* article inside.

ANARCHISTS IN PARIS

NEARLY 3,000 ANARCHISTS marched through working class areas of Paris on Saturday, November 15th. The march coincided with the Libertarian Social Forum, running at the same time, which had a series of large and well-attended meetings and film shows as well as a busy Anarchist Book Fair.

All the anarchist groups, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT-F, the Federation Anarchiste, Alternative Libertaire and the Organisation Communiste Libertaire as well as smaller groups and unaligned individuals came together to show unity. There was a contingent from the Anarchist Federation from Britain and Ireland, marching behind our banner. ★

ON THE FRONTLINE

THE THREATENED CLOSURE of the Hoover factory in Cambuslang has brought people out into the streets in protest. The closure would mean the loss of 260 jobs, which are being transferred to Wales and China. The workers' union, Amicus, claimed "No-one is seriously suggesting that Cambuslang workers should compete against a low wage economy like China but there is every reason for us to compete with Wales as the most innovative and highly motivated workforce in the UK." So, the union reckons that the real enemy isn't the transnational company ready to do business wherever's cheapest, but Welsh workers who are, apparently, less highly motivated and worthy of jobs. This approach is of course typical of the 'nationalist' logic of unions, Amicus being merely a particularly vile example. With leaders like these...

The Scottish nursery nurses are back out on selective strike in the weeks beginning 1st and 8th of December. The tactic of selective strikes, often used by Unison, seems to have done nothing to convince the bosses that it's time to pay up and voices are being raised that leaving Nursery Nurses to fight alone, when low pay is an issue affecting thousands of council workers, has been a conscious union tactic to "let off steam". Although morale remains high, many nurses are sick of being rolled out like a stage army every other month. The time has come for some self-organisation and imaginative tactics!

Two hundred of Oldham's posties walked out in a lightning wildcat strike on November 18th. They walked out after one postie was suspended for refusing to clear a backlog of mail from the London strike for no extra pay. So effective was their action that by lunchtime he had been reinstated.

In Martinique and Guadeloupe strikes and blockades of several economic sectors multiplied recently against threats to the index linked cost of living by the right wing government.

In Germany 100,000 workers demonstrated on the first of November against Agenda 2010 of the Green-Social Democrat government which will reduce the unemployment benefit and pensions for workers.

In Italy a general strike took place at the beginning of November against pension reform. It was the first general strike called by grass roots workers organisations, not traditional unions linked to political parties. Italian anarchists played a key role. ★

A news sheet has been produced by Bradford anarchist group. Contact them at: bradfordcalling@yahoo.com

CELEBRITY PRAT OF THE MONTH

THE CHARITY MASCOT Pudsey prat of the month? Yes! Wherever you go there he is trying to get money off us. His devious strategy is to look pathetic and try to con us into thinking that if we weren't such tight wads there would be no "Children in Need". Pudsey teams up with publicity hungry rock stars who could easily raise millions from their current accounts.



Pudsey: Prat

That such a charity actually exists nowadays in the fourth richest economy in the world is a total disgrace and clearly shows that the capitalist system works for some and not for others. It's bad enough that we have to fork out money to enrich landlords, supermarkets, and the State's war coffers without being morally blackmailed into giving to Pudsey the prat and his rich backers.

The apathetic acceptance of such crap is reflected in the fact that the BBC "Breakfast Programme" are offering as a prize a visit to have breakfast with City of London's suited sharks to help raise funds for poor old Pudsey. These are the people who made fat profits out of the war on Iraq - the bombing of children is good for the arms industry.

Why on one day a year are we sup-

posed to be generous when corporate greed for a few is worshipped as the norm the rest of the time? Usually we're encouraged to "think of number one" and stuff everyone else. This philosophy can only benefit a few. The real reason there are children in need is because these same people are quite happy to pay such low wages that cause many people to live in poverty.

Doubters of the above brief points should invest in a copy of Noam Chomsky's book "Profit over people - Neoliberalism and global order".

Pudsey's also a prat for his condescending portrayal of children and disabled people. They are not powerless victims who cannot speak and act for themselves. We should support them in doing so not celebrate them being patronised. Here at resistance we were inspired when school kids went on strike against the war on Iraq.

Donating to "Children in Need" won't solve the problem of poverty or inequality because the only way forward is to work to get rid of the whole rotten system. Pudsey should stop looking so pathetic and show some teeth! ★

A WARM WELCOME FOR BUSH

IN LATE NOVEMBER, the capital city was visited by the barbarian hordes from the West.

As soon as (Genghis?) George Bush touched down, he was greeted, not by sycophantic, flag waving patriots, but by hundreds of thousands of pissed off protesters, angry at everything from steel tariffs to the main sticking point, 'The War Against Terror' aka the war for oil. On Tuesday Nov 18th, hundreds of students at University College London occupied a section of the building, turning the space into an autonomous area in which people were invited to discuss issues they saw as important, organise for direct action, and for the march scheduled for the Thursday. The national demonstration on the Thursday, predicted to number 30,000, shocked everyone with a turnout in the region of 200,000.

Whilst we can only be encouraged by the overt display of mass disgust for the governments of Britain and the USA, we here at resistance believe there are a couple of points which need to be emphasised

Bush himself is only symbolic figure for the destructive systems of capitalism and the State. Even if he was to drop dead

tomorrow (we can but hope!) little would change. The rich would carry on getting richer, and we would carry on slaving away, getting poorer. If we are truly interested in fighting for justice and freedom, then we have to go the whole hog. Whilst capitalism and hierarchies exist, war and violence will continue, as those on the top of the pile consolidate their power, and keep the working class down.

Another problem was the passive nature of the demo. The scheduled 'day of direct action' was a predictable washout. The combination of 14,000 police - as always serving the interests of our rich and powerful rulers - and complete lack of support from the Stop The War Coalition (comprised as it is of people who want to become our new rulers), and their joint scaremongering, meant many stayed away. As the million strong march on Feb. 15th showed, nice processions from a to b do not change the minds of the ruling class, no matter how many people there are. Many people understandably find these strolls a disempowering experience (we know we do!). Mass direct action on the other hand is empowering; we take control over our own lives and actions - it truly scares our beloved rulers! ★

AN ANARCHIST INTERNATIONAL?

IT MAY COME as a surprise to some, but yes, anarchists are actually organised enough to have formed an international.

The International Federation of Anarchists was founded in 1968 in Carrara, Italy. It brought together anarchist federations in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Argentina, France and Bulgarians in exile which had a history of struggle dating back many decades. Also there were anarchists present from around the world. Many of the older founders had been involved in the Spanish Revolution and the younger ones had been active in the wave of unrest that swept through Europe in the 1960s.

We in the Anarchist Federation felt that it was important to join with other anarchists, especially those who had shown such a commitment to working class revolutionary anarchism. Therefore we decided to affiliate and are now the British section of the International. We attended one Congress and have participated in the twice yearly meetings, the most recent one last month in Prague. It has been very inspiring to meet with anarchists from so many countries- not only Spain, Italy and France but also now the Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Slovenes and



Poles. The anarchist movement in Britain is growing, though it's still yet to reach the same level of influence among the working class as our brothers and sisters in France and Italy have (both these federations have weekly papers).

Particularly inspiring, though, is the interest expressed by many young people in eastern Europe. Not being at all fooled by the smooth talk of the authoritarian communists, those who realise that capitalism and "democracy" do not mean freedom and equality have been attracted to anarchism. Their enthusiasm and a commitment and level of theoretical analysis stand as an example to us all to follow.

The International is now preparing for its Congress - a major event which is held only every five years. It will be held in Besancon in France, a town with a long anarchist history. There will be delegates and visitors from all over the world. But the aims and topics of discussions will be very different from other world summits. Instead, of organising for greater exploitation and oppression, we will be coming together to share experiences and ideas in order to contribute to the building of a global anarchist movement. ★

HUNGER STRIKERS BAILED

Thessaloniki Seven Released

ON 26th NOVEMBER at 4pm, the council of judges in Thessaloniki decided to release all seven activists who had been imprisoned since the 21st of June for taking part in the demonstration against the EU summit, held near Thessaloniki, Greece. Because of the success of militant street demonstrations, which showed the contempt for our rulers that many feel, the authorities have been clamping down hard.

The release of the seven was mainly down to the five hunger strikers, but the large amounts of international solidarity will have helped! The hunger strikers conditions are no longer critical, and they've come off the hunger strike.

In central Athens the university had been occupied, and, after a short assembly, the occupiers had a spontaneous motorbike demo to the hospital, and the prison where the prisoners had been held. But the solidarity campaign is not over, the hunger strikers need to recover, and the prisoners have only been released on bail, not allowing the foreign ex-detainees to leave Greece. All of the seven have to report to a police station every two weeks.

29 people are now facing charges re-



lating to the demonstrations against the EU summit, and could face prison sentences. We need to keep on pushing until the charges are dropped. For more information get in touch with the Thessaloniki Prisoners Support Group - thessalonikiprisoners@yahoo.co.uk ★

ARAB ANARCHIST WEBSITE

Anarchists in Egypt have built a website with some texts on anarchism in Arabic (and some in English). This will be important for helping spread anarchist ideas throughout the Arabic world. Links to English text at: www.geocities.com/aggoa2000/index13.html

To Arabic text at: www.geocities.com/sameh562001/ ★

TIME BOMB



"ANARCHISM IS ORGANISATION, organisation, and more organisation."

Errico Malatesta, who coined the unambiguous phrase above, was born 150 years ago this month. He dedicated his life to the anarchist cause, joining the Italian section of the First International Working Men's Association in 1871, shortly after the Paris Commune uprising, and dying in 1932 while under arrest ordered by Mussolini.

In the intervening years he was involved in insurrections, strikes and near revolution. Though forced to spend many years in prison and in exile, he was an outstanding organiser, agitator, writer, and editor. He was one of the most famous revolutionaries of his time, an icon of freedom for the Italian working class movement.

Malatesta effectiveness is shown in this police report: *"Malatesta's return from London was the signal for a reawakening of the anarchist movement in Ancona ... Malatesta immediately set about reorganising it. He made revolutionary propaganda at meetings and gatherings; by leaflets and through articles in the weekly Volonta ...*

... In a short time in Ancona, anarchists and sympathisers number some 600 individuals, consisting predominantly of dock porters, workers, and criminal elements of the town. ... his qualities as an intelligent, combative speaker who seeks to persuade with calm, and never with violent, language, are used to the full to revive the already spent forces of the party, and to win converts and sympathisers, never losing sight of his principle goal, which is to draw together the forces of the party, and undermine the bases of the State, by hindering its workings, paralyse its services, and doing anti-militarist propaganda, until the favourable occasion arises to overturn and destroy the existing State".

The "Red Week" occurred shortly after Malatesta's return: armed battles with the police took place, a general strike was declared, and in many areas autonomous communes were proclaimed. Sadly, when the reformist unions called the strike off, the government was able to re-assert its authority, and Malatesta returned to exile.

There is only a small amount of his writing translated into English, but the clarity and strength of his arguments make many of them seem refreshingly relevant today. "Malatesta's Anarchy" (available for £2.95 from Freedom Bookshop, 84b, Whitechapel High St, London, E1 7QX) is well worth reading.

From Dec 5th - 7th, meetings celebrating Malatesta's life will be held in Italy, organised by the Italian Anarchist Federation. ★

INSIDE INFORMATION

Irish anti-war activist imprisoned

FINTAN LANE, OF the Cork Anti-War Campaign and public relations officer for the Irish Anti-War Movement has handed himself into Garda custody and is in prison in Limerick after refusing to pay a fine for his part in the mass trespass in Shannon on Oct 12th 2002 (after the fence was taken down and 100 to 150 people went into the runway grounds). Shannon being a civilian airport in the west of Ireland currently being used by the US military.

More details here:

http://www.indymedia.ie/newswire.php?story_id=62419

Please write to him at:

Dr. Fintan Lane, Limerick Prison,
Mulgrave Street, Limerick, Ireland.

Probably best to include a return address (prison censors can be pedantic) and remember to send cards at Christmas.

He is in for 60 days (from Wednesday, Nov 26).

Police repression in the US

The Free Trade Area of the Americas summit came to a premature close, after ministers from 34 countries apparently accepted a watered-down proposal for creating a hemispheric economic community.

Huge amounts of protesters came to Miami to protest against the FTAA. They were met with extended police brutality—mainly on the streets but also in jail. Already in the run up to the summit, dissent was criminalized with support of the mainstream media.

The legal team estimates more than 250 arrests in total, with more than 50 arrested at a jail solidarity protest. There are reports of the arrested being brutalized in jail.

Independent journalists, including a producer of Democracy Now! were arrested, and a New York City indymedia volunteer was held in solitary confinement and a \$10,000 bail is set for him.

When not busy being attacked by the police, activists took the opportunity to

feed the homeless and to show school kids the independent media centre.

For more info on how to support the prisoners visit: <http://ftaaimc.org/en/2003/11/1758.shtml>

Legal support has confirmed at least five sexual assaults of arrested people, plus 12 separate incidents of beatings, mostly because people would not state their nationality or citizenship status. There were numerous pepper spray incidents as well and much verbal abuse and humiliation.

If you would like to wire money for bail and legal defence for these APOC people, it can be donated online via paypal, at <http://www.illegalvoices.org/apoc/index.html>

Greece

In one of many actions against imprisonment of Thessaloniki Seven, anarchists occupied the Press Agency in Macedonia on October 10th. A few hours later and many miles away in Iraklion, Crete, 30 anarchists occupied the offices of Radio Crete, interrupting broadcasts and reading out a message of solidarity with the seven. *See also article inside.* ★



Subvert and resist

Take precautions when going on demonstrations and don't take cameras, booze or drugs. If you're nicked give your name and address then say 'no comment' to any other questions.

DECEMBER:

6: Fifth Manchester Radical Bookfair. Bridge 5 Mill, 22A Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester. 11 am - 5pm www.radicalbookfair.org.uk

6: Frock On! Glasgow. Female collective workshops and bands. www.frockon.org

13: Glasgow Anarchist Dayschool 10 am - 11pm The Annexe, 9a Stewartville St, Partick www.nocog.org/~autonomy/dayschool.html

13: End injustice at Guantanamo Bay 1-4pm, opposite Downing Street, London. Campaign against Criminalising Communities 020 7250 1315 www.cacc.org.uk

13-15: Menwith Hill Spy Base women's peace camp and blockade. 01943 458 593 helenmenwith@yahoo.co.uk

22: Benefit for Leonard Peltier Defence Committee, Joiners Arms, St. Mary's St, Southampton with bands: Crowzone, Careless, Chihuahua Zycantah £3 (free booklet) www.leonardpeltier.org or joepublic23@hotmail.com

JANUARY

17-18: Reclaim the bases weekend of anti-militarist action. A weekend of action at military bases - from vigils to direct action. Start organising an event at a base close to you. Visit: www.reclaimthebases.org.uk To join the discussion list Email: reclaimbases-discuss@yahoogroups.com

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- I enclose £4 for a year's subscription to *Organise!* the magazine of the AF.
- I am interested in the **Anarchist Federation** and would like more information.

Name.....

Address.....

Join the resistance

The **Anarchist Federation** is an organisation of **class struggle** anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is **Anarchist Communism**.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the **ruling class** which controls all the power and wealth, and the **working class** which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the **direct action** of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it, such as working through parliament and national liberation movements, as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above. Contact us at:

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