

resistance

anarchist bulletin

Free/Donation
Issue 49 May 2003



Labouring under illusions

THE LABOUR PARTY must be the most mis-named organisation in the world, equalled in that respect only by Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazis) and the "Communist" Party. From the moment of its birth, it has done as much to destroy the wellbeing of working class people as it has done to promote the interests of capitalism. Now, Tony Blair has taken this to new depths.

In support of an extreme right-wing American government, Blair has dragged us into a brutal conflict that has laid waste to an already poverty-stricken Iraq. There are spin-offs here in Britain: in the budget, £300 million has been allocated to countering the threat of "terrorism" (as defined by the British State, which has plenty of weapons of mass destruction, and has just been found guilty - officially - of supporting the loyalist murder of Republicans in Northern Ireland). The people in Britain are already one of the worlds most spied upon and now surveillance measures are to be dramatically increased. We will be watched and harassed even more.

Tony Blair's Labour Party is the party of big business, greed, and hypocrisy. Millionaires have been falling over themselves to fund New Labour and you can bet that it is nothing to do with generosity. They want, and will receive, a pay-back for their investment.

Of course, the working class has always had to subsidise business. The very

nature of employment requires that the workers who make the wealth only get a fraction of the wealth that they create. The rest goes to the bosses. Now, with a bloody war and its aftermath to pay for - £3 billion plus - the new increase in National Insurance contributions will do nicely.

By the way, avoid having a serious accident! Stocks of blood donated to the transfusion service have been prioritised for troops in Iraq, thanks to the government.

New Labour's "Third Way" is nothing of the sort. Old Labour was in reality a third way between (private) capitalism and state-capitalism. New Labour is unashamedly pro private capitalist. An example of this cosy state/business relationship will be the huge profits private firms will make in the so-called public-private partnerships which are being promoted everywhere.

New Labour Gangsters

New Labour is being shown for the set of gangsters that they are - bashing strikers at home, and butchery abroad (an average of a war a year).

Regardless of their backgrounds, whether working class like Prescott or upper middle class like Blair, Labour is our enemy, they must be defeated by working class action in workplaces and the community, which does away with all bosses and governments permanently. ★

ANARCHY IN THE EU



Greeks greet Blair and Aznar with their favourite cocktail

Greece: AS UP TO 20,000 police guarded the EU meeting in Athens, Greece, 8,000 anti-war protesters clashed with police and smashed shops and banks. Police responded with tear gas and savage beatings, and were met with stones, bottles and petrol bombs. Elsewhere several other blocs of demonstrators managed to get near to the meeting. Several undercover police were beaten by protesters and expelled from the demonstration. The British, Italian and French embassies were attacked, and British Airways' office was occupied. The day ended with 106 arrests.

The EU enlargement will involve increasing "liberalisation" of the economy, to the benefit only of the rich.

Spain: The city of Barcelona was shaken on Thursday 10th April as thousands of people took to the streets in a day of protest against the killing in Iraq and the permanent war. Many businesses were closed, following a call by several anarcho-syndicalist unions (CGT, CNT-AIT, SO) for a general strike of 24 hours. Actions were continuing until the late evening. Strikes and demonstrations also happened in Madrid and across Spain.

Italy: One million people responded to a general strike call put out by the rank and file unions such as the CUB, COBAS and the anarcho-syndicalist USI-AIT. Marches and demonstrations took place in most towns and cities. ★

ON THE FRONTLINE

THE DAY-TO-DAY class war has been continuing as normal, demonstrating the non-sense behind the idea that the country has united around the bosses in a time of war.

- More trouble for management in the midlands car factories - MG Rover workers have overwhelmingly voted for strike action over the offer of a paltry 2.2% pay rise - in the same week that Chief Parasite - sorry, Chief Executive Kevin Howe was awarded a £500 000 bonus.

- The fire-fighters dispute rumbles on, despite desperate attempts by the Union bureaucrats to bring about a humiliating 'settlement' and deliberate morale weakening statements from the same.

At a Brighton Conference delegates voted to reject the 16% offer recommended by the executive and setting up the very real prospect of 'rebel strikes' once the War is over - clearly sticking two fingers up to the FBU chiefs whose mis-handling of the dispute has highlighted the danger of relying on well-paid representatives to fight our battles - they've more in common with the bosses across the table than the workers.

- Wales & Borders, Central Trains, Virgin West Coast, Virgin Cross Country and Midland Mainline and ScotRail were all hit by strikes by guards and conductors over Easter (one of their most profitable weekends) over safety worries (the companies want a 'looser' safety-book to save money). Most of the lines were only able to operate less than 50% of their scheduled journeys and suffered financial losses probably in the millions.

- Hospital cleaners, porters and catering workers are on strike at hospitals in Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Goole in protest at receiving lower wages from the private sub-contractors (Carillion) than those directly employed by the NHS. These deliberate attempts at dividing workers and also increasing profits are increasingly common tactics by the NHS Trusts.

- There's serious trouble brewing for bosses in the state sector with teachers on the verge of their first national strike since 1994 if any jobs are lost because of the present funding crisis - caused by "Ministers making fundamental miscalculations to the education budget" with half a billion pounds gone "missing".

The prospect of a council workers strike is also looking likely if the government presses ahead with plans to end national pay bargaining. ★

ELECTION DECEPTION

EARLY THIS MONTH, council elections will take place throughout Britain as well as elections to the Scottish Parliament. Turn out at the polls has been lower than at national elections for many years. The chances are that mass disillusion with the electoral process will grow. This disenchantment may well be fuelled by recent events, when the Blair regime virtually ignored even token recognition of Parliament.

Despite this, some may decide to show their disgust with Labour by a vote for the Greens, or even the Lib Dems, as a result of anti-war sentiment.

At the same time, the fascists of the BNP will be standing a record number of candidates in the council elections, hoping to profit from an increasing disillusion with Labour within the working class.

In response to this disillusion which opens up a vacuum in British politics, and against the threat of the BNP, some groups have decided to run as left alternatives to Labour. This includes the Independent Working Class Association in various areas around England, and the Bristolian



DON'T VOTE
It Only Encourages Them!

electoral alliance in Bristol. The latter appears to be an alliance of community activists, ex-Labour and ex-Liberal Democrats and radical liberals.

Some anarchists seem mesmerised by these electoral challenges to Labour, and appear to have lost their critical faculties. Some of these groups have highlighted the need to build effective community organisation within working class areas, especially in opposition

to the fascists, who are trying out this tactic themselves. We heartily agree that now is the time to develop community organisation, to act locally - within a broad general strategy - to organise among tenants, to develop counter-organisation and self-organised welfare groups.

But there is no difference between a vote for a parliamentary candidate and a vote for a council candidate: the local state - as represented by councillors - is the same as the national state as represented by MPs. Organisation in the community should not mean a vote for an uncontrolled candidate but should involve the empowerment of all. ★

ARGENTINEAN STATE REPRESSION

THE ARGENTINEAN STATE continues its attack on the occupied factories and neighbourhood assemblies over there:

"The sisters and brothers workers of Brukman have suffered another attack at the hands of the justice system, the government and the bosses. In a brutal police operation, with more than 250 police, attack vehicles, ... and the presence of infantry, our factory was evicted."

"During the last year and a half of occupation and production under workers' control, we workers demonstrate that we are the only ones interested in sustaining the workplace abandoned by the bosses. We have taken charge of the factory, we put it into production, we have been receiving a decent wage all these months and have even hired workers fired by the bosses. This has led to our receiving immense solidarity from the people of the capital and especially from the movement of popular assemblies, trade unions and other organizations of employed and unemployed workers."

"We call on all of them to stay rallied at the door of our factory. Since the first

moments hundreds of brothers and sisters got here, now we are almost a thousand defending the factory. Here we will stay until we regain it." - *Sister and brother workers of Brukman. As we go to press the workers of Brukman are fighting hundreds of police for control of the factory.*

Meanwhile, the occupied space of Lezama Sur, home of the local community assembly and Indymedia, was evicted as part of a terror campaign against the occupied spaces in Buenos Aires - buildings taken over by activists and families for safe housing and cultural centres. The organisers inside the building were forced out by police but not detained.

The government is cracking down on protests and community projects to intimidate activists. The atmosphere of brutal police control seems to grow more intense daily. Almost everyday there are cases of police repression - worker controlled factory evictions, protesters being beaten, police blockades in the streets, and most frighteningly assembly members being kidnapped. In recent weeks the media has only sensationalized these acts. ★

IRAQI "FREEDOM"

OPERATION "IRAQI FREEDOM" has supposedly liberated Iraqi Arabs and Kurds. The trouble is, what freedom and peace can this sort of war bring?

It was the creation of Iraq by colonial powers, their backing for Saddam against Iran, the war and sanctions when he stopped behaving as the US wanted and the blind-eye turned to the suffering of Kurds that has also been responsible for the misery of ordinary people. So this is a war not to right those wrongs but to improve the US economic and political influence in the oil-rich region. We all know this, and millions of people have told the UK and US governments "Not In Our Name", but were still unable to stop it.

Meanwhile, now more US involvement is called for even by leaders who said they opposed the war, to "restore order". The western and Iraqi middle classes patronisingly call looting unfortunate and misguided. In the space between repression and poverty under a tyrant and an equally uncertain future, it makes sense to take what you can and need. It is survival, not theft. Of course there are people acting against working class interests – the contract stealing of what should be common resources for personal profit. But government at the point of a US gun has removed opportunities for more constructive self-organisation and community based solutions. This is what war – any statist war - does. The rich and the brutal get richer and more brutal at the expense of the rest. The Iraqi working class doesn't need US troops to impose order but peace to organise autonomously.



Iraqi "self-rule"?

But working class self-organisation is not the same as the nationalist self-rule which newly emerging leaders in Iraq are demanding. Anarchists know that self-rule granted by western powers will mean yet more military-backed divisive repression of ordinary people of all ethnic and religious groups. It might come in the form of twisted religious clerics like those who run Iran, or of ethnically defined regional government which will oppress minorities, or by Arab-dominated secular government promoting the interests of the Sunni middle class within global capitalism. Ordinary people need to unite across such divisions and revolutionaries must help them.

Western "democracy"?

But appealing to western leaders to see reason isn't working. International opposition has continued, and even grown as the war unfolds and we watch the true US agenda reveal itself. If Anarchists fear what will come next in Iraq we also point out the defects of our own countries' supposedly democratic systems. The majority of people in Britain opposed the war and between one and two million people in England were present on a single march in London. But our democratically elected government entirely ignore our demands.

So, what exactly is so good about "western democracy"? "We have the freedom to demonstrate", liberals argue. But this "democracy" is robbing us, as it will rob Iraqis, of the freedom to bring about real change. ★

ANTI-WAR ACTION IN MANCHESTER

WHAT BEGAN AS a heavily controlled anti-war demo in Manchester (29.3.04) ended up as something completely different. And wasn't it a lot more fun!

The march through Rusholme was supported strongly by passers-by, shopkeepers and drivers. The initial, well publicised, aim was to demonstrate outside the BBC, criticising them for their censored dishonest reporting of the Iraq war. The crowd sat down and blocked the road.

We walked down to the Peace Camp...a large banner in the camp with "Fuck Capitalism" on it was ripped down by the cops and people started to get angry.

A quiet word went round to lead off down towards Market Street without the police. This is a pedestrianised area full of shoppers. Now also full of demonstrators, coppers and bloody massive police horses.

We were doing what we wanted – a lit-

tle bit of mayhem in a normally hemmed in, consumer driven, Saturday afternoon. That was too much for them. You can't let people see that they can do what they want and get away with it. Too dangerous. So now the cops started to get nastier.

Some people went down a side street which was really narrow. It was easily blocked off by the horses. The police corralled a group onto the grass. Loads of coppers, many with horses, kept the rest away, but inadvertently made a great amphitheatre for their production.

Significant numbers of people who had previously scoffed at the demo or not understood what the police were doing started to make connections.

Self organised action leads to much more thought and understanding all round and doesn't half authority them off.

From Greater Manchester AF ★

CUT THE CARD

YOU DON'T NEED to work for the Financial Times to realise that credit card debt is getting well out of hand. Ten years ago hardly anyone had one. Now there are 91 million credit and debit cards in the UK. Two fifths of our shopping is now put on the plastic. The net result is a large portion of the population with massive credit card debt. Given the extortionate interest rates charged this is seriously bad news for us and the source of gleeful hand rubbing for the high street bankers who are pocketing it.

Credit cards have been introduced not to make our lives easier, but to extract money from us. Credit card debt acts like a mini mortgage – got to keep our noses to the grindstone so as not to miss any payments. We lived without them for years, and can start doing so again. To help you on your way to liberating yourself from plastic purgatory **get your credit card and take a pair of scissors to it.** This may seem hard at first, but believe me, the feeling of relief when its done is immense. Worried about the debt you've accrued? The most important thing is not to panic. For starters, did you know the following?

- Credit Card debt is classified as "non-priority" debt. You can't be imprisoned for not paying non-priority debts and you are unlikely to lose your home or your essential goods.
- It is an offence under The Administration of Justice Act 1970 for someone in debt to be harassed by their creditor such as a credit card company or an agent acting on their behalf.
- Debts of under £5000 can only be heard at the small claims court. So even if you do get taken to court you can't be stung with solicitors costs if you lose.
- Debt collectors are not the same as bailiffs. Debt collectors cannot take any action against you, apart from asking you to pay any money owed.
- Regardless of what they say, YOU DON'T HAVE TO LET BAILIFFS IN. They are not allowed to force their way into your home unless you have let them in on a previous visit, hence the importance of never, ever letting them in.

We don't claim to be legal experts. We certainly don't claim to offer "impartial" advice either – we despise bailiffs, bankers and other creditors as much as anyone and support fair means or foul to get the better of them! Some decent, free, practical advice is available from The National Debtline on 0808 808 4000. Their website is www.nationaldebtline.co.uk.

Alternatively, you could visit the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Thanks to Walthamstow Anarchist Group (07810 288 889) for the article. ★

INSIDE INFORMATION

Toby Olditch-JT5132
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Ray Gilbert

Seven debilitating long years beyond an initial tariff of 15 years black Liverpool prisoner Ray Gilbert still protests his innocence. They won't release him until he admits to the crime. How can he? Would you? A discussion forum to push Ray's case for freedom is to be held on Thursday, May 29, 8pm at Friends Meeting House, Pradise Steet, Liverpool (opposite Holiday Inn). Come along in support of Ray if you can.

Prisoners of War against War

Bristol Prisoner of War Against War, Josh Richards is now out on bail. He sends his thanks to all those who wrote to support him and should be out until September. Don't forget others still inside, including:

Philip Pritchard-JT5131
HMP Gloucester
Barracks Square
Gloucester GL1 2JN

Angie Zelter - Charged for trespassing onto a US air force base near nuclear capable F-15 Strike Eagle aircraft, for more info contact David on 01508 550 446.

Barbara Smedema - Disabled an American communications satellite at the military airport of Volkel, in the Netherlands. Contact: P.I.TerPeel, Patersweg 4, 5977 NM Evertsoord. Netherlands.

Arthur Milling and Dr Margaret Jones will be in court on 23 May for cutting their way into Fairford airbase and causing £50,000 of damage to B52 support vehicles. More info: media@tridentploughshares.org.

Other peace prisoner info: www.peacenews.info and www.j-n-v.org/prisoners.htm
For Legal info check out www.gwi.org.uk/legal.htm ★

ACTIONS IN HEREFORD

ON TUESDAY 15TH MARCH 20 people held a vigil outside the Magistrates Court in Hereford in solidarity with a member of the Herefordshire Anarchist Group who was on trial for walking in the road at an anti-war demonstration the week before. The member was released with an unconditional discharge.

The following day around 50 people met in Hereford city centre to protest against the war. Dispersing and then regrouping to evade police surveillance. The group then successfully blocked a main road outside the Armed Careers Office for an hour with police merely re-directing traffic. *From Hereford AF* (contact hereford@afed.cjb.net) ★

SUPPORT RESISTANCE

THOUSANDS OF COPIES of resistance are produced and distributed for free each month by the Anarchist Federation.

We have no rich backers so if you like what you read please help us by sending a donation to the address below. ★



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.

MAY: Mark Barnsley Speaking Tour - prisoners survival and prison support - contact the campaign to help and organise an event in your town. JfMB, PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX, England. Email: markbarnsley@mail.com Tel: 07944 522 001

1: London Critical Mass. Part of London Mayday 2003 - a day of action against capitalism and war (www.ourmayday.org.uk) Calling all bikes, skates, anything without an engine. Meet 11am under Waterloo Bridge - South Bank, London. Visit: http://cmlondon.enrager.net

8: Disarm DSEI public meeting 7:30pm Venue: to be confirmed - Tel: 07817 652 029

10: The French Connection: Anarchism and Organisation. 2-5pm. A talk at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Organised by London Anarchist Federation.

17: 4th Manchester Radical Bookfair, 11am onwards - Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick St, Ancoats, Manchester. www.radicalbookfair.org.uk

7: Manchester Peoples' Assembly, 1pm - 5pm, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, City Centre (behind Central Library). For more info Tel: 07986 305 320 or Email: peoplesassembly@manchestersstopthewar.org

JUNE: 28-1: Anti-G8 summit, Evian in France. Visit: www.claaacg8.org. Anti-capitalist village, Visit: www.vaaag.org

New Wales AF Email Address: afedcymru@yahoo.co.uk

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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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84B, Whitechapel High Street,
London, E1 7QX. Tel: 07946 214 590
Visit: www.afed.org.uk or www.iaf-ifa.org
Email: anarchistfederation@bigfoot.com