

# Don't mourn, occupy!

In response to the killing of innocent Palestinians and continuing siege on Gaza, students across the country have been occupying university buildings demanding aid to the people of Gaza and deinvestment in companies that support the Israeli state. The actions started when students from the London School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) occupied and closed an exhibition held by the Ministry of Defence. The exhibition celebrated the role of the British armed forces in defence of the British Empire. The occupied



Banners displayed at Leeds University occupation.



exhibition was transformed into a liberated space condemning imperialism and the persecution of the Palestinian people. A seven day occupation at LSE won many of its demands while actions at King's College, Essex, Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds and almost a dozen more were to follow. Further occupations are expected in Liverpool, Nottingham and Sheffield. Meanwhile in Glasgow, a coalition of anti-war activists occupied the BBC offices in response to the BBC's decision not to broadcast an emergency appeal for the people of Gaza. <http://occupations.org.uk>

## EDO SMASHED

A group of anti-militarists entered the ITT/EDO IBM arms factory in Moulscambe, Brighton earlier this month and succeeded in shutting the factory. Extensive damage was caused to the offices and equipment used to make arms. EDO's military products include bomb racks, release clips and arming mechanisms for warplanes. They have contracts with the UK Ministry of 'Defence' and US arms giant Raytheon relating to the release mechanisms of the Paveway bomb system. They also supply parts via Lockheed Martin to the Israeli army which are used in the bombs responsible for killing hundreds of Palestinians in the recent atrocities in Gaza. One activist commented, "I think it's absolutely disgusting that weapons made in our cities and in our country are being used to kill innocent women and children ... If the law and the police can't do anything about it it's about time somebody else did".



# A time for mutual aid

In response to the capitalist crisis, many workplaces have closed their doors, and are laying off workers, demanding voluntary redundancies, banning overtime, reducing working hours, or moving to a 4 or 3 day week. A widespread pay freeze is looming. Local councils are poised for large job cuts in the coming months. Queues at Job Centres have grown and temp jobs are becoming more common, as firms try to keep their permanent workforce at a minimum.

This crisis could never happen in an Anarchist society. But how do anarchists respond as people affected by



Community kitchen during the Spanish Civil War



Chicago soup kitchen for striking workers.

economic crisis, just like everyone else? For a start, we have to go on the offensive. Wage-cuts, unemployment and poorer conditions of work must be fought. Taking militant industrial action is a good strategy for the public sector. It means demanding what we are owed and refusing to work for less. This is less effective if privately owned workplaces go bust. One way of surviving is to make worker-controlled cooperatives out of failing enterprises, but this still assumes a line of credit and consumers with cash, and the boss would have to go!

One clear response that Anarchist-Communists can make is the need for what we call 'Mutual Aid'. Anarchists are already putting these ideals into practice through acts of solidarity, and this doesn't require money. It is the formal economy that is in crisis, and we need an informal one to get through it. In a system based on wage-labour and minimal benefits, short of our

and make things we might otherwise have to pay for, or do without. Even better is communal activity where we work together freely to provide what we need in the face of adversity: mass catering, collaborating on a DIY project or running a voluntary youth or community group. One growing project is the Food not Bombs network. Volunteers in communities

world-wide cook and give away healthy and free food to hundreds of thousands of people a year. Such projects have been proved to be especially vital in periods of working class struggle; during industrial disputes for example. The need is just as great now.

Mutual Aid is certainly not a full solution to economic inequality. But while we continue to force demands on employers and the welfare state, true voluntarism or Mutual Aid remains key to providing us with practical benefit in the here and now. It can also give us the confidence to resist bailiffs, evictions and repossessions, something many people will soon face.

In promoting mutual aid, we recognise that human beings are no less capable of cooperating than competing. Anarchist Communists envisage an economy based on work freely given and the collective rewards of labour freely taken: from each according to their ability, to each according to their need. We will satisfy our needs communally without money, and without employment or unemployment. What could be better than that?

# Refinery Walkouts - perspective of an AF oil worker



Workers from the Lindsey refinery.

I work for a contracted company in charge of the maintenance of a oil refinery in South Wales. The start of the strike occurred due to an Italian company being contracted to increase refinery capacity at the Lindsey refinery. The strikes quickly spread across the rest of the refineries, sporting the slogan "British Jobs for British workers".

In the area where I work there are two oil refineries and two LNG terminals plus an oil storage facility. Recently due to the economic crisis workers at all of these sites have been made redundant, which is pretty much uniform across the UK and even the world. With the prospect of work coming in the form of new building projects such as the planned gas fired power stations and nuclear power stations there is hope for workers who are out of work. However due to the recession the fat cats want to cut costs. As a result they will use the company who will charge the least. Its unfortunate that overseas companies can do the job for less than the British companies. This is where the problem began, workers recently made redundant

were horrified when local jobs went to an Italian company who would use Italian and Portuguese labour. A lot of my colleagues regularly work overseas in places such as Kazakhstan, Dubai and in other countries. When this work is offered people jump at the chance. Don't blame the workers - it's not their fault at all. Its the system: capitalism. To quote one of my colleagues, "foreign workers are in the same boat as us, if were offered work we would take it." The recent wave of redundancies had nothing to do with overseas workers "taking our jobs". Its the whole greedy system that is to blame. In an the engineering industry, especially with the oil and gas industry, the job takes you world wide. Contractors can work all over the world. As I'm sure the media is pushing this on the front pages they are doing nothing to defend the foreign workers who also face threats of redundancy and unemployment. Who can blame the workers who just want to work and support their family? What happened to international workers solidarity?

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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.

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## Across borders, across cultures, across states

# SOLIDARITY

**As events show, the Israeli state is free to do what it likes to the Palestinians. It effectively imprisoned them in Gaza, and then bombed civilians with nowhere to run, leaving thousands dead and injured. This was a calculated over-reaction to a few missiles sent in the opposite direction, a crime we must never forget.**

So, how should people oppose the violence of a state with the greatest get-out-of-jail-free card of all time, namely US patronage and military support? Certainly not by supporting Hamas and its sacrificial altar for the Palestinian people. Why oppose one form of religious-nationalist violence with another? Hamas has

declared war on the Palestinian working class; ending strikes at gunpoint, kidnapping and making assassination attempts on trade unionists, persecuting sex workers, and gays and lesbians also. The only answer lies with ordinary Palestinians and Israelis; people we

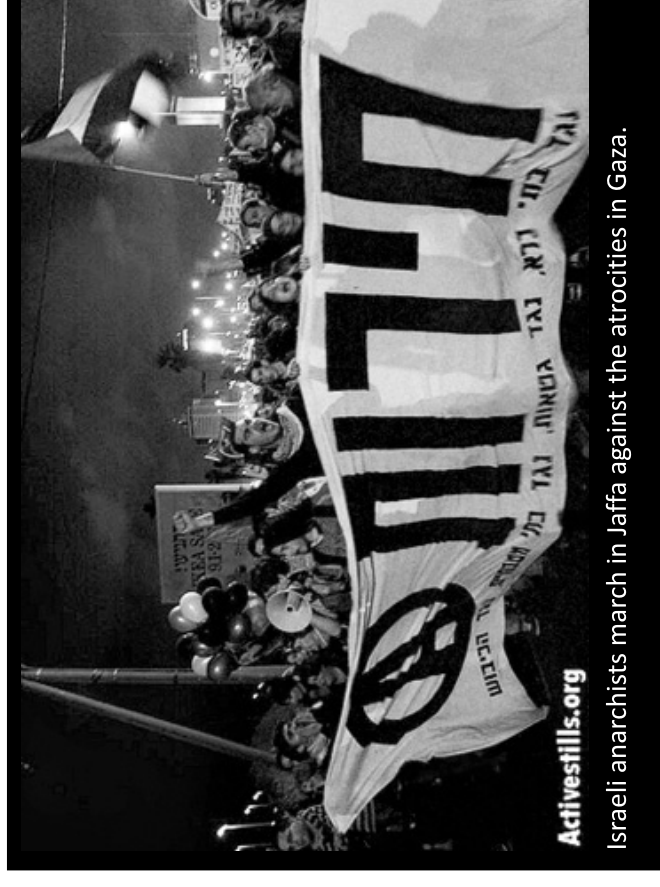
identify as working class even though many Palestinians are prevented from getting paid work. In the long run, in terms of very real economic grievances, they will have more in common with each other than they do with their own rulers, as we all do, regardless of the country or faith they were born into.

attack Palestinians - recognise injustices on both sides, but that Israel bear the principle responsibility. There are many grassroots organisations within Gaza and the West Bank struggling against both the Israeli occupation and Hamas and Fatah, including the trade union movement and groups such as Anarchists Against The Wall (AATW).

The only way forward is for such people to take matters into their own hands, not to rely on state 'support' or 'solutions'. In the same way that opposing the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan was not support for Saddam or the Taliban, opposing Israeli violence, whether from the

In the town most affected by Hamas' rockets, S'Derot, 500 people signed a call for the Israeli Defence Force not to attack Gaza. 3000 people marched from Tel Aviv to Jaffa to protest the carnage. The Refusenik movement - Israeli military personnel who refuse to

support for Hamas or Fatah. It is support for the Palestinian people, as they hide in fear in their homes, afraid to bury their dead. It is solidarity for Israeli people who find the actions of their state as repulsive as we do.



Israeli anarchists march in Jaffa against the atrocities in Gaza.