

resistance

anarchist bulletin

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Britain and Ireland
Anti-war special Feb 03



War against war

SINCE THE 1950s, North American warlords, usually accompanied by their pet poodles in Westminster and Whitehall, have intervened against various factions of the ruling elite in the Middle East. Squabbling over the oil that lies under the desert sands.

Not that "America" needs the oil, most petrol consumed in the United States does not come from the Middle East, and most of America - the ordinary working people, have about as much say in U.S. foreign policy as the ordinary working people of Iraq have in policies of their government. A big chunk of the profits of oil corporations is, however, dependent on relations with the oil-producing states.

The Billion Dollar Question

The question isn't what happens to the oil, it's what happens to the profits?

For the ruling Western elite this is an important issue. If they circulate back into the Western-dominated world economic system, then all well and good for Bush, Blair and the capitalists they represent. This usually happens. The non-Western oil producing states fill the coffers of the multinationals by buying fighter planes and other armaments. However, if it is used to develop native industrial capitalism, as Hussein, Nasser, Bin Laden, Khomeni and the like aimed at, beneath the cloak of nationalism or religion, the problems start for "our" rulers.

Not only does this lead to lost profits for them but it also leads to the development of a new rival to their monopoly of economic and state power.

So what they are fighting for is the right to exploit and we should only support the war effort if we want to support our

own exploitation and if we want to continue to see but a fraction of the wealth we create return to us in wages.

It's not a million miles away

The British government's own estimate is that the war will cost £5 billion. Every pound of tax payers' money that is spent on obliterating the people of Iraq, every pound that has been spent over the course of the last 12 years doing just that, could have been spent on the health service, could have been spent on the fire service, could have been spent on social welfare. And this is not just a minor thing. Poor public services KILL.

Nor is the battlefield confined to far off deserts. It stretches across the world, from New York, to Moscow, to Bali. While the Al Qaida - Iraq link has no substance outside the day dreams of Dubya's scriptwriters, we have no doubt they will use the opportunity presented to them by the invasion of Iraq to build their organisation.

All the deaths and injuries inflicted in this war are the responsibility of all sides. We don't think the planes on S11 just popped out of the sky with no relationship to the previous 50 odd years of American military intervention in the Middle East, nor do we think the people of Iraq have much to thank Hussein for other than 22 years of war.

We think anyone who blames "Americans" needs to wise up, we'll start blaming the cleaners in American office blocks the day they start sending armies to Saudi Arabia, likewise with anyone who thinks Bin Laden represents some kind of



Anti-war protesters invade Shannon airport

uprising of the poor and oppressed. If we were as poor as Bin Laden we would be doing well.

The truth is there are two sides - the working class, the soldiers in all armies, builders in Baghdad or office workers in London, against the ruling class consisting of officers in all armies, war mongering multi-millionaire scum bags like Bin Laden or Bush. ★

WHAT CAN WE DO?

AN UNNAMED US defence official recently admitted to USA Today newspaper that the timing of an invasion had slipped



from mid-February to the end of February or early March due to **logistical problems** in shifting a huge land, sea and air force.

Bases across Europe are the lines of supply to feed the war machine in the Middle East. Demilitarise them and the capacity of that war machine to go to work is seriously impaired.

See the back page for upcoming direct actions and demonstrations against military bases. Nothing going on in your area? Then form your own anti-war group and get organising. Read the reports of anti-war actions inside this paper. There are no limits to what can be done! ★

WE'RE HAPPY TO report that 2003 has picked up where 2002 left off with continuing worker resistance, including the possibility of a new wave of strikes in the car industry – which has long been claimed as a 'strike-free' area by the bosses.

The Fire-fighters have gone back on the offensive after the cooling-off period over the holidays. 55,000 workers held another 24-work stoppage on 21 January and are now threatening to hold further 48-hour strikes over the coming weeks – unless the FBU manages to pull the rug from under them – the "leaders" are showing clear signs of wavering, happy to use ACAS to discuss an 11% offer previously rejected. The strike has noticeably developed from being over a wage increase to one that is essentially about jobs – the modernisation plans that the fire-fighters have rejected would mean a loss of 4,500 jobs – the union officials should be pushing this, not back-peddalling.

Workers at the Peugeot and Nissan car factories in Coventry and Sunderland are close to striking. Both are pay disputes, the companies making annual offers below what is average in the industry, as the factories are in high-unemployment areas. The return of industrial action in an industry which was once a hotbed of working class resistance is a welcome sign that people are increasingly not going to let the bosses walk all over them anymore.

Bus drivers in Norwich held a weeklong strike early in January over unacceptable changes in working practices,

In Ireland, construction workers have taken part in a series of wildcat strikes in response to attempts to undermine their safety conditions and wages through the use of "black-market" workers. At the minute, the action is mainly limited to Limerick but there are signs that the trouble could spread to other counties.

In Italy recently, a similar dispute occurred on the railways, and the "black-market" workers *also* went out on strike – something to bear in mind.

In Europe, dockworkers blocked a number of ports in Belgium and Finland in protest at EU proposals that threaten jobs – potentially this could be a very important struggle in the coming months. Italian pilots and flight attendants also struck in a dispute over safety.

Finally a success story: the workers at Friction Dynamex who had held a two-year long picket outside their factory won their case against the company, holding a victory parade through Caernarfon and were cheered on by 1,500 locals. ★

FROM THE AUTUMN of 2001 to the Autumn of 2002 there have been at least half a dozen massive anti-war demonstrations in central London, not to mention protests marches where there have never been protest marches before, the largest anti-war demonstration in Glasgow ever. Are you listening Tony Blair? Well is he? It is time to go on the offensive, it is time to start inflicting a cost, it is time to stop asking nicely, it is time to stop playing by their rules. The following are some beginnings:

October, 02: Over 100 anti-war demonstrators took part in a mass trespass in the runway grounds of Shannon airport, a civilian airport in the West of Ireland which is being used for re-fuelling by the U.S. military.

November, 02: Walthamstow anarchists re-decorated their local Territorial Army base, and an anti-war mob invaded the Confederation of British Industry Conference in Manchester.

Night time, 8/12/02: *"The Armed Forces recruitment office in central Bristol was attacked. All windows were smashed, locks glued and walls splattered with blood-red paint. "NO WAR" was the spray-paint message...This is direct action against state terrorism and social control...Pick your targets and fight back. Anyone can take direct action..."*

Women with bolt croppers, 14/12/02: *"We, the Women with Bolt Croppers claim responsibility for breaking into US spy base Menwith Hill in Yorkshire and destroying their devices for intercepting radio communications...we made our way through fields and fog and rain to the fence of the base...No alarms sounded, no-one came to challenge us...We walked to our target unhindered. Armed with just a pair of bolt croppers and a hammer we set about our task of causing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage to the US listening devices...It was easy! ... Imagine the power we would have if just 1% of the people on the last anti-war demo decided to take their opposition to the war a step further..."*

RAF Fairford, 8/12/02: Over 500 anti-war demonstrators went to Fairford in Gloucestershire. RAF Fairford is one of only three B-2 Stealth bomber forward bases in the world. The first wave of attacks on Iraq will most likely be carried out by Stealth bombers flying from Fairford and Diego Garcia. Some people entered the base ...

8/01/03: Scottish train drivers refuse to carry ammunition for the war.

11/01/03: Anti-War demonstrations disrupt US Air Force-run military base in Norfolk, same day, blockade of Naval base at Portsmouth.



Actions on January 18/19: In Northwood Strategic Command Military Base north west of London. 150 demonstrators took photos of the British military HQ – illegal under the official secrets act, and the next day the base was blockaded by hundreds. There was a wide cross-section of people showing the widespread resistance to war.

At U.S. Airbase at Mildenhall fifteen anti-war protesters got on to the base's main runway after breaking through a perimeter fence. Together with nearby Lakenheath, it is among the biggest U.S. airbases outside the United States mainland. Aviators from both bases have seen action in most major conflicts involving the US in recent years.

A group of activists from the Cardiff Anarchist Network chained themselves together to block one of the busiest roads in Cardiff, as part of the global protests against war in Iraq. The blockade took place during an anti-war march through the city centre bringing the march to an abrupt halt and causing traffic chaos. Other marchers responded by holding an unplanned sit-down protest in support.

The Anarchists said that they resorted to direct action because the government finds it so easy to ignore traditional marches and protests. *"400,000 people marched through London and no-one took the slightest bit of notice. The government doesn't give a damn about the views of the ordinary person in the street. If the anti-war movement is going to have any impact whatsoever it has to move to direct action and civil disobedience, it has to involve people in active opposition to the war and government machine, it has to get people to take back control of what's being done in their name."*

In San Francisco an anarchist bloc of two thousand broke away from a permitted march of 200,000. The British Consulate and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service offices were re-decorated, and the police constantly outwitted. ★

MESSAGE TO THE SOLDIERS

SO WHAT IS to be made of the discovery dozens of phials of anthrax vaccine found washed up on a south coast beach a few days after the departure of a Royal Navy Task Force bound for the Gulf from a nearby port? Gulf War Syndrome, according to the US and UK governments and military, does not exist. This is especially so when it is claimed to be caused by military vaccines. Seems that some troops bound for the Gulf beg to differ. For those still in doubt of the reality of Gulf War Syndrome and as a way of showing just how much the state cares about "our boys", the following words which are all from British and US military personnel who served in the first Gulf War serve as a stark warning.

M Morris – "We were given all kinds of shots, exposed to depleted uranium, oil well fire smoke, etc... One day in January 1991 the entire company was lined up. We were ordered to take "secret" shots, we signed non-disclosure forms, and the corpsmen were ordered NOT to enter the shots in our record books. I started experiencing a lot of the symptoms of "Gulf War Syndrome" within a year or so of returning to the states...The VA denied my claim for muscle and joint pain, shortness of breath and problems walking. They did however approve me for a 10% disability on the basis of the brain damage they found in an MRI. Funny, I didn't have it before the war...Couldn't have been the "secret shots" or anything, you think?"

Andy Vincent - "...after the fighting was over I was responsible for preparing this equipment for its return back to the UK...Many of them that had been used in the field came back to me filled with dust from all over Kuwait and Iraq...I left the RAF in 1994, it wasn't until 1996 that I had my first emergency trip into hospital...I wake in the mornings feeling like I'm 75 not 42. All this and a memory that don't work properly...I think the



worse part of being a victim of Gulf War Syndrome is the not knowing, not knowing what the cause is, not knowing what's yet to come, and being powerless to do anything about it."

Aaron Kidwell – "Two months [after the war] it started. I had noticed that since I had returned, it was difficult for me to breathe when we would do PT (physical training)...I was 19 years old. These "attacks" became more and more frequent and their intensity was frightening. My joints also became tender. I became quite irritable, and later angry. In the years since, I've been diagnosed with PTSD, depressive disorder with paranoid traits, fibromyalgia, anxiety disorder, irritable bowel syndrome, alcoholism, and simply accused of lying...I now have little faith in our government, no faith in the institution that is our military, and am deeply suspicious of military doctors. I will trust them only as far as I can throw them...I do think that there is a Gulf War Syndrome. I do think that thousands have gone through similar experiences and have suffered for it. I do think that most, like myself, have given up hope that anything will ever be done to help us. The government knows what happened, but those that are willing to help are outnumbered and their voices silenced."

William Cotton – "I was given a couple of "vaccinations" during the lead-up to the air war...Since leaving the military my memory problems have increased and that frightens me...I once held the American military in high regard and was the most gung-ho of my colleagues in uniform. Today I'm angry and bitter with those who once called me their friends who have now deserted me...I've since found that I'm not alone in that sort of treatment either...We should all stand together, because no one else will help us. We are on our own." ★

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AFGHANISTAN?

A YEAR AGO the war camp talked about defeating terrorism and liberating the women of Afghanistan while the anti-war camp talked about pipelines through Afghanistan for oil and gas fields.

Well leaving "defeating terrorism" to one side (nobody seriously argues it did that!), according to a recent Human Rights Watch report: "As of December 2002, the U.S. and coalition military forces in Afghanistan are continuing to pursue a strategy of entrusting general security and policing to local forces with terrible records



on women's rights."

Meanwhile PakNews.com reports on December 28, 2002: "Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan on Friday signed here a framework agreement for a US \$ 3.2 billion gas pipeline project passing through the three countries.

"According to a study by Asian Development Bank (ADB), the 1460 km pipeline would use gas reserves at Dauletabad fields in Turkmenistan, which has world's fifth largest reserves, while passing through Afghanistan into Pakistan." ★

TIME
BOMB



Continuing our regular look at history:

Mutiny: A Noble Tradition

IN JANUARY 1991 the Iraqi army fought well against the enemy, by refusing to fight the Allies (not one Allied soldier was killed by Iraqi fire), by deserting the front line in droves, and by returning home and turning their guns on their government.

Soon Iraq was in the grip of revolution, and the effective authority of the state reduced to the central region around Baghdad.

The reaction of the U.S. Government and it's allies:

- Thousands of deserting troops were massacred on the road to Basra by the USAF and RAF.
- A ceasefire was then made with the Iraqi regime, all thoughts of overthrowing Saddam forgotten, and crucially the elite Republican Guard left intact to crush the uprising.
- As part of the truce Iraqi counter-insurgency helicopters were allowed into the 'no fly zones' controlled by the American and British airforces.

In 1917 and 1918 the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian Empires crumbled and the First World War was brought to an end as the common soldiers refused to fight. Also in 1917 massive mutiny made the French Army unable to take offensive action.

After both the First and Second World Wars mutiny and demands for demobilisation in the armed forces left the British Empire unable to effectively combat internal rebellions.

Following W.W.1 demob. unemployed ex-soldiers rioted across Britain, after W.W. 2 they forged a powerful squatting movement in the face of chronic homelessness.

During the later stages of the Vietnam war, as a U.S. Officer wrote at the time, "By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous."

Today, over 500 Israeli soldiers are refusing to serve in the occupied territories. ★

Anarchist Federation online:
British site: www.afed.org.uk
Irish site: www.afireland.cjb.net

PRISON RESISTANCE

ABOUT 80 PRISONERS fought back against the regime at Shotts maximum-security prison in Lanarkshire, Scotland. The 19-hour rebellion began on the 2 of January when prisoners refused to return to the cells. A number of small fires were started and three screws were hospitalised. The prison authorities have used drug sniffer dogs, drug detecting equipment, monitoring of phone calls and CCTV as part of a crackdown. Some prisoners succeeded in getting onto the roof and shouting could be heard inside the jail. Flags were waved from the windows and a banner demanding 'leave our visitors alone' was also visible. The revolt was suppressed when van loads of riot cops and screws stormed the jail. Prisoners in Shotts jail have fought back several times in the recent past.

Prison Labour Conference: To establish a campaign against prison labour. Leeds, starts 12 noon. Tel: 07944 522 001 ★

CLASS WAR NOT RACE WAR

WITH THE NEWS that two of the six suspected Algerian terrorists caught up in the "ricin plot" were asylum seekers, the press wasted no time in spinning into nationalist, anti-asylum seeker propaganda overdrive. But what the government and "their" media seem to be forgetting is that the only myth is the "bogus" asylum seeker.

The main sources of refugees are Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Eastern Europe with people making potentially tragic journeys to Britain. Not because Britain gives the most benefits, but because life in their "home" country is simply intolerable. What the media fail to mention is the conditions endured by the refugees that try and get here - they die from suffocation in trucks; from minefields; from stowing away in undercarriages and freezing or falling; or from drowning in shark infested seas. Without a doubt, all would have preferred not to have had to leave home and familiar surroundings in the first place.

It is estimated that some four million

"unite and fight for a decent life for all"

annually are smuggled world-wide by ruthless entrepreneurs who have developed sophisticated methods of relieving desperate people of the little money they have. If "customers" arrive alive at their hoped for destinations, in order to clear debts to the traffickers, they risk being forced into prostitution, organ donation, slavery or forced marriage.

What is needed is for people to recognise that it is the ruling classes, whatever their nationality, that take from society and leave us, the working classes, whatever our colour, with nothing but destruction. The only way out of this mess is for the working classes to unite and fight for a decent life for all - to smash the state and capitalism and to organise our lives and communities according to everyone's needs. Don't let the authorities divide and rule us! ★



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.

FEBRUARY: 8 - Mass die-in 1pm Bournemouth Square. Tel: 07743 537 043

8 - Worthing against War 1pm - Gathering in Montague Place with banners and speakers 2pm - March to war memorial, Chapel Road. worthingagainstar@yahoo.co.uk

14-18 - Actions organised by Faslane peace camp including action against a Labour party war conference in Glasgow. Tel 01436 820901 faslanepeacecamp@hotmail.com

15 - Don't Attack Iraq demonstration in London from 1pm. Meet at Embankment.

15 - Anti-war march and rally in Glasgow. Meet 10am on Glasgow Green.

MARCH: 1 - demonstration against military re-fuelling at Shannon airport. Visit: www.indymedia.ie **Transport:** Dublin Tel: 0877 939 931 or Email ggantiwar@yahoo.com, Galway Tel: 0861 682 416 or Email: galwaytoshannon@yahoo.com, Belfast Email: anarcho_syndicalist_federation@hotmail.com

To join a discussion list for the non-hierarchical anti-war movement in Ireland send a blank Email to: gg-antiwar-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

22 - Demonstration outside Fairford USAF base. Email: james@venables.plus.com

22 - Action at Menwith Hill Base. Tel: 07905 913 139 or Email: mail@now-peace.org.uk

If war breaks out check out: <http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap/ifwarbreaksout.htm> for details of events planned for your area.

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- I enclose £4 for the next 12 issues of resistance bulletin (cheques payable to "AF") and send to AF, PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2XL. Specify if you want the British or Irish edition.
- 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.....

J.

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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