

resistance

anarchist bulletin

Free/Donation
Issue 50 June 2002



Hot summer ahead

THERE'S A HOT June month ahead, regardless of the rainy English weather.

To start with, the G8 summit in Evian, France on 1 - 3 June is going to be met with widespread opposition. This is the first summit to be held in Europe after the Genoa riots in which one demonstrator, Carlo Giuliani, was killed by the defenders of the rich and powerful. Since then, they have held their meetings in unreachable places such as the Seychelles. The leaders have been cast out by their own governed



and as usual in their case they found it better to run away and hide than to think about why so many people are opposed to them. Of course, once again the opinion of the democratically governed people had nothing to do with

the decisions made in these far away places. Now they are trying to hold their meetings in a very central European location again, not far from Genoa.

The aim of our movement will be to show that our opinion of them hasn't changed at all. We still consider them to be murderers, and puppets of big corporations implementing policies that only bring destruction to the environment; impoverishment of the already poor and lots of money for such nice guys as land mine manufacturers and rain forest destroyers.

Also, later in the month on the 20 - 22, there will be a meeting of the European Union representatives in the Greek town of Thessalonika as the start of the six month Greek presidency of the union. Widespread opposition is expected at this summit as well. We can't help but have the impression that the whole process of

the EU construction is being carried along according to an agenda agreed before hand, considering the opposition of the respective peoples as obstacles to surmount. Not very democratic, eh? Curiously enough the only point of the construction already being implemented is the Europol, the pan-European police with wide power of surveillance on all the citizens of this free union of countries.

We can see a general trend in both the G8 and EU summit: the lack of real democratic decision making forums in the so called democratic world. If we want to build an alternative to capitalism and corporate rule of our lives, then we need to do it ourselves

from now and getting together in the streets and discussing it is the best way to start. If by simply doing this we meet the violence of the state and its defenders so be it, but it will be their choice not ours.

CLAAAC!

Recently, the Anarchist Federation gave its support to the "Convergence of Anti-Authoritarian and Anti-capitalist Struggles" (CLAAAC), the French-Italian based network which has been set up to counter the G8 at Evian. They write: "We believe that between human beings, there should exist relationships other than that of the market, of domination, alienation and exploitation. Pollution, the waste of natural resources and differences in wealth are ever more catastrophic..."

Read the full statement online at www.claaacg8.org contact us for a copy.★



LIES, DAMNED LIES...

...AND THE LABOUR PARTY. Over the past few weeks, as weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have stubbornly refused to be found, Labour ministers have come up with a succession of excuses. What are they?

The 'Sneaky IRA' Defence

John Reid, Leader of The Commons, argued that if the IRA could hide their weapons during 35 years of searches, it was no surprise the Iraqis could do the same. He forgot that dozens of IRA arms caches actually were found, but then they actually existed.

The 'Big Country' Defence

Before the war Jack Straw told us it would be hard to find WMD in a country as big as France. Weeks later he pointed out that Iraq was "twice the size of France". Finally he admitted that WMD might never be found. How big does Iraq have to be before Straw admits he's a warmonger?

The 'Fast Shooter' Defence

Tony Blair said that Saddam had "chemical and biological weapons which could be activated within 45 minutes" and needed to be taken out. Yet none were used, so where are they hidden? On Mars?

The 'Documents' Defence

Bush's national security advisor, Condoleeza Rice, recently announced that, with no weapons to be found, the US was pinning its hopes on finding "incriminating documents" instead. As if there's a government in the world that doesn't have "incriminating documents".

The 'Biggs Was Guilty' Defence

According to John Reid, everyone knew Ronnie Biggs carried out the Great Train Robbery even though they couldn't prove it. Now this excuse is used about Iraq.

The disease of lies and hypocrisy is rotting the whole fabric of government and always will because it serves to create and protect privilege and power. ★

ON THE FRONTLINE

AS PREDICTED IN previous issues of resistance it appears the union bosses are joining hands with the state bosses to try and impose a previously rejected deal over the heads of ordinary fire-fighters. The FBU executive is again recommending acceptance of the 16% (phased) offer that was thrown out earlier this year – it would be no surprise to see delegates reject it as they did when voting down the previous FBU recommendation. This would lead to the scenario of workers having to organise outside of their official union representatives, who would in turn be doing all they could to sabotage the new strike – it's happened before.

Nursery workers across Scotland have been staging strikes in support of a 30% pay rise and a 35-hour week. Over 5000 walked-out closing workplaces in all the countries Local Authorities. The dispute is especially bitter as there hasn't been a pay or status review in 15 years! Funny that MPs and company directors seem to need a review at least once a year...

In London there's been more of the constantly recurring walk-outs over the inadequate 'London Weighting' - this time local government workers (mainly low paid school workers) went on strike in 9 boroughs in support of a £4000 rating - which has been accepted in other sectors - in effect these workers are facing pay-cuts. With rising rents, many local authority jobs are going un-filled and having to be staffed by high-wage temps - further worsening the financial situation. The words piss-up and brewery spring to mind.

Across the channel now - and the French state was hit by a series of strikes connected to pension reforms in the public sector. Two million postal workers, bank staff and employees of the state-controlled communications giant France Telecom joined the strike - schools were worst affected, as around half the country's primary and nursery teachers and 40% of other teachers reportedly joined the stoppage - including blocking entrances to end-of-year exams.

Given that similar reforms have led to General Strikes in Italy, Spain and Portugal recently then this could develop into an extremely serious dispute - especially if linked with the current industrial unrest sweeping the continents docks, airports and other transport networks.

Israel was the scene of a five day national strike that crippled the public sector and shut down much of the economy - the strikes were in protest at budget proposals for job and salary cuts. It seems the workers determined action actually paid off with the budget being altered. ★

MAYDAY EVERYDAY

IF MAYDAY DEMONSTRATIONS are a show of strength then the anarchist movement in Britain needs to put in some more effort at the gym.

Despite the usual hostile press about Mayday before hand a few thousand people still turned up in central London to protest about the way business and the state actively promote war and repression. But thousands more coppers turned up and were able to stifle dissent with little effort. Whether anarchists in Britain like it or not events like this are showing diminishing returns. It's time for some serious thought about what's the best way of promoting our ideals.

To make anarchism a threat to capitalism and the state we need strategy of building up our strength and the long-term commitment to follow it through. Amongst other things, members of the Anarchist Federation (AF) have recently been making the effort to build anarchist groups locally and have already seen success in Walthamstow, Herefordshire and Surrey. The AF works to build anarchist



Mayday in London

strike on Mayday or any day.

At the moment there are real opportunities for anarchists. The mainstream political parties are discredited and the Leninist left seems to be in terminal decline. It's an excellent time to build a real alternative

Anarchists, inside and outside of the AF, should seize the opportunity.

We're always open to honest debate about this or other issues. The Anarchist Federation discussion forum can be visited via our website at: www.afed.org.uk.

For more on the views of the AF read 'Beyond Resistance' also on the website or two pounds from the address on the back page.

The Mayday website can be seen at www.ourmayday.org.uk ★

WALTHAMSTOW AND BEYOND

MEANWHILE, IN WALTHAMSTOW, local anarchists within the *Reclaim our Cinema* group have been busy in their fight to stop a cinema being turned into a branch of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, that well-known Christian sect.

Over 100 - 150 people went along to the church/former sinhouse of moving pictures, having requested an opportunity to inspect the listed building. It had previously been thought that sect members hadn't had the decency to reply, but anarchists were forced to eat humble pie when they saw that the Christians, bless them, had planned a little surprise.

Knowing that demonstrations can get a bit boring, the godheads had travelled all the way from Finsbury Park to lay on some sounds, with a choir of 200 and a sound system blasting out hymns. Locals didn't seem too keen on the UCKGers whose raucous singing and pavement blocking was an unwelcome taste of the Kingdom of God on earth. Ironically, the church members whose counter protest was to ensure that the cinema would be-



Reclaim our cinema march

long to them and nobody else (except possibly God), stood around singing "Hosanna" and carrying placards that proclaimed, "The cinema is yours". It later transpired that this wasn't a surrender note, just a new spin on the word "Yours". "Yours" is really "ours" without the "why". And that pretty much sums up religion in a nutshell, don't you think? ★

ACTIVISTS FROM ARGENTINA are coming to Britain for speaking tour about the huge social struggle happening there. The (as yet unconfirmed) dates are:

JUNE: Brighton 16th, Guildford 18th, North London 17th, East London 19th, Durham 21st, Manchester 23rd, Hebdon Bridge 25th, Leeds 27th, Newcastle 28th,

JULY: Glasgow 1st, Edinburgh 2nd and 3rd, Lancaster 5th, Bradford 7th, Liverpool 9th, Cardiff 11th.

The tour has been arranged by anarchists and activists across Britain. Contact the AF for final details. ★

BRIGHTHOUSE - LEGALISED LOAN SHARK

ON SAT 10th of May, West Midlands Anarchists held a demonstration outside Brighthouse, in Birmingham, off Corporation St. near Virgin. Here is why:

Got hardly any money? Bad credit rating? Then Brighthouse wants you to sell them your soul (well, almost).

For many of us, Brighthouse is one of the only places we can actually buy anything. Well, we say buy, what that normally means when you get something from Brighthouse is being badly ripped off and lumbered with debts for years, paying a ridiculously high interest rate (almost 30% in many cases). This means you actually end up paying several times the actual value of whatever it is you've bought, while the rich who can afford the full price to begin with actually pay less than you!

If for some reason you should miss an instalment, you get a hefty fine on top of the amount you're already being ripped off for. Worse if they think you're not being quick enough in paying their extortionate prices, they'll send the bailiffs round to intimidate you and seize back the goods that you've probably already paid more than the full value for. They don't care that you've lost your job, or that you've got kids, or whatever the reason you can't pay is.



Not surprisingly, this vile practice of exploiting the most financially vulnerable of us has not gone unchallenged. Questions have been asked about the company in parliament, the company is a target of the "Debt on Our Doorstep" Campaign

(www.debt-on-our-doorstep.com), in Birmingham residents of an estate in Bartley Green took direct action against two bailiffs employed by Brighthouse, and it was even kicked out of France for unethical practices!

However, this is not enough. In the long term what is needed is a mass non-payment campaign such as the one that defeated the poll tax in the early 1990s. Unfortunately, this is not easy, as isolated individuals refusing to pay will only result in their lives becoming hell. This has to be an organised community effort so we can defend each other's property from the bailiffs and support each other through any court cases until Brighthouse is forced to stop trying to squeeze the our last pennies out of us.

If you would like further information get in touch with West Midlands' Anarchists - Tel: 07866 933 927 Visit: www.wmanarchists.org.uk Email: info@wmanarchists.org.uk ★

CAMPAIGN AGAINST PRISON SLAVERY

LONDON ANARCHIST FEDERATION started mayday by going to the picket of Wilkinsons organised by London Class War.

This was part of the "Campaign Against Prison Slavery" as Wilkinsons use prison labour. Prisoners are forced to work for pitifully low wages (£10 for 30 hours work is common!), helping to keep Wilkos profits high and wages for the rest of us low. There was a good turn out of anarchists (and police!) at the demonstration and passers by were very interested about both why we were picketing Wilkos and anarchism in general. The manager of Wilkos didn't look too happy though!

Meanwhile in Wales AF members were picketing Wilco's in Blackwood, Gwent:

"Just got back from picket of Wilkinson's in Blackwood, Gwent. A couple of us went up and handed out leaflets to passers by and customers for well over an hour. The reaction was mixed - a lot of people had little regard for prisoner's human rights but we made more headway by explaining about it undermining wage levels/job security etc. on the outside. Even

the man they sent out to intimidate us seemed to concede this point. After some harassment by the management we were finally paid a visit by the local plod, who said they had received complaints from "residents".

When we said what we were doing and showed no sign of leaving she had to radio back to base for instructions, finally returning to explain we were not breaking the law and then walking off, much to the disappointment of the Wilco management!"

AF (Cymru) can be contacted by Email at: afedcymru@yahoo.co.uk

The Campaign Against Prison Slavery can be contacted at CAPS, The Cardigan Centre, Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ. Email: againstprisonslavery@mail.com ★

UNTAMED DISTRIBUTION IS a small anarchist inspired pamphlet, magazines and books distribution service based in Bristol.

Write to: Untamed Distribution, Box 18, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB or send an Email to: info@untameddistribution.org ★

LET'S GET ORGANISED!

THE PAST YEAR has seen a growth in the national anarchist movement, most notably with a number of local groups springing up around the country.

Local anarchist groupings are what make networks and federations such as the Anarchist Federation stronger and make the destruction of capitalism and the state that bit closer. Here, a member of Herefordshire Anarchist Group (www.herefordanarchists.cjb.net) gives a guide to setting up your own anarchist group:

"Firstly, it's always best to get in contact with existing anarchist organisations to see if they know of any groups or individuals in your area. Get anarchist propaganda out onto the streets. Make sure people can visibly see posters and stickers etc. Perhaps hand out leaflets to raise the anarchist profile. But remember to add a local contact address such as an email people are more inclined to get involved with local projects.

Once you have started to generate a bit of interest, it is best to call a meeting to set up a local anarchist group. It is best to draw up a set of principles, even if a short paragraph, perhaps a mission statement, perhaps as criteria other people wanting to join have to agree to. Discuss local issues or whatever takes your fancy, but get to know people. Most importantly decide on something, if only the date of your next meeting. People don't want to feel that the meeting didn't have a purpose.

Once you have a local group set up tell people about it. There may be other anarchists or people keen to get involved who you've just managed to miss. Publicise it in bulletins such as resistance. Perhaps even your local newspaper. After your group has established itself, it's up to you what you do - publish a newspaper of your own; support struggles that are already going on; distribute anarchist literature whatever."

For information or help setting up your group contact the Anarchist Federation, details on back page. ★

Issue 60 of **Organise!**, the magazine of the Anarchist Federation, is now out. Available from the address on the back page for one pound fifty.



INSIDE INFORMATION

Mayday update

From the *Legal Defence and Monitoring Group (LDMG)* :

"ALTHOUGH MAYDAY WAS very peaceful, the cops still managed to arrest about 30 people. Not all have been charged and the picture is still slightly confused, but we know of 15 people who have been charged (including a journalist on the *Evening Standard!*). Of these, one pleaded guilty (see below). All the others are on bail. Trials will not take place for at least a few months. Most people are facing s4 (threatening words & behaviour) or assaulting a cop. One is charged with s3 (affray). The desperate nature of the charges is illustrated by the person charged with possession of an offensive weapon - they had a multi-tool in a pouch, in a pannier, attached to a bicycle!

WITNESSES NEEDED We urgently need to make contact with potential witnesses. If you saw an arrest or have pho-

tos or video of an arrest, please get in touch (email is quickest). Please let us know the time and location. This information may keep someone out of prison.

Of the 30 or so people arrested at Mayday this year, about 20 have so far been charged. The first court appearances were at Bow Street on 2nd May. Only one person pleaded guilty and he was sentenced to 28 days prison for spitting at a cop. He will serve a minimum of 14 days inside. LDMG has long warned against pleading guilty before all the evidence has been produced in protest cases as, where there is lots of media interest, sentences are handed down with an eye to how it will be reported.

Legal Defence & Monitoring Group can be contacted by post:

LDMG, c/o BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX (please send a stamped self-addressed envelope); by e-mail: ldmgmail@yahoo.co.uk and by 'phone: 020 8245 2930 (24hr answerphone).

www2.phreak.co.uk/ldmg/index.php
Postal address: LDMG, c/o BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX"

Harold H Thompson

U.S. prisoner activist /jailhouse lawyer Harold H. Thompson has had his most vital piece of equipment, his electric typewriter, go bust on him and the authorities have ruled inmates cannot replace/renew any more. Harold's workload on behalf of other prisoners has increased enormously as a result as everything has now to be handwritten, which is not only time consuming, but a big strain on Harold's health. Please write protest letters to:

Mr Quinton White,
Departmental Commissioner,
Northwest Correctional Complex,
Route 1,
Box 660,
Tiptonville,
Tennessee 38079,
USA

Harold's support group can be contacted at:

Friends of Harold H Thompson,
PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey,
GU21 2XL. ★



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.

JUNE: 1 - Campaign Against Prison Slavery Conference A conference in Leeds is planned to highlight the slave work prisoners do. The use of prisoners is slavery (they have no choice) and affects workers outside prison whose pay and conditions are undermined. For more info Tel: 07944 522 001 Email: Markbarnsley@aol.com

1-8 - Stop the Arms Trade week of action. Info from: Campaign Against the Arms Trade Tel: 020 7281 0297 Email: enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk Visit: www.caat.org.uk

3 - Leicester AF meeting. Upstairs at Ale Wagon Pub, Charles Street.

7 - Campaign Against Prison Slavery picket of Wilkinson's Burgess Hill Store. Organised by Brighton Anarchist Black Cross. 12.30pm bring banners, placards etc...

9-15 - Faslane Peace Camp 21st Birthday week of action. Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Argyll, G84 8NT. Tel: 01436 820 901 Email: faslania@faslanepeacecamp.org Visit: www.faslanepeacecamp.org.uk

13 - Pro Missile Defence Rally! Join Blair and Bin Laden, Bush and Saddam standing side by side, hand in hand supporting missile defence. Outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London. Info: CND - Tel: 020 7700 2393 Visit: www.cnduk.org

19 - North London Critical Mass. Bring your wheels to take part in this carnival of anti-car culture. Meet 2pm outside Finsbury Park main gate, Seven Sisters Road. Takes place the third Sat of every month. Email: northlondoncm@home.se

Subscribe to resistance

- I enclose £4 (£6 EU, £12 Rest of the world) for the next 12 issues of resistance bulletin (cheques payable to "AF") and send to AF, PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2XL
- 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:

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