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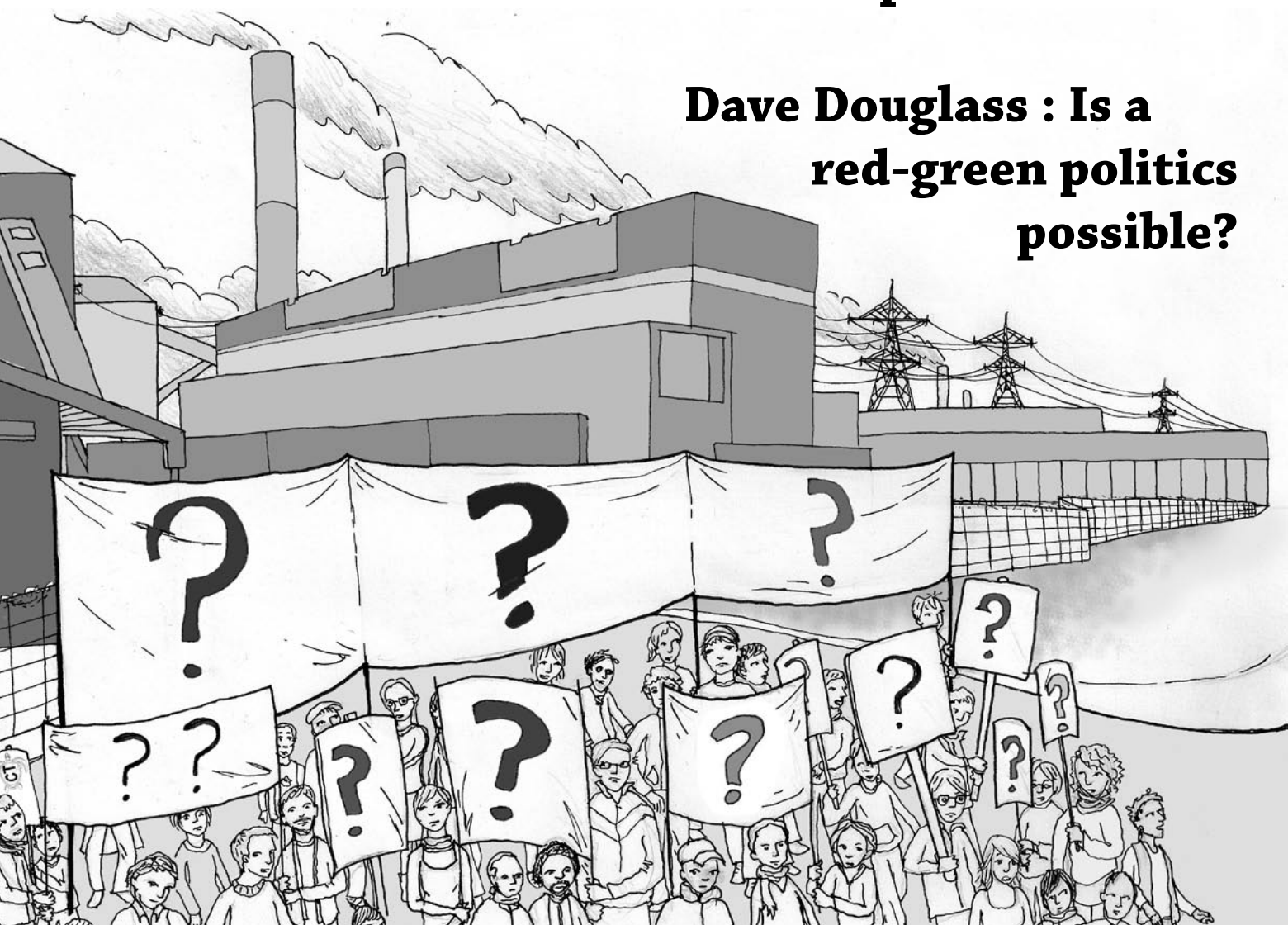
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Kingsnorth

Climate Camp and Class

Is the planet full?

Dave Douglass : Is a red-green politics possible?



Sept '08 - Jan '09

Contents

Shift Magazine Issue 4

4 Climate Camp and Class

ADAM FORD tells of his experience at the Climate Camp near Kingsnorth

8 Interview with Dave Douglass

An interview with Dave Douglass from the National Union of Mineworkers

11 Notes from Hamburg...

Some impressions from the first Climate Camp in Germany

12 “Overpopulation:” letting capitalism off the hook

Stopping population growth is a red herring, write MANCHESTER NO BORDERS

16 1968 the soundtrack... No thanks

PASCAL STEVEN and JOHN ARCHER discuss the challenges for the UK student movement

21 “Make a foreshortened critique of capitalism history!” - A Reply

A reply by the WINE AND CHEESE APPRECIATION SOCIETY OF GREATER LONDON

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editorial

The Climate Camp at Kingsnorth was great! These were our initial thoughts on arrival at the first German climate camp in Hamburg, which took place just one week after Kingsnorth. The Hamburg camp seemed less organised, there were far fewer people and the lack of a clear neighbourhood structure meant that we aimlessly walked around the site for a good half hour before finally pitching the tent in the 'anti-barrio' barrio.

In Hamburg the climate campers weren't camping alone but were doubled up with the 'anti-racists'. There were thus two main action targets (coal and deportation flights), two press groups and two websites for example. The inherent complexities that have been noted between the austerity politics typical of the green movement and the calls for freedom of movement from many anti-racists (see the article by No Borders on page 12) didn't seem to be a problem for the Hamburg campers, however.

But Hamburg was an attempt at a 'broad church' movement that was built upon a compromise solution tied to the concept of 'Global Social Rights'. For the climate campers this meant re-evaluating the notion that climate change is a purely ecological problem and situating the threat, and our response to it, in a social context (a banner hung from a crane during the climate camp's mass action read "expropriate energy production"). On the other hand the anti-racists had to accept a quasi-fearsome language of new migration pressures caused by climate change: 'climate change will lead to more 'climate refugees', that's why we must do something about it!'

There is something else inherent in the 'Global Social Rights' slogan that doesn't seem fitting with radical grass-roots politics. Demanding rights is not only a passive and liberal notion (Which rights? And who is going to warrant them? The state?), but also undermines any attempts to de-legitimise the authoritarian and economic structures that shape our everyday lives and experiences, including our experiences of climate change and border controls.

This was also a major topic at the Kingsnorth Climate Camp. With climate change understood as a mainly ecological problem, scientific facts were thrashed around that encouraged the projection of non-emancipatory, authoritarian solutions. This culminated in George Monbiot calling for a state response to climate change in one of the camp's major plenary sessions as well as in a later Guardian article, and a backlash of interventions from an anti-authoritarian minority (see Adam Ford's article on page 4). Such interventions demanded a social, anti-capitalist, bottom up response to climate change, the importance of which was evident in the outraged response from the National Union of Mineworkers at the Climate Camp's demand to 'leave it [coal] in the ground' (see our interview with Dave Douglass on page 8).

Despite the problems inherent at Kingsnorth, anti-state and anti-capitalist positions were being reaffirmed and discussed again. One camper in Kent felt that he had experienced the "maturing of the green movement". The fact that the coal workers were invited (and the resulting discussions around class, work and climate change) was testimony to a mature movement that can foster such debates. However, in its 'old age', is the Climate Camp now losing sight of its roots in the direct action movements of the 90s or the anti-G8 Dissent network?

A clear dividing line through the movement was drawn by journalist-turned-climate 'expert' Monbiot who criticised the "anarchist" Climate Campers for "diverting from the urgent task" of stopping climate change. In a remarkable return of Hobbes' 17th century Leviathan into the contemporary direct action movement, he could do no better than to imagine a life without government as the freedom for Daily Mail readers to pick up a gun and kill the nearest hippy. As we remember it, the Drax camp had set out to claim that corporations and governments were the problem not the solution to the climate crisis. We would hope thus that the Climate Camp would 'find the time' for a political rejection of all eco-authoritarian claims that "stopping runaway climate change must take precedence over every other aim" (Monbiot).

climate camp and class

Picture the scene. The setting sun is glinting off the visors of the police lined up in front of me. It's the second or third day of the weeklong Camp for Climate Action - already I've lost count - and for the second or third time since I last slept it looks as if the cops are about to invade. I've just bolted from the opposite end of the site, where I've helped dig a defensive trench at another gate. To my left, atop a red van, a woman who sounds scouser than scouse exhaustedly screeches words of encouragement into a megaphone and somehow dances to Radiohead. To my right, a posher than posh couple casually talk up Cornish nationalism and agree that political correctness means white people suffer more oppression than anyone else on the planet. All the campers care about the environment, but that seems to be the only thing we have in common. That and - by now - a dislike of police.

The first Climate Camp was set up in 2006, by activists who had been heavily involved in organising protests against the G8 summit in Gleneagles the year before. Their immediate target was the Drax coal-fired power station in North Yorkshire, but they sought to demonstrate two things. Firstly, that direct action was an effective way of making changes within society - like shutting down power stations - and secondly, that people could live non-hierarchically, in an environmentally sustainable way.

Many of the initial organisers self-identified as anarchists, and they wanted climate camps to be anarchy in action.

At least that was the theory. Now in Climate Camp's third year, the results are highly questionable. In terms of building a movement for environmental sustainability, the camp experience and how it is perceived by the wider population both need to be considered.

Certainly, to be a climate camper is to participate in anarchy in its original and best sense - running things without bosses. The camp is clustered into regional neighbourhoods, which hold meetings every morning. These assemblies discuss organisation within the neighbourhoods and camp policy as a whole, such as whether to accept the police's latest ultimatum. Decisions are eventually reached via consensus, and 'spokes' are delegated to express the collective's views to the 'spokes council', before reporting back. This can be seen like a long-winded process if you're used to taking orders, but it works to ensure that everyone feels ownership over decisions, and are therefore usually happy to implement them.

Anarchy can work fast too, and not just when riot police arrive on site at 5.30 in the morning. Perhaps my favourite illustration of this took place on the final Sun-

day evening, when a trail of wooden boards that snaked through the camp needed to be stacked. Someone took the initiative to do this, then someone else joined in next to them. Within a couple of minutes, the idea of stacking had gone along the trail, and about quarter of an hour later it was all done. Quite a strenuous task had quickly been completed, without a single order being given.

However, halfway through the week 'An open letter to the neighbourhoods' was circulated, authored by '...a large group of anti-authoritarian participants in the climate camp', and expressing 'deep concern about the direction that the debates have taken over the past days'. It went on to claim that 'In more than one workshop we have heard calls from the podium for command-and-control and market-orientated measures to address climate change', and 'The responses to these proposals have been far too polite'. Calling for 'A very clear rejection of capitalism, imperialism and feudalism', as well as 'all forms and systems of domination and discrimination', it emphasises 'A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organisations'.

The letter hit on one of the central problems facing the camp: how to make it 'a welcoming and non-sectarian space' for



people new to anarchist ideas, whilst ensuring that career environmentalists like George Monbiot and Mark Lynas (who outraged many by backing the government's nuclear power plans, the former on BBC's *Newsnight*) don't get an easy ride. This issue is compounded by the inevitable tendency of more militant campaigners being drawn to the barricades and defending camp against police.

Saturday was the climax of the week, and had been declared the day when we would "...go beyond talk and culminate in a spectacular mass action to shut down Kingsnorth. Permanently!". The camp separated into blue, green, silver and orange blocs, with the plan being that we would take different routes over land, sea and air to get to Kingsnorth, arriving en masse, and E.ON bosses would order a shutdown. The end result was that one person climbed over the second security fence onto company property, and was immediately arrested. One boat made it onto a jetty, and a police charge sheet reveals that one of the four water inlet systems was shut down, but E.ON claimed it was "business as usual". Fifty arrests were made, about half the total for the week.

So much for what actually happened. How much of the intended message survived the mainstream media's filters and made

it into public consciousness?

At the start of the week, coverage focused on the police attacks. Monday, 4th August saw BBC exposure of the police's brutal dawn raid, giving details of casualties, showing police in riot gear attacking campers, and quoting camp media team members at length. On Tuesday, they ran with local Labour MP Bob Marshall-Andrews' claim that the police had been "provocative and heavy-handed". On the other hand, none of the other almost daily attacks got any press. This may be partly due to the pressure of the police's announcement that they'd discovered a stash of knives and other weapons in woodland near the site. Campers immediately denied any connection with the stash, and none has since been found. But it seems likely that for many, this discovery provided retrospective cover for the police's use of force, potentially dissuading waverers from paying a visit.

For the mainstream media, the camp wasn't so much an experiment in sustainable living as a collection of oddities. When they discussed on-site conditions at all, they seemed more intrigued that there were people in the 21st century who voluntarily used compost toilets and grey water systems, than by the green implications. That this was part of an 'eco village'

seems largely to have passed them by, a fact illustrated by a Google News search. Bizarrely, the Custer County Chief in Nebraska, USA picked up on it, as did a *New Statesman* article (not very encouragingly titled 'Woolly minded hippies?'). This contrasts with 109 results for "climate camp" "compost toilet". For their part, *The Guardian* even produced a tourist-style survival guide, entitled 'How to go to Climate Camp - and enjoy it'.

As in previous years, the camp got the mainstream media talking about the role that carbon emissions play in manmade climate change. However, outlets overwhelmingly portrayed this as a protest against emissions at Kingsnorth in isolation, rather than the structural need of capital to expand, degrading the environment in the process. One deviation from this was when the *Kent News* quoted camper Anya Patterson as saying "If we are serious about fighting climate change, we have to tackle the root causes, and those are greed and a commitment to relentless economic growth." Similarly, the non-hierarchical decision-making process was largely ignored, with the BBC merely describing it as 'exhaustive' and 'somewhat baffling'.

One facet of the week that all mainstream media went big on was the idea of direct

An open letter to the neighborhoods

We are a large group of anti-authoritarian participants in the climate camp. Many of us have put a great deal of time and energy into preparing and setting up the camp this year.

We are writing to express our deep concern with the direction that the debates at the camp have taken in the past days. In more than one workshop, we have heard calls from the podium for command-and-control and market-oriented measures to address climate change. ~~Then~~ responses to these proposals have been far too polite.

While we recognise the importance of creating a welcoming and non-sectarian space, we feel that the camp risks losing contact with its anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian roots and appearing ^{as} a gathering that lends its support to top-down, state-centered responses to the crisis that climate change and energy deflection pose for capitalism. As a result, even the mass action is now likely to be interpreted as a gesture of support for tightened social control and austerity measures visited upon the population, rather than expressing resistance to the exploitative obsession with economic growth that has precipitated the present crisis.

In order to re-establish the crucial space of a radical perspective married to action at the core

action. Unfortunately, it was only covered in the most superficial way, focusing on the supposed dangers that campers would be letting themselves in for. Of course, police attack was not listed amongst these hazards, but electrocution and drowning were. The implicit message in all of this was that once people stepped outside the law, their safety was at risk, and that therefore the state and - by extension - police really are there to serve and protect everyone – batons, riding crops, pepper spray and all.

Though the Climate Camp website is declaring the week a resounding success, it can surely be judged a valiant failure in terms of its stated objectives. E.ON were inconvenienced for a few hours, but Kingsnorth was not shut down. Some campers learned about non-hierarchical organising and strategies for sustainable living, but this made little impact on the wider public. ‘Direct action’ became a media buzzword, but only as something irresponsible and to be feared. Carbon emissions became a hot topic, but in the context of the above, only as ‘footprints’ to feel guilty about.

Indeed, some campers were hoping for this. On the Thursday morning, I had a discussion with an activist about his ambitions for what is being dubbed the ‘climate movement’. “To make a lot of people very guilty”, he replied.

This emphasis on guilt as a precursor for individualistic lifestyle change is perhaps the very opposite of what many original organisers hoped for. However, I believe it is fundamental to what is sometimes called ‘green and black’ anarchism. The idea of a class-based transformation of society is rejected – in some cases because of righteous disillusionment with traditional forms of class struggle, in many cases because the individual is from a relatively wealthy background. When such people see impending environmental catastrophe as the number one threat to their lives, their philosophy often becomes more anti-technological than anti-capitalist. Taking this perspective to its logical conclusion, capitalism and the state wouldn’t be much of a problem if they could somehow leave people alone in ecological peace, but since they can’t, both must be overcome. But with international class-based solidarity

apparently ruled out, the result is that “setting an example” (as one woman put it) becomes the main method of ideological recruitment.

This sets green and black anarchism up for its own failure. Due to the built-in ideological structures of mainstream media and the state, the example set is of using those compost toilets, getting attacked by police, and putting yourself in mortal danger on your week off. Understandably, this is not an example that many are willing to follow.

«This emphasis on guilt as a precursor for individualistic lifestyle change is perhaps the very opposite of what many original organisers hoped for»

The boast that Climate Camp would “shut down Kingsnorth” was always about bravado and bluster, a tendency which people from all strands of activism are vulnerable to in times of unrelenting defeat. But how could Kingsnorth really be shut down?

Medway Council have approved E.ON’s plans, and the final decision rests with the government, who have already indicated they will grant permission. Demolition of the current site and the construction of the new one is scheduled for February next year. On camp, there was a lot of talk about trying to build on current “momentum” and systematically blockading work from then onwards. Clearly, because of the long term commitment to direct action necessary, this would attract a smaller and ever dwindling number of people, unless substantial local support is forthcoming. Even if it is, there are plans for seven more

coal-fired stations in the pipeline, plus all the other myriad ways capital is destroying the environment. There simply aren’t enough of us to wage such a struggle.

Any campaign against environmental destruction has to be rooted in a movement against the profit motive and the capitalist system, or it is doomed to symbolic gestures and failure. Industry doesn’t create carbon emissions, working people do, because they are paid to do so and see no viable alternative. While capitalist ideas prevail amongst the working class, invasions of power stations are less direct action and more dramatic lobbying; ultimately impotent appeals to the government to see further than the short term bottom line, something it is organically incapable of doing.

Ironically, this plays into the hands of people like George Monbiot. ‘Climate change is not anarchy’s football’, he patronisingly declared in a post-camp online reply to an article by radical journalist Ewa Jasiewicz, before going on to declare that ‘I don’t know how to solve the problem of capitalism without resorting to totalitarianism’. And every dictatorship needs paid advisors.

No George, climate change is not ‘anarchy’s football’; it’s a matter of life and death. That’s why we need working class revolution, so we can sort it out.

[DISCLAIMER: this article was previously published online at www.metamute.org.]

Adam Ford is an activist and journalist from Merseyside who writes about activism, local history, social issues and culture from a radical working class perspective. A collection of his work can be read at <http://dreaming-neon-black.blogspot.com>.

interview with dave douglass

At the camp you joked about the police presence being nothing compared to your previous experiences. How did you find the Climate Camp this summer?

Well I've been up against the law since the age of 14, arrested for hitting the prime minister with a tomato and assaulting the police at 15, through to Holy Loch and Aldermaston's right up to the late 60s. Grosvenor Square, London. Dam Square Amsterdam, Belfast, and pickets in the 72 / 74 miners strike. Mass confrontations in 84/5 Orgreave, hit squads and petrol bombs, the cops weren't a surprise at all, but I was just making a joke I wasn't trying to 'pull rank' or see who had the raggiest arse.

Before the camp you wrote a letter to the Climate Camp. Why did you choose to do that?

I was incensed. Because it seems to me, the miners throughout history have had nothing but betrayal and being stabbed in the back. 'The Green Movement' we had foolishly thought was our ally. An ally who could see that we stood against nuclear power, civil and military, were against

opencast mining, and were for practical renewables.

We thought they understood the politics of energy and why it was the miners had been almost wiped off the face of the earth (in Britain) in class war. We had set up an alliance Energy 2000 way back in the mid 80s with Greenpeace and environmental groups (by 'we' I mean the NUM) to campaign for Clean Coal Technology, and an end to Nuclear power, for solar, tidal, and geo-thermal and phasing in practical world applicable programmes like solar power farms in the worlds deserts to supply the world with ever lasting power, free and clean, with clean coal buying us the time. Then just when we are on our last chance for survival, just when we are trying to knock back the major nuclear construction programme in favour of clean coal and carbon capture, the Climate Camp marches in and attacks Drax.

The shrill middle class instruction that there was no place for coal in Britain energy supply, came as a slap down, and a warning to keep our place and be quiet. Our betters knew better than us, and coal had to go, it had been decided. Well it drew a furious response from me. I am not, by the way saying the Climate Camp is entirely middle class, nor am I saying that a largely middle class milieu invalidates their argument just because of that. I am

saying that that particular bright young middle class thing, appearing on the TV news that night, and telling us what was good for us, did produce class anger, and it reinforced a class divide of perception.

I have been associated with protest organisations since I was 14, many of them heavily composed of middle class people and full of muddled middle class shite ideas, but the cause, the anti bomb movement for example, the anti nuclear movement demanded that the working class add its own colours to those movements and debates. This was another reason for responding to Climate Camp instead of bricking them.

In your letter and at the camp you made the case for the continuation of the coal industry. Does this not put you on the same side as the government, the police and the E.ON bosses?

Well the cops didn't seem to think so when we got nose to nose on the gate on Wednesday afternoon. But let me ask the same question, on the day the Camp opened, Brown made a statement saying he too was concerned about coal and CO2 and this was why they were investing in

Nuclear Power. The stink against coal is fuelling a revision of ideas among so called socialists and environmentalists, who now are panicked into believing nuclear provides the only answer. The fact is the choice for base load generation, is either coal or nuclear, the camp keeps bashing coal, which is promoting nuclear.

This just so happens to the Government's policy and has been since the Ridley Committee drew up plans in the late 70s to take out the miners as a social threat to the system. The camp is acting on the side of the state and government. We fought the cops, whole communities of working class people fought the cops and some think the army too, to stop pit closures, against state and government plans to wipe us out. Now the Climate Camp shouts Leave It In The Ground, and defacto Shut The Pits. The cops helped shut the pits, the government closed the pits and coal power stations, this is the same demand as the Climate Camp now advances. So you answer the question whose side are you on?

By the way, when mass protest movements stand against the big power generators investing in land based wind turbines and political arm-twisting, patronage and sheer bribery is applied to force Wind Turbine estates into rural lands, where do the Climate Camp stand? Not on the side of the protesters, not against the environment being utterly despoiled by industrial turbine estates, but on the same side as the capitalist power generators N Power and the others, getting £300,000 per tur-

bine per year whether it turns a blade or produces a watt of power. So which side and whose side? Fact is the government is anti coal, anti coal communities, and those who support that side support the government and state, touché.

«that particular bright young middle class thing, appearing on the TV news that night, and telling us what was good for us, did produce class anger»

Many who attended the Climate Camp, yourself included, are not just concerned with climate change but with radical social change. If this is our goal does there not need to be a fundamental change in industrial infrastructure, the nature of work and the

role of trade unions?

Why aye, why do you think we want a working class revolution? We want minimal amounts of work, an end to the wage slavery of capitalism, an end to useless duplication of production and waste. We want real fundamental needs met, like water, housing, clothing, education, food, and freedom not invented needs, which we don't need. But we believe only the organised working class, organised and conscious of its own existence and role in changing society and smashing the old order can deliver this change. For that, we need progressive unions like the NUM, visionary working class communities like the pits, docks, factories etc. That's why we defend their existence and the ruling class will at every turn try to wipe us out, close us down, disperse us, or divide us. That's why they closed the pits here only to import 70 million tonnes of coal from countries where the union doesn't exist and miners toil in conditions we fought our way out of over a hundred years ago.

It's not just about work, its not and never has been just about jobs, it's about the right and ability to intervene into life and challenge the system, and bring about a new social system.

We thought that the decision to invite NUM members to the camp was definitely a step in the right direction. Where do you see divergenc-



es between your own goals and those of the Climate Camp?

Well we've organised a Labour Movement Conference on Class, Climate Change and Clean Coal in Newcastle upon Tyne on Nov 1st, with myself and Arthur Scargill and others speaking at it. We invite the Climate Camp spokespersons to come and debate these issues with us. (Venue to be finalised)

The Climate Camp is a thoroughly undemocratic movement, which is led by some strange impulsion, which seems not to debate targets, or strategy or goals or class before it arrives at a new enemy. It takes for granted, coal for example is the enemy. It is deeply offended to be offered a different vision. I was asked about ten times as I gave out our bulletin if I had had permission to give these out in the field. Seriously. I will not tell you how I responded.

The Climate Camp needs to engage itself, and it needs to engage and understand the working class movement. It needs to accept that the working class movement, the union movement and the socialist / anarchist movement have a vision too, and we don't necessarily agree. They need to engage us more and confront us less. They need to intercept the demands and goals of the workers movement with questions and ideas on how they relate to the environment and climate change for example. I say again I am not saying there are no trade unionists and working class people

engaged in the camp, there clearly are, but the camp overall is not represented by that small tendency, and will frequently confront their own class positions and they will find themselves in contradictory positions. It must also be said that elements of 'the left' have jumped on this environmental bandwagon and is free loading. It hopes to seem relevant to a powerful movement because it despairs of the working class. Abandons traditional working class areas and unions to seek new shiny platforms on which to lead and appear relevant.

Given the need for some kind of response to climate change, could you see trade unions such as the NUM ever having a productive working relationship with 'radical' greens such as the Climate Camp? Is a red-green politics possible?

As I say we started this way back first with CND, and Trade Union CND, and then with Energy 2000, With The Anti Nuclear Campaign, in the 90s in joint campaigns against open cast mining which was being undertaken at the expense of the deep-mined industry. But with a collective perspective on clean coal, and practical renewables, (solar can be made practical on a world scale, geo thermal on a limited scale and tidal too -but land based wind turbines are classic 'green wash' and a cheap

trick which is decimating huge tracts of unspoiled countryside and wilderness.) We can and must co-operate. Hopefully lots of people will come to our November conference and we can debate it further.

David Douglass, worked in the mining industry for 40 years; 30 of those on the Coalface tunnelling and driving roadways, working both in the Durham and Doncaster coalfields. The last three years working was as a Trade Union Organiser for the TGWU in the Northern Region. Previously 25 years an official of the NUM at Branch level and executive member of the Yorkshire Area of the NUM. The last ten years in the industry ran the Mining Communities Advice Centre which was a hub for political and welfare and benefits action in the South Yorkshire Coalfield communities.

An Anarcho-Syndicalist, with roots and history in the anarchist movement but still philosophically a Marxist. Anarcho-Marxism has been recently described by the CPGB Weekly Worker as 'just anarchism' so 'just an Anarchist' then by that definition. Been active and involved in movements from Holy Loch in 62, through to Vietnam, Ireland, Iraq and countless strikes and battles with the employers, the cops, the army and the state.

Just completed my autobiographical Trilogy: Stardust and Coaldust, the first book Geordies gets its launch at this year Anarchist Bookfair, and I hope people will come along and hear my reading from the book, (and actually consider buying it). Produced by Christiebooks, with great help and support from Stuart Christie.





Notes from Hamburg...

The 'eco-anarchists' - those who claimed to be inspired by the camps at Drax and Heathrow - remained remarkably sidelined and ignored; despite an open letter to the emerging climate action movement in Germany in which they scandalized "the NGO- and movement elites in the Climate Camp process".

A 'path towards climate communism' - that's what some were hoping for when demanding the expropriation of energy companies. They were pointing at the fact that E.ON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall together control 90% of the German energy market. E.ON announced record profits of 5 billion Euros this year. Article 15 of German constitutional law explicitly allows for the collectivisation of natural resources and means of production.

The anti-racist and climate camps could secure a site for their camp only days before set-up began. The authorities did not grant the demand for a site in a central Hamburg park. Instead they offered a field near the home stadium of football club HSV. It had been used as a car park during the World Cup 2006. Anti-fascists warned that the HSV has 500 organised, right-wing hooligans but there was no trouble on matchday.

“overpopulation”: letting capitalism off the hook

From when we started being active as a No Borders group in Manchester we have been frustrated with a lack of radical analyses and critiques (anti-state, anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist, anti-discrimination etc.) of climate change. This was particularly so, as we became aware of a ‘greening of immigration controls’. There appears to be an increasing tendency for green politics to lean towards repressive measures as solutions to the environmental crisis.

More specifically, in discussions with other (environmental) activists, we have recently found ourselves in disagreement over the issue of ‘overpopulation’. A common green orthodoxy today is that there are too many people on this planet, and that we need to do something about it. (Although as we gave a well-attended workshop at the Climate Camp on this topic, we were positively surprised how many of the participants were critical of this stance.)

In this article, we want to spell out the

dangers of the ‘the planet is full’ argument and argue that ‘overpopulation’ is not the root cause of climate change. Not people are the problem, but society. Not human beings per se, but the way our social life is organized: capitalism.

There are two levels to our criticism of the ‘overpopulation’ argument. One, the argument quite simply plays into the hands of governments, nationalists and anti-feminists who are quite happy to step up demographic controls, people management and anti-immigration policies. Two, interpreting population growth as the root cause of the climate crisis completely disregards the systemic nature of the problem and thus lets capitalism off the hook.

The overpopulation argument

So where is the problem? The UN projects that world population figures will rise from today’s 6.8 billion to 9.2 billion by 2050. For the prophets of demographic doom, Britain, in particular, is under threat. Government projections are that

the UK population is to rise from 60.6 million (mid-2006) to 77 million in 2050. Obviously, demographic modeling contains lots of cultural and political assumptions, and should be treated as politically informed rather than neutral observations. Human population behavior is very random and unpredictable and not something that can be forecasted as unproblematically as tomorrow’s weather, say (and you know how inaccurate that is!).

Whatever the assumption, an increasing amount of global players (from government agencies to international organizations, from think tanks to celebrities) conclude that the planet is full. They argue that any such densely populated area as Britain would be unsustainable in terms of food production, housing and energy needs. Also within the green movement this is not a marginal position and no longer limited to ‘deep ecologists’. The green-nationalist think tank ‘Optimum Population Trust’, for example, estimates that the UK can only sustain less than half its current population level. And they de-

mand a national population policy that first stabilizes the number of people in the UK and then gradually brings it down to 30 million.

Fact is however, that the UK population is growing primarily because of immigration. The argument thus is threefold. First, immigration puts pressure on national resources such as water, energy, food and countryside. Second, new migrants tend to have more children than the national population thereby accelerating the problem. Third, migration to 'first world' countries turns previously low-impact consumers to high-impact consumers increasing their ecological footprints. It comes as no surprise to us, then, that the BNP calls itself the 'real Green Party'.

The government's chief green advisor, Jonathan Porritt, has also time and again argued this point. But what to do? Porritt's suggestion is straightforward: zero net immigration! David Cameron also agrees that rapid population increase will put pressure on our natural resources. And again, his solution is to lower net immigration:

"my focus today is on population, and here we should note that only around thirty per cent of the projected increase in our population by 2031 is due to higher birth rates and longer life-spans...the evidence shows that roughly seventy per cent - more than two thirds - of the increase in our population each year is attributable to net migration. Of that increase, forty seven per cent comes directly from people to moving to Britain, and the rest from higher birth rates amongst immigrant populations."

Malthus

Throughout its history then the overpopulation argument has been used to present people and children as the source of inherently social problems: letting capitalism off the hook. The argument always goes like this: there are too many of us and the planet can't hack it. Whether it's the poor, the Jews, women or migrants, all have been used strategically as scapegoats for an irrational and unproductive use of space and resources within a capitalist economy.

One of the most prominent writers on over-population was Thomas Malthus, a 19th century cleric of the Church of England. His treatise on over-population "A summary view of the principle of population" was printed in 1830, but is still read widely today. Malthus stated that whilst population increased at a geometric rate (1, 2, 4, 8, 16...), doubling every 25 years, food production increases at an arithmetic rate (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...). Malthus believed this disparity between food production and population growth was the root cause of "checks to (human) growth" such as war, famine and disease.

The strong strand of prejudice within Malthus' work, however, often goes unacknowledged by neo-Malthusianists. He saw poverty as deserved rather than produced and blamed the poor for their "lack of moral restraint" thus making them the primary focus of population policy. The inherent conservatism and class prejudice hidden behind a veneer of scientific objectivity has made Malthus a popular source of intellectual legitimacy for various conservative and authoritarian positions.

«Not people are the problem, but society. Not human beings perse, but the way our social life is organized: capitalism»

In the late 19th century Eugenicists began utilising and expanding on Malthus's critique of the rapid population growth of the poor. Eugenicists argued that this lack of restraint was genetically inherited and posed a threat to the future of the nation. A prominent eugenicist was Winston Churchill and many discriminatory laws were passed to attempt to influence the outcome of breeding. Once again systemic problems were naturalised and projected upon the very people most negatively af-

The feminist dimension

In a sexist, imperialist, capitalist world, it is impossible to separate discussion of population control from hierarchies of oppression. Which population is going to be "controlled" and how will this control come about?

Any form of population control risks seriously impinging upon women's right to bodily autonomy. State-enforced population control programs, such as China's 'one-child policy', are usually enacted upon women's bodies; it is women who are forced to have abortions, to undergo sterilisation, or to take long-term birth control products (often with serious health repercussions). Rarely are men forced to undergo vasectomies, despite the relative easiness of this procedure when compared to tubal ligation.

However, not all women will be affected equally; those from the Global South, ethnic minorities, those perceived as disabled, and the working class have historically borne the brunt of population control policies. Eugenicists in Victorian England were very clear about which segments of the population needed controlling: the poor and the disabled.

More recently, Black British feminists in the 1970s and 1980s wrote about the need to campaign for abortion rights while at the same time also fighting for their right not to have abortions and not to be pressured into sterilisation. At the same time dangerous forms of birth control, like early experimental forms of Depo-Provera, were being tested upon women in the Global South (and in predominantly African-American areas of the US) before being allowed for sale in the Western world. Today, women in the Global South are often 'encouraged' by NGOs to use long-term forms of birth control, like implants, that require a medical attention to stop (as opposed to something like The Pill, which can be stopped at any time by the woman taking it). This history cannot be ignored today when discussing population control in the UK. As single working-class mothers, immigrants and ethnic minorities (particularly Muslims) find themselves being increasingly demonised; any population control policies will target women from these groups.

fected by them.

Neo-Malthusianism

Many anti-migration authors have also mobilised Malthusian ideas. These arguments have relied upon an analysis of national resources as closed and finite systems and exaggerating rates of migration. Proposals for the closing of borders are contrasted with images of swarms of migrants exhausting national resources like locust. One example of this nationalist position, which supports the competitive nature of states, is this quote from the 'Population and environment' journal:

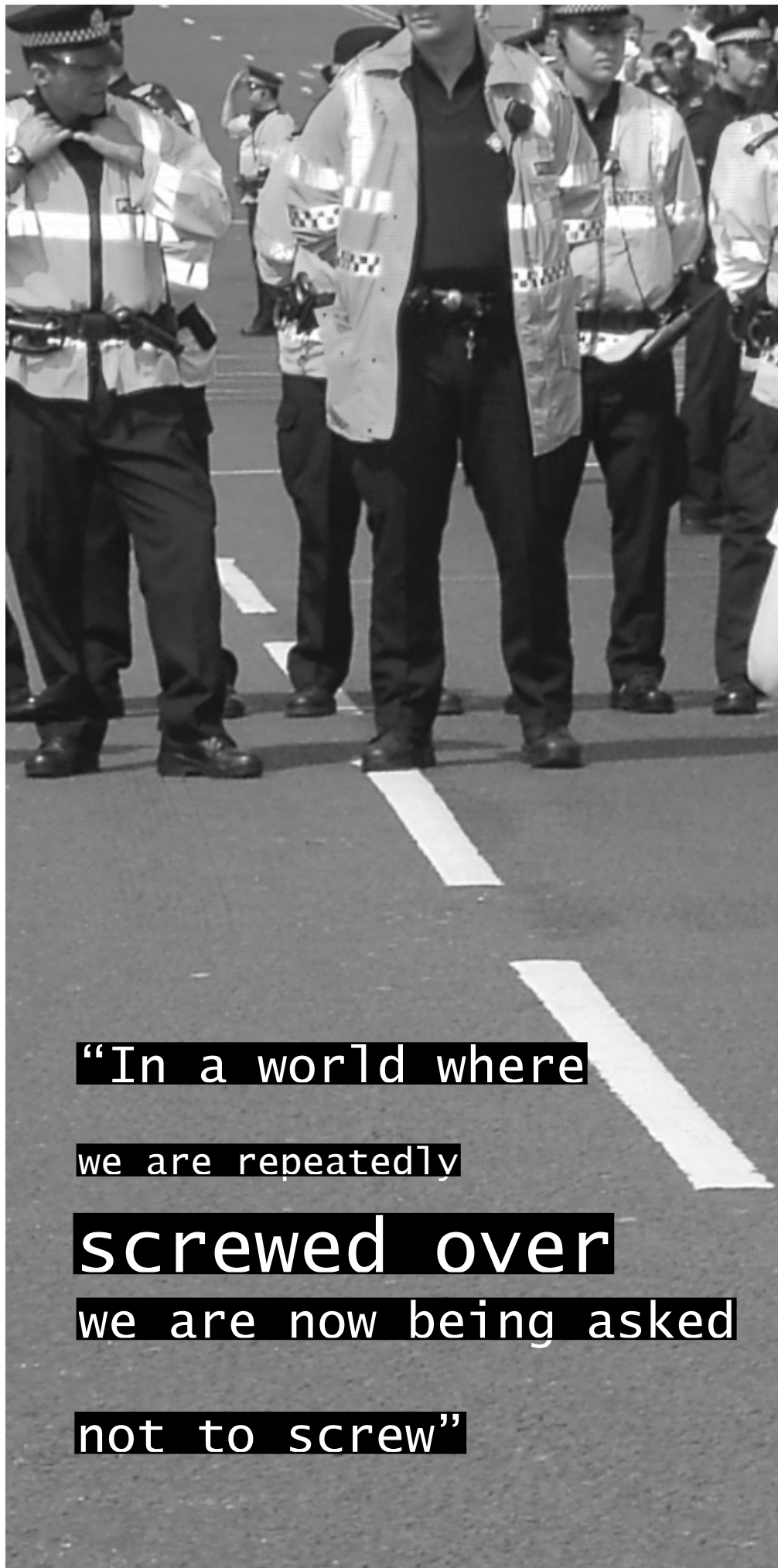
"Countries that are in the lead in reducing their populations should not give in to advocates of growth by allowing massive immigration. This rewards those who multiply irresponsibly"

As environments change due to climate change the monster of 'overpopulation' is being resurrected as a security issue.

As we are seeing with climate change, environmental issues provide a space for the legitimisation of conservative and authoritarian policies.

Perhaps one of the most influential of these authors was Garrett Hardin whose essay "The Tragedy of the Commons", printed in 1968, masked a pro-private property stance beneath a veneer of scientific objectivity. Hardin believed that, without private ownership of natural resources, unchecked population growth would lead to their exhaustion. The same arguments were used to support the 20th century 'green revolution' and are appearing again with the G8 leaders in Japan agreeing to extend research into GM crops to deal with 'overpopulation'. 'Overpopulation' is used as a convenient argument to support the agendas of specific political and economic actors.

But let's not attack a straw man here. None of the green progressives here in the UK argue for more stringent migration controls (in contrast to parts of the green conservationist movement in the US). Nonetheless, we have witnessed population graphs being used in climate change presentations, which could have lead to knee-jerk reactions and dangerous political conclusions when taken out their left-



**"In a world where
we are repeatedly
screwed over
we are now being asked
not to screw"**



wing context.

Earth First?

The climate action movement of course recognises the repression faced by migrants and the fact that the groups of people who are hit hardest by climate change are in the Global South. However, even with the best intentions of warding off ecological destruction and creating better lives for people in the face of climate chaos the 'overpopulation' argument still ignores the systemic logic behind climate change: capitalism.

The central flaw to Malthusian thought is its a-systemic nature. Regardless of the economic system or social organisation, it views the root cause of most human suffering as population growth, and in particular the threat of the poor becoming richer (and thus consuming more). Poverty however, is produced not bred, and by projecting systemic flaws onto those it most affects neo-Malthusianism both helps to protect the status quo from criticism and construct vulnerable social groups as legitimate targets of control.

As relatively rich Western countries consume the most energy, it is often argued that it is their populations, in particular, that should be curbed, whether by authoritarian state control, or by individuals in the West simply realizing it is their moral responsibility not to reproduce. But to imply that the Earth should come before a child can lead down a dangerous path. It may lead to a resentment of those social groups that migrate or reproduce more often than others.

Besides, social, economic and cultural pressures to have or not to have children cannot be tackled through individual lifestyle choices and guilt trips. An emancipatory response to climate change requires a political and social solution.

We should be attacking capitalism, not children and families. In a world where children are killed over oil and exploited at the hands of multi-national corporations it isn't surprising that children will eventually be blamed for capitalism's fuck-ups. Capitalism doesn't make sense and neither do capitalist solutions. The 'overpopulation' argument ignores the contradic-

tions inherent in capitalism that mediate the relationship between human beings and the environment and already limit our freedom and desires on a real everyday level.

Instead of acknowledging the unprecedented global disasters that seem to spiral as capitalism grows and spreads its destructive wings, the 'overpopulation' argument asks not for a new form of social organisation (that might see land and resources accessed and shared more evenly, contributing to less poverty, more sustainable lifestyles and fewer wars) but takes the shameful and hopeless route of asking people to have fewer children. In a world where we are repeatedly screwed over we are now being asked not to screw!

Manchester No Borders is a group 'resisting migration controls and the persecution, detention and exploitation of refugees and other migrants. We are committed to practical solidarity and direct action as well as imagining a world without borders and ways to realise this.' Recently, we have aimed to focus strongly on the theory linking border control, capitalism and the environment to help inform our practical actions resisting migration controls. This article is a product of these many discussions. www.manchesternoborders.org.uk

On student politics and finding one's place in one's own time

by Pascal Steven and John Archer

1968 the soundtrack...no thanks

You can hardly open *The Guardian* or turn on the television or radio this year without being reminded of the 40-year anniversary of the 1968 uprisings. The “spirit of ‘68” has been commodified, sold to us on t-shirts, mugs and through the bleary eyed nostalgia of ‘68ers” such as Tariq Ali cashing in on old war stories and bemoaning a lack of similar radical zeal in today’s students. 1968 is understood within both radical and liberal circles as a period of massive social conflict, in which students played a prominent role in struggling for greater freedom. Critics of this myth such as Slavoj Zizek, who argues that the main thing that 1968 produced was neo-liberal capitalism, have been silenced beneath the mountains of commemorative articles. You get the feeling that many commentators believe that 1968 can and should be recreated, and blame today’s apathetic students for it not doing so.

Those cashing in on the corpse of 1968 and all that it represents have forgotten that this is 2008 and history can never be repeated but can only be learnt from. It seems many expect that chanting the

same slogans will produce the same results forty years later.

The deluge of flyers shoved into my hands this year by various socialist groups all offering the same unimaginative narrative and offering workshops on how to recreate the 1968 conditions are nothing more than a quaint anachronism. Whilst many on the left have their heads in the sand writing articles and dreaming of the “right social conditions”, they are ignoring the conditions within which student protest movements find themselves today.

In Britain students at the University of Sussex, Southampton and the University of Manchester have been very active in resisting the continuing marketisation of their education. With the signing of the Bologna accords in 1999 many European universities are beginning to undergo structural changes in accordance with the blueprint laid out by British universities. The Parisian student occupations earlier this year are one example of student protests against these changes, which have also been seen in Germany, Spain and

Greece. Globally other students are also resisting structural changes to higher education in the USA, Canada, Chile, South Africa, Mexico, the Philippines and Thailand (for more information see http://fading-hope.blog-city.com/international_student_protests_2007.htm). An international day of action against the commercialisation of education is being planned for the 5th of November 2008.

This contemporary struggle should not be reduced to an analogue of the struggles experienced in Paris, Prague or Mexico in the 1960’s. We are now experiencing a new cycle of capital accumulation, a different geo-political situation and a whole range of new issues to deal with, in particular climate change. Iraq is not today’s Vietnam and Parisian student protests this year are not the same as those in 1968. Students today are facing a different set of issues within a different social context and are responding to them in different ways.

But what are the major points of tension within these movements, what are the limits and obstacles to their radical poten-



tial and how can other social movements best help them? The following insights have been gleaned from an active involvement in the “Reclaim the Uni” campaign that has been running in Manchester for the past four months.

Neo-liberal changes within the University of Manchester

The 2004 merger between the Victoria university of Manchester and UMIST left the newly founded University of Manchester heavily in debt. In July 2006 its operational deficit was £30 million pounds. At the end of 2007 a moratorium on job losses was removed allowing the university to begin the process of shedding 650 staff that were enjoying “abnormally high levels of pay inflation in the sector”.

Whilst the media have focused on the forced retirements of prominent Marxists Terry Eagleton and Sheila Rowbotham (who has just won her campaign to stay on) perhaps more significantly for most students and staff at the university has

been cuts to the I.T. and library departments. I.T. clusters and faculty libraries have been removed and staff-student contact times have been halved over the last twenty years due to losses of staff.

At the same time the university is also attempting to promote itself as a top class research institution. Figurehead staff such as Martin Amis and Joseph Stiglitz are paid vast sums for little more than marketing rights whilst an investment of six hundred million pounds has seen buildings designed to divide staff and students, such as the Arthur Lewis building, being constructed with little student input. In order to supplement their income Manchester has been a vocal supporter of increasing top-up fee’s for Russell group universities – effectively calling for the creation of a two tier system – and has signed a variety of deals with companies such as Bp, Tesco and BAE.

At the same time market processes have been entering the academy in a variety of more subtle ways. Knowledge is becoming increasingly market oriented through venture capital intellectual property compa-

nies set up in our departments such as the University of Manchester Intellectual Property Ltd (UMIP) and the University of Manchester Incubator Company (UMIC). Government initiatives such as the research assessment exercise (RAE) have produced mechanisms for quantifying and directing academic research towards profitable areas and making academics compete against each other.

The average student’s time at the University of Manchester is often alienating and uninspiring. Alongside concern with high levels of debt (which have increased with the introduction of top-up fee’s) many students we have spoken to have expressed their sense of feeling like an economic unit, of being given an education to perform an economic function in the future rather than as a valuable end in itself. Students are increasingly being viewed as consumers of a product rather than partners in the pursuit of knowledge.

It is important to stress that the changes experienced at Manchester are also being experienced throughout much of the world. The problems we face are the result

of specific political and economic processes not mismanagement by individual university administrators.

Reclaim the uni and the problems of creating a truly anti-capitalist campaign on campus

The reclaim the uni campaign is an outcome of these neo-liberal changes. We consciously wanted to reject the hierarchies that characterised most of the left on campus and provide a space for people to feel empowered and for often quite varied ideas to cross-pollinate with each other. We worked explicitly outside of official student union channels, although the union did offer support. We wanted to try and encourage autonomous action rather than a reliance on leadership – a reliance that the union executive members are usually all too keen to promote.

The group encompassed many people with a variety of perspectives all brought together by the negative changes we were experiencing in our daily lives. Although some were adamant that this was not a “political” group, but one merely focused on improving our student experience many of us involved wanted to highlight how capitalism affected our day-to-day lives as students. Whilst not neglecting the “big issues” we were keen to stress that capitalism has to be fought at a day-to-day level, at the level of lived experience. Capitalism is a system of social relationships, not an object that can be confronted through the spectacle of demonstration every three months in London. We wanted to avoid mobilising people through guilt (as is happening with lots of climate related movements), or through “militants” prepared to sacrifice time and energy for noble, yet distant causes such as Iraq or Palestine. Our poster campaign consciously focused on issues we could relate to as students at Manchester such as reduced contact time, library hours and lack of access to buildings whilst explaining that this was a political process, not just the result of some accidental bad decisions.

After a few months planning we had our first demo; over 300 students with a

sound-system confronted police and occupied a university building where a list of demands was formulated through a difficult consensus process and sent to the vice-president. The demonstration was a starting point not an end goal. It demonstrated the deep dissatisfaction with the way things were going and showed students what we could do when we worked together.

The campaign, unsurprisingly, has its own internal tensions and we think they are worth reflecting upon. In many ways those of us involved weren’t expecting such a large turnout and were inexperienced with the practical issues of keeping the momentum of such a large group going. Perhaps the most interesting political tensions, however, came out during the formulation of the demands during the building occupation.

«hours upon hours were spent discussing what the appropriate stance towards Hezbollah and the Iraqi insurgents should be»

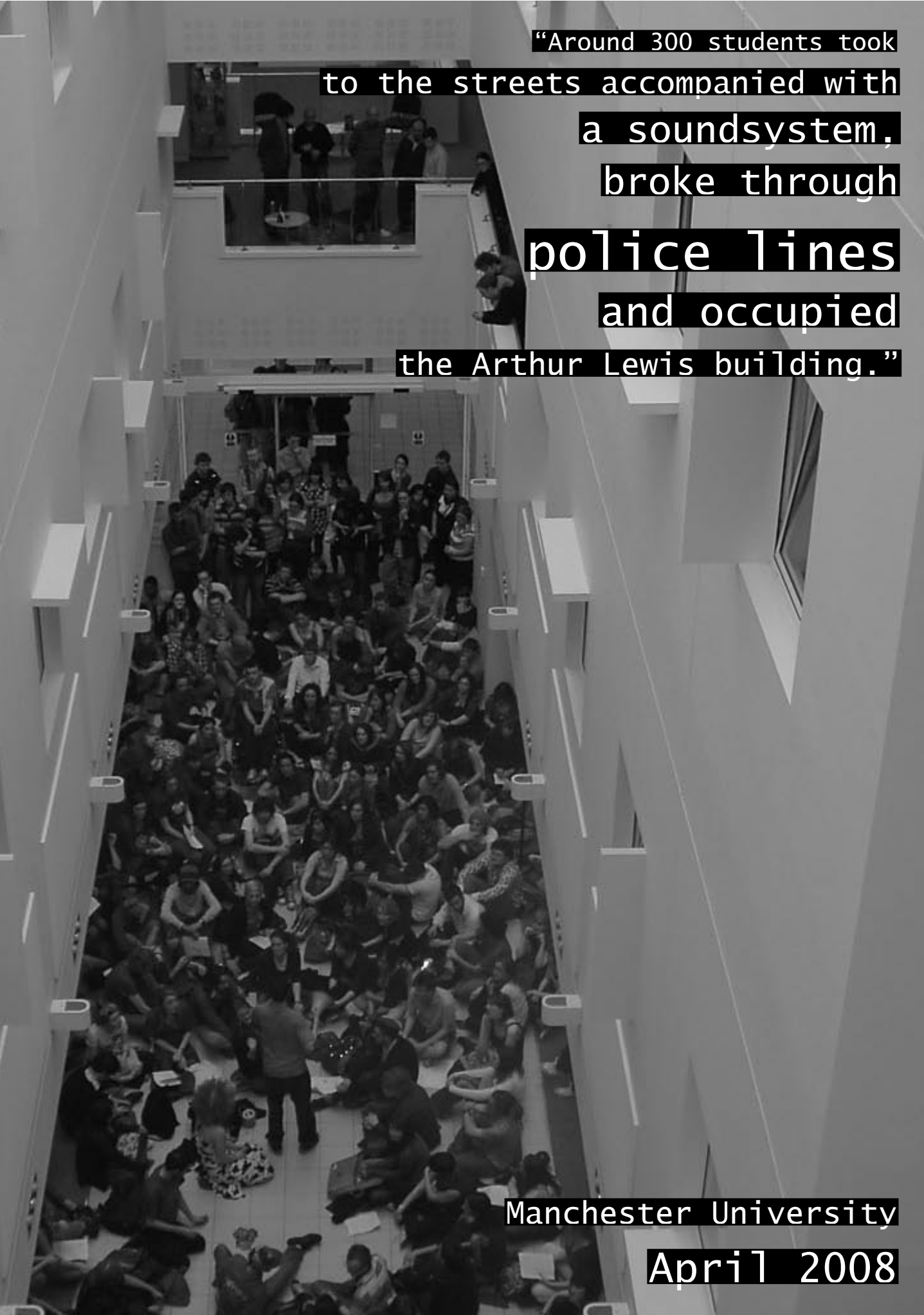
It was clear at this point that there were splits in opinion even between those that saw the problem as being caused by neo-liberal processes. During the discussions it became apparent that some SWP members were attempting to link this large autonomous movement with their own (much smaller) free education campaign. Without wishing to create a counter-clique of anarchist elders it was difficult trying to ignore the political posturing and comments that often felt like pre-planned speeches. By the end of the occupation, admittedly after many people had drifted off home, the major lines of tension that a group this large and varied had to internalise had become apparent.

A major difference was between those of us that saw capitalism as something that could, and should, be challenged here at the place we studied and those that believed that our best response to faceless global processes should be to simply demand better value for money here at Manchester. Although capable of winning minor concessions in the short term, as a long-term strategy it didn’t look particularly viable. So were we faced with the dichotomy between denying minor concessions and compromises in favour of the longer, more impossible seeming struggle?

Not really, though many thought so. For many, capitalism was something ‘out there’ and if we weren’t calling for the immediate withdrawal of the troops from Iraq, the independence of Palestine and the immediate end to all neo-liberal policies, then we were simply being reformist. Yet, we believe that our strategy does not have to be either of these rather unappealing choices.

By instantly aiming at the global level we ignore the mass of power relations we are entwined in. Protests are reduced to passive acts of consumption, which a small number produce, they become indulgent displays of who can sympathise the most. Demonstrations are reduced to little more than a spectacle of impotent fist shaking and chanting at a target so diffuse as to be invisible. For us effective struggle starts in the demands for improvement in our every day lives. By changing things at a tangible level, these little victories can inspire people and instil a sense of confidence in our collective abilities to create change rather than endlessly banging our heads against brick walls. This is the very basics of classical class struggle, workplace organisation – and it was surprising that so many on the left seemed unaware of it, being so scathing of the professed concerns of the workers and students of the university.

This difference in viewpoint was confirmed at a ‘reclaim the campus’ conference held in May in London – hours upon hours were spent discussing what the appropriate stance towards Hezbollah and the Iraqi insurgents should be, whether we demand immediate withdrawal of the troops from



**“Around 300 students took
to the streets accompanied with
a soundsystem,
broke through
police lines
and occupied
the Arthur Lewis building.”**

Manchester University

April 2008

Iraq or whether a phased withdrawal would be better for the Iraqi labour movement. Not a minute was spent discussing how we practically organize on campus. Most of the criticisms about student lefties is true, they are often more interested in intellectual posturing and one-upmanship than actually doing anything. When we have a movement strong enough to force the governments hand over major features of its foreign policy, then that will be the time to start discussing the matter in depth. Until then, we have to deal with how we build a struggle from our everyday lives, without losing sight of the need for solidarity, and the fact that the Iraqi labour movement and anti-capitalists in the UK share elements of a common enemy.

Small steps before giant leaps?

We cannot hope to recreate the conditions of the 1960's and in many ways we wouldn't want to. As the debates in Manchester are repeated in universities all over the world it seems to us that a truly anti-capitalist politics can only be based upon struggling in the here and now against tangible issues. Campaigns based upon the premise of capitalism as something out there, as the plan of George Bush or

the G8 lead us down the wrong road. Until our movements are large enough to influence (inter)national policy effective anti-capitalist actions must be locally situated. Although trans-national solidarity is important, if it becomes the focus of a campaign then it leads to symbolic sacrifices of energy that produce the mere spectacle of opposition. Effective movements must be aware of the tensions between situating a campaign locally whilst still being connected to struggles in different places and at different scales. In practical terms this is a very difficult thing to do and localised campaigns run the risk of falling into what David Harvey would term militant particularisms, movements that are defined by local interest only. An often forgotten part of 1968 was British workers marching for restrictions on migration whilst today hidden beneath the "We Are Everywhere" triumphalism of Seattle is the truth that many groups involved were campaigning for national protectionism. So, we must walk the tightrope of tensions between being rooted in the everyday whilst still being connected to wider struggles.

True resistance to capital is based upon movements with tangible and inspiring goals. We must be realistic and recognise that currently anti-capitalist movements

are relatively small and this is in part down to poor choices in strategy. The free education campaign is a relatively small and SWP dominated group for very clear reasons, it fails to inspire or connect with people. On the other hand the reclaim the uni movement, whilst also being openly anti-capitalist, has attracted a large amount of support on the basis of its ability to clearly articulate tangible and desirable goals. Once our movements are large enough then we can begin the task of challenging capital at a larger and more abstract scale but until then we must continue movement building at a local level rooted in our everyday experience of capitalism.

Pascal Steven is studying in Manchester and is involved with both the Reclaim the Uni group and Manchester No Borders.

John Archer is from Manchester and has been closely involved with the 'Reclaim the Uni' campaign, and will continue to be so as long as he can keep his sanity in the company of liberals and Stalinist SWP members.



“make a foreshortened critique of capitalism history!” - a reply

In the very first issue of SHIFT magazine the Berlin-based group TOP delivers fragments of their critique of the anti-G8 mobilisation in order to “make a foreshortened critique of capitalism history” (TOP). A sympathetic cause indeed to challenge antisemitic currents and nationalist floods (not only) in that movement.

Unfortunately TOP fails to deliver an appropriate critique of those positions. Whilst in some cases moral appeals and warnings replaces a proper critique, they provide a wrong explanation in some other cases. In this reply we aim to provide arguments against these shortcomings hoping to aid TOP’s cause which we subscribe to. Thereby we will concentrate on what we believe to be TOP’s main fallacy: Their underestimation of the state’s role in preserving capitalism. TOP rightfully refuses “economistic and personalized (state-conceptions)” within the anti-globalisation movement and writes: “one of the inherent dangers of this logic is to fall into anti-Semitic stereotypes”. They then go on by giving a brief overview of history and substance of the antisemitic worldview.

However, TOP does not sufficiently detail their position on what capitalism is, why and how so many protesters come to a wrong differing conclusion about it and how this involves antisemitism. However, we believe that these details are crucial to defeat a foreshortened critique of capitalism. The brief remarks about their understanding of capitalism are: Capitalism is a “process, which arises following its own structural logic without a particular leadership”. Discussing whether and how protest against a meeting of the most powerful states in the world is reasonable TOP writes that “domination has neither name nor address”.

We think that this position is a consequence of TOP’s failure to understand the democratic state, its elected agents and its objects of government: the people. First, in order to develop our critique of this position, we have to make a step back and state some results which we probably all agree on: In capitalism the satisfaction of personal needs is not the purpose of production. For example because food is private property of a grocery store owner, one’s hunger is not a sufficient condition for

gaining access to that food. Store owners don’t stock food to feed the hungry but to make a living.

The first principle of capitalist interaction is free and equal trade or in less palliating terms: without giving there is no receiving. So only if a store owner sells enough stuff this month he might be able to make a living with his store next month. This is complicated by the fact that there are many grocery stores around competing to attract buyers who in turn dispose only about a limited budget. This competition exists on all levels (jobs, customers, markets, etc.) — it is universal — and also involves global corporations, they too compete for customers. If they fail, they go bankrupt. To survive in universal competition they improve their production and increase the absolute exploitation of their workers (prolong the work day, more intense work, lower wages).

Capitalism is a labour divided society which means that the producers depend on each other: A farmer needs tools, the tool maker needs raw materials, and miners need food. Under the dictate of private

property this interdependency is not resolved in a conscious common plan but each agent is depended on each other's arbitrariness. In this situation — being subject to other's free will — it is indeed best practice to always strive for one's best result.

Insofar universal competition is logical in capitalism. This is probably what TOP would call "structural logic". A position which wants to preserve the free market and private property in the means of production but singles out capitalists or corporations for their 'greedy' and immoral behaviour is therefore indeed a wrong personalised conception: "the notion misconceives that in capitalism the economic actors are following a rationality that is forced upon them by the economic relationships themselves." (TOP)

But: Heiligendamm was not a meeting of grocery store owners, farmers or factory workers but a meeting of heads of states. A store owner (or any capitalist) and Gordon Brown fulfil some very different roles for capitalist reproduction. Gordon Brown's government's decisions reach to (and beyond) the borders of this country, the decisions of a capitalist affect his own store/factory and maybe the shops he competes with. Furthermore, the capitalist — regardless if he produces, sells, etc. — has to obey to the rules of private property, while the government formulates and enforces these rules. Thus the state causes all the messy business. Note that those without considerable personal effects, too, have to obey to these rules, though without being able to use them to their advantage. Because of this relationship between citizens and the state asking what the rights of the citizens are is of importance. In contrast, when nation states decide to treat each other like "juristic persons" (TOP) they are only limited by their own choices. Thus considering whether the most powerful states in the world can "freely" and 'equally' arrange informal meetings" gets pointless. There is no monopoly of force that can grant or withhold this right.

On a side note: TOP's counter to the anti-globalisation movement's claim that G8 is illegitimate misses the point when they discuss whether the meeting is legal or

not. To fulfil the crucial duty of granting private property the state has to be sovereign with respect to his subjects. How sovereign a state is depends on how much it pushes its monopoly of force through within its borders and its interests beyond its borders. The last requires military might or the power of economic extortion and the G8 is a meeting of states which generally don't have a problem in those departments. This does not imply on the other hand that there are no other states with a significant military force or economic power. However, in many other states most of the sources of national wealth are in the hands of foreign capitalists and every government — whatever the intent — which touches this property is confronted with the US and EU.

«Heiligendamm was not a meeting of grocery store owners, farmers or factory workers»

Thus even though state actions are somewhat limited by the international community of states (read: mainly G8) the limitations of a capitalist and a state (including its personal) are very different. For example, the EU has limited the free exchange of crop and subsidises its farmers to make sure it is independent of foreign food suppliers. Other examples are road works, public education and public health. Those sectors are not completely subject to the invisible hand of the market because the state decided to regulate the "free market" according to its interests. Or consider any embargo or war in which a state practically negates possible business interests of its national capital. Exactly, because state has not to succumb to the "structural logic" of capital it can provide the "particular leadership" necessary to perform "domination and exploitation" "within and through these forms [democracy and law]" (TOP).

Note that using this result to demand a radical change in politics from the govern-

ment would be foolish. First, the state agents believe in freedom, democracy, and capitalism and so do the parliaments which appointed them. Also those parliaments are re-affirmed every once in a while by the people of their respective countries via elections. Governments have a purpose which is documented in their respective constitutions, abolishing capitalism altogether is not part of those constitutions and even if Gordon Brown was convinced to stop the madness of capital and nation he could not do it. Modern states have safety measures to make sure a government does not go rough — in either direction — like ballots and if necessary the state of emergency where democracy and freedom are suspended in order to preserve the state.

Capitalism is neither a conspiracy of a few nor a "process ... without a particular leadership". It is neither a process without leadership because there is a government but nor is it a conspiracy of the few because the government is bound to the constitution and law. The anti-globalisation movement generally approaches this problem from a totally different angle. Instead of asking how and why the world is set up, they compare state and capital with their ideal of it. Consequently, this movement either demands "better politics" or has lost trust in the political class and aims to replace it. As there is no interest in understanding how democracy, freedom and equality preserve exploitation and domination the anti-globalisation mainstream keeps searching for violations of those high principles. If the system itself is not flawed there must be some external source for all the trouble: corrupt politicians, greedy bosses, loss of culture. This search for external jamming sources is where antisemitism has some "answers" to offer.

what next?

Thanks to all those who came to our workshops series at the Climate Camp. Stay in touch...

Issue 5 of Shift Magazine will be published in January 2009. Please contact us with article ideas. To get hold of a copy (or copies) of this issue, or back issues, please visit the website.

Thank you,

Shift Editors.

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