

Ar-A-mach

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Anarchist Federation Alba

resisting capitalism in scotland

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Spiv Councillors

Councillors, businessmen and so called local democracy - don't ya just lov'em?

Wonderful folk these time serving party hacks, former trade union bureaucrats, assorted lackeys and lickspittles that make up our local councils. Well if that lot are not bad enough lording it over us just look what may be coming our way.

Not content with the misrepresentation and manipulation of tame councillors capitalist businessmen (Federation of Small Businesses in Scotland) intend - to coin a phrase - to cut out the middlemen and become councillors themselves. Only one little catch though - they don't believe that they would be well enough paid. Yes, that's right, to avail ourselves of their expertise in exploitation businessmen councillors would have to be better paid. Poor pay for councillors is a formidable barrier to the capitalist boss class standing for election they claim. Doesn't it just make your heart bleed? There's irony in there somewhere from a group whose supposed measure of success is built on the back of exploiting the labour of the working classes whilst paying them a pittance.

Not content with their stranglehold grip on our society the fat cats want to further control and rob under sham local democracy without having to rely on the lapdogs already there to dole them out PFI contracts, outsource services and throw Council workers out of their jobs. No let's get in there and pay ourselves handsomely for the privilege they say. All to satisfy the grasping need of the fat cats to get even richer on public sector work whilst paying even less lip service than the control freaks supposedly representing local people now.

If you think that's bad well you've not heard it all yet.

Not content with that controlling framework they also have their eyes on schools. Paid over the odds to build and run a school, that's not enough for these bastards, they want to become head teachers as well. Background in education, concern for young people, nurturing independent thought and creativity - well who needs that? Obviously not them. They know what's best because they can run a business and they'll



tell us all what to think and how to behave and conform to their agenda. Can't be wrong can they? Oracles of information and wisdom these jumped up spivs and hucksters. Trust them with your kids as they build on campus a few practice chimneys, mines and assembly lines for the better conditioning of future workers. Playground - yes it's just round the back of the practice call center building, you can see it after the hooter sounds but be sure you've clocked off first sonny.

After all this their spokesperson had the gall to say they are not being "cocky". Well fine try but I'm not buying that one (or a second hand car by the way). But what does the Convention of Local Authorities have to say about this? Fuck off and die, perhaps? No, not quite - "We would welcome businessmen becoming actively involved in local democracy."

Well there you have it, local councils - what a choice - washed up arselicking time servers or thieving capitalist bastards. We'll be well rid of all of them when the people drive them out of the council chambers.

VICTORY FOR GLASGOW NHS WORKERS

300 ancillary workers at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow have won some decent gains against employer Sodexo. After a short strike, parity with NHS conditions were agreed, pay has been increased from £4.20 per hour to £5 per hour backdated to April 2002, sick pay has been increased and lengthened and overtime rates increased as well. Pierre Bellon, Chief Executive of Sodexo has an estimated wealth of £1.3 billion.

A member of Sodexo's Chairman's committee earns an average minimum of £4700 per week!

Management had attempted to bus scabs in but they were followed round the town by pickets and supporters. Well done all concerned. For more info on Sodexo and their other dodgy dealings including private prisons and asylum seekers vouchers contact sod-action@fsmail.net.



Also in this issue...

Conquest of Bread - Kropotkin (Gaelic)
Water Fiasco (Scots)
Sacco & Vanzetti 75 years on
Industrial Struggles
Against Parliament For Anarchism
(Part 1)

Why Anarchists Oppose Parliament

We will be serialising our leaflet Against Parliament, For anarchism over the coming months until the Holyrood elections. The whole leaflet can be downloaded at http://flag.blackened.net/af/ace/ap_index.html

We are constantly told that we live in a free society. The guarantee of this "freedom" is said to be the parliamentary system. This allows us to elect representatives who govern the country in our name, and who are answerable to us. That, at least, is the theory. This system had its beginnings in a body which only represented feudal nobles, and evolved into one which represented land-owning and agricultural interests more generally. There was no pretence that it was democratic, i.e. representing the will of all the people. By the 19th century, with the development of industrial capitalism, the newly-rich owners of factories and mills lacked political power to match their economic strength. Agitation for an extension of the franchise produced the so-called Great Reform Act of 1832, which only granted the right to vote to property-owners like the industrialists despite their reliance on working-class support during the long campaign. The working-class continued to have no significant economic or political voice. Consequences of this situation were the working-class fight for the vote in the Chartist movement and the growth of trade unions. Most significant, in terms of an independent class outlook, was the development during the rest of the century of various forms of socialism, communism and anarchism.

Government: the Way to Freedom?

Anarchists, because of their belief in the strength of voluntary co-operation and mutual aid, were (and are) opposed to the coercive power of government on principle. They therefore denied the notion that the working-class should work to extend the franchise and then vote its own representatives into power, convinced that this could only ever achieve domination by a minority. However the idea was spread by others (often socialists from the middle -class) that capitalism and the many laws required to sustain it could eventually be legislated away once enough working-class parliamentary seats had been gained. Similarly a socialist system, using the power of the State in the working-class' favour, could then be introduced by Acts of Parliament. Strangely, one of the reasons for taking this line was precisely the repressive capabilities which the capitalist State had built up. Only anarchists anticipated that such standard governmental tools as courts, prisons, police and troops, whoever commanded them, would end up preserving a society of inequality and exploitation, not abolishing it. But parliamentary socialists, believing that any attempt at revolution must resolve itself to the advantage of

the ruling-class, took a gradual, reformist approach. By patient legal changes, a socialist utopia would be arrived at, and no-one hurt or aggrieved in the process. Typical of this outlook were the Fabians, an early socialist think-tank still influential in the Labour Party. Many believed in the reasonableness of such sentiments. With the gradual winning of the vote by all of the working-class, subsequent history has too often revolved around workers giving up their power by electing "representatives". The fallacy has been that, by ceding power to someone or some party claiming to represent you, your interests and those of others like you will be the chief concern of those representatives. This idea has legitimised the election of full-time union officials as well as politicians.

It has proved untrue on two counts. Short of the actual deposition of the class of industrialists, bankers, stockbrokers, etc., political representatives are driven to make deals with these people, whose prime aim is to preserve and expand their social and economic privileges, not give them up. And these representatives themselves, when not born into the ruling-class (making connections and assumptions at public school and university to last a lifetime), sooner rather than later adopt its attitudes. Supposedly working-class MPs lose touch with their original background, just as do those elected primarily as women or black; and for the same reasons.

The Ruling-Class

What is it that makes such attitudes so easy to adopt? It stems from the fact that, once existing in a world of large salaries, consultancies and bribes, chauffeurs and private secretaries, politicians become largely divorced from life as most of us experience it. They are also both more and less informed than most people. On one hand, privy to information and the making of decisions which will affect millions, with only a selected portion of that information available for what is laughably termed public debate. On the other, living in ignorance of everyday life and having their information filtered via civil servants, lobbyists and journalists. The contempt for the public thus encouraged is plain in the constant necessity for leaks to enable us to know much at all of this world. There is in addition a basic condescension on the part of politicians, in their assumption that some people (i.e. themselves and their economic counterparts) are best suited to making the major decisions on how society should run its affairs.

The 1996 debates about MPs' pay, with the outcome of increases of 26% (whilst urging 3% or less on everyone else), were especially significant in revealing this gulf between government and the governed. Once, the argument was that Parliament would work for the working-class through the election of working-class representatives, on the basis of common interest and experience. Now it was said that MPs' wages had to be raised by huge amounts in order to attract the right calibre of person, who would otherwise be lost to a managerial position in industry. Ex-

actly so. MPs and ministers are political middle managers, and their gaze is so frequently turned to the City and the Confederation of British Industry (and their international equivalents, such as the Council of Ministers of the European Union, the World Trade Organisation and the IMF) because these are the people to whom they are really accountable. For their part, they exert firm central control via local councils and also by means of placeperson-packed quangos (unelected bodies like hospital trust boards, responsible for spending millions in public funds). This in turn exposes the hollowness of local "democracy".

Despite the form of a democratic political process which allegedly includes us all, the impotence of national governments before the activities of transnational companies (otherwise known as globalisation or neo-liberalism) has meant that its content has increasingly become concerned simply with devising ways to improve the lot of the well-off or ease their worries. Since its election in May 1997, the Labour government has been at pains to stress how business-friendly it is both to domestic and foreign investors. The proof has been in such measures as its appointments of business-people to head various commissions on aspects of the Welfare State (e.g. the ex-chief of Barclays Bank in charge of a commission on benefits!), its harassment of the unemployed and the setting of a minimum wage based on what bosses wish to pay rather than what workers need. The non-Tory parties now believe in only the most mild reforms of unfettered capitalism, based on the further belief that nothing but a capitalist system is workable. And this conviction unites all of the main political parties - hence the growing ease with which they swap members. This is the essential "choice" of which they make so much.

None of the above comments should be mistaken for any nationalistic stance. Anarchists are quite clear that the injustices suffered by the working-class are common across the globe. Indeed it is this common character that helps create a working-class that is international, for all its local variations, and makes the need to unite across national boundaries ever more urgent. And this despite the fact that bosses and politicians still play up national differences in order to maintain weakness and division amongst the world's workers. Those who today complain about Brussels' interference should simply ask themselves, is a British boss or politician so preferable? The idea that they are somehow more under our control or more sympathetic is a fallacy. No, it is having a ruling-class at all that is the root problem, whether its members are of the same nationality or not.

A Free Society?

For those who cannot be pacified by material goods (or at least the hope of them), the other side of the democratic picture is coercion. This goes both for those who have an insecure hold on work, housing or education, and those who dissent. With the continuing legal and technical tooling-up of the police, detailed ism

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and linked government databases, and the widespread use of closed-circuit TV, all the means for a totally authoritarian system are coming into place. Freedom is reduced to mere consumerism.

Crime is the justification for these measures. Anything that might indict the role that the propaganda and pressures of a capitalist world play is disregarded as an excuse for individual weakness. More than this, in a system where the market is held to be supreme, any assertion of the interests of the working-class that is not thoroughly diluted by politicians and union bureaucrats itself becomes defined as verging on crime. Thus the outlawing or restriction of strikes, demonstrations, picketing, etc.

The point which we have reached today reveals the basic fallacy that has always underlaid the parliamentary road. This is that the working-class can make continuing and permanent gains while another class dominates it economically and politically. The "finest hour" of parliamentary socialism in the post-1945 nationalisations and creation of the National Health Service continued to preserve managerial chains of command and had no idea of how to counteract the harmful inroads of market capitalism other than through subsidies. This may have cushioned the workforces against unemployment for some decades, but by now the truth is plain: the ruling-class drive for profit is the supreme value in a capitalist world. If this means a return to sweatshops, disregard for the health and safety of workers and excessive hours of work, this is the price to be paid to compete in a global market. In the case of public services it means either their abandonment in privatisation, or severe limitations being placed upon their expenditure. The same point is true of all such areas that have been the object of reform by Parliament: if they can be clawed back for profit's sake, they will be.

Freedom of Choice

In this pamphlet we explore the ideas of many political parties. Most offer some variant of managing capitalism politically. Ultimately this is to resign ourselves to continuing stressful work, unemployment, discrimination, pollution, and wars, whether over natural resources (as in the Gulf War) or regional political influence (as in the Balkans). Naturally, policies for this management vary, as do the gestures towards social justice. But although certain specific policies will change, there are ideological limits to each party which preserve continuity. Thus today's Labour Party, while being explicitly more pro-business in its outlook than its early 1980s model, in both cases is part of a tradition that has never envisaged any more than the taming of the market, rather than its abolition. Similarly, its commitment to reformation of the House of Lords will only mean that we can elect more of our oppressors, instead of their simply inheriting the right to do so. Similar examples could be given for all of the parties. They adapt, change rhetoric, symbols, even their names, but they never shift

so much that their own self-importance (the "need" for them or other bosses) is put in doubt. Those claiming to be socialist (rather than social democratic) or communist, while perhaps committed to economic equality, see political equality as a goal that is much further off. They, of course, will benignly rule us in the meantime. Thus they end up on a par with the others, who always seek to offer "strong leadership" when not merely "representing" us. What we are trying to do throughout this pamphlet is highlight some of the parties' defining ideas, with reference where appropriate to their current policies. But though there will undoubtedly be a future need to update this account, the continuity must never be obscured by the inevitable hype over policy changes, or even party splits.

Anarchist Apathy?

It is often argued that those like anarchists who deliberately refuse to vote in elections are apathetic, and have no right to comment on political affairs if they do not participate in the approved manner. Anarchists vigorously deny this. Even the politicians profess to be disturbed at the mounting lack of participation in the "democratic process", a worldwide phenomenon. Anarchists in fact argue for constant and general involvement in politics, that is, all of the questions (work, food, housing, transport, education, etc.) which affect our lives. Apathy - and despair - are the by-products of a vote every few years and the chance to sign the occasional petition to Parliament. They do not come from the refusal to be mocked in a farce. As anarchist-communists, then, we are opposed to parliamentary democracy and capitalism. Neither can we be satisfied with the end of one and not the other. For example, capital can thrive in all kinds of political environments but it will still produce similar misery and injustice.

We conclude by outlining some of our positive views of a world in which they have both been superseded. Our starting-point is that individual freedom is best realised in a society without domination, brought together instead by voluntary co-operation and association. The needs of the individual and the needs of society are in a constant tension, but they stand the best chance of being harmonised in a world which has seen the abolition of classes. This means an end to the power of anyone to dominate, either economically or politically. Power would instead be diffused. One hundred years ago, anarchists chiefly argued against the working-class taking the parliamentary road on a theoretical level. Today we have all too much experience to confirm their original insight that freedom, equality and well-being are not to be achieved via that route. In the 21st century it is more than time to leave behind the political illusions which littered the 20th. This pamphlet is a contribution to the exposure of one still deeply-rooted.



TIME
BOMB

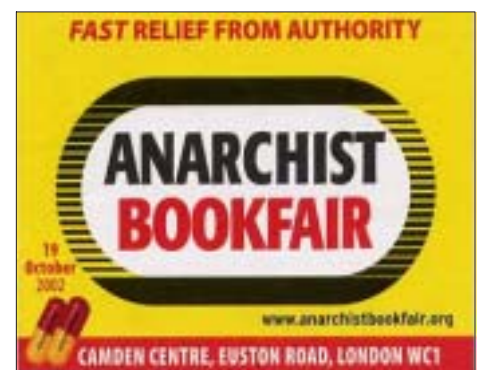


SACCO & VANZETTI 75 YEARS ON....

The murder trial of two Italian-born anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, was the most celebrated political case of the 20th Century. On Aug. 23rd, global justice, immigrant rights, anti-war, and anti-death penalty activists around the world commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, which took place on Aug. 23rd, 1927. The Sacco-Vanzetti Commemoration Committee, organized by New York City activists, held a mass rally and memorial on Aug. 23rd in NYC, where more than half a million people gathered in 1927 to protest the state-sanctioned killing of the two anarchists.

Framed for a killing in Massachusetts, Sacco and Vanzetti were the most famous victims of the Red Scares - the first great wave of US government persecution against political dissidents. Their case inspired mass protest around the world, and their memory has never been forgotten. Yet again and again, during the McCarthy Era, the Civil Rights and Vietnam War struggles, and now during the "war on terror," the state has persecuted, scapegoated, and framed dissidents - especially immigrants, the poor, and people of colour - to suit its political ends. Now more than ever, we must remember the legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti: * As hundreds of immigrants sit in jails, rounded up in a wave of hysteria after Sept. 11. * As hundreds more sit on death rows around the United States. * As the Bush Administration prepares an unprecedented assault on civil rights in the name of "homeland security."

"Everything should be done to keep alive the tragic affair of Sacco and Vanzetti in the conscience of mankind." ALBERT EINSTEIN, 1947



WATTER JOKE

WATTER: LEES, COMPLACENCY AND CAREERISM. NAITIONALIZATION ISNA THE ANSWER

"Politicians are not born, they are excreted." (Scipio/Cato - canna mind) The wittens that watter wesna safe tae drink maun hae come as a stound for maist Scots, siccar in the 'knowledge' at oor watter is amang the maist cleanest i the warld, but the issue (that potentially lethal parasites cried cryptosporidium is ayewes present i wir watter supply - ae wumman in her eild, sufferin fae cancer, dee'd o cryptosporidiosis twa year syne ower the heid o drinkin tap-water - an that sen 1990 Scottish Water's been legally obliged (wi an EU directive) tae get rid o the cancer causin Trihalomethanes, that it admits is in the watter, forby the quantites o pysony leid an aluminium but hes done nocht thereanent) breirds mair profoond questions o owerance an o priorities. While in Scotland watter isna privatized, unalike it is in England (whar sair underinvestment an the struissle tae maximize profits for shareholders means that fowk whiles disna hae watter ava, despite thare bein nae drouth in terms o rain), it's owned an run bi the state, it's no fit tae drink nather! Thaim that hes the owerance for it (the politicians, civil servands an the placemen at Scottish Water) hes lee'd, latcht an parried, playin cairtes wi public safety, an ownin til naethin gin they hae tae - naitionalization, giein pouer til the politicians an careerists, in action. Whan Ross Finnie, that hes the ministerial responsibility for watter, threats at he didna bather tellin fowk at watter wesna safe akis it wad cause "public bloody panic", and wad mean "bugger all", whit he means is that it wad refleck badly on him, he'd rather that fowk gets seeck an dees like thon wumman twa year syne, as he admits whan he says it wad hae been better tae "issue a statement saying [water] is safe and we are monitoring it." Juist as Dr Harry Burns, Glasgow's director of public health, an him that's responsible for witterin the public about the information resaved fae Scottish Water, while kennin, on Thursday, that the war "a rising number of parasites" didna issue a warrandice til fowk tae Setterday nicht, Proffessor Bill Reilly, co-

ordinator o the gastrointestinal section o SCIEH, Scotland's naitional surveillance and epidemiological centre, refuses tae tell oniebody about the levels o cryptosporidium athin wir watter supply, whil haudin that he supports the Novemmer 2001 report intil the ootbrek o the parasite that pit a wumman deid in 2000 that says "It seems reasonable to consider that, at the very least, [vulnerable fowk] should be allowed to make an informed decision as to whether they want to boil their water."; it seems thaim that hes the pousy in wir society is mair interestit in keepin thon nor in protectin the public. This is juist anither case o the incestuous naitur o control, whar social priorities, like seein at fowk disna dee!, is foreleetten for tae forder fowks' ambitions an careers. It's time tae pit an end til this immoral spectacle; pauchlin, no goamin oniebody's interests but yer ain an ither sic careerism is a faut o ordinar fowk no haein pouer ower thair ain destiny. It's time we, the ordinar workin cless, done somethin about this thegither an stopt pittin wir trust in politicians - shite's shite, whitever rosette they gie it!

INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLES

Firefighters from all over the land gathered in Glasgow for a huge demo for a pay increase to £30K. 55,000 members prepare to ballot for strike action. On a related note we utterly condemn the attacks on fire crews by youths in the Blackhill area of Glasgow where a crew were ambushed and attacked with clubs, knives and bricks.

This behaviour is totally anti-working class and the people of Blackhill should organise themselves to sort this lumpen element out. Obviously Blackhill is a poverty-stricken estate and youngsters suffer alienation and boredom but attacking firefighters who might one day save their lives is not a way out. Perhaps they need to look at the drug dealers who feed on this area and increase the misery on everyone.



Two general membership branches of the Industrial Workers of the World were formed in Scotland this month in Lothians and Clydeside. For more information contact iwwclydeside@hushmail.com

PEADAR KROPOTKIN

Ceannasachadh an Araìn (Pàirt a dhà)

Cha taìrg eachdraidh a' chinne-daonna, tuigte mar seo, argumaid an aghaidh cho-mhaoineas. Nochdar e, an aghaidh seo, mar leantainn oidhirpean a thoirt gu buil seòrsa air choireigin de eagrachadh co-mhaoineach, oidhirpean a chaidh a chrùnadh an siud 's an seo le soirbheachadh leth-bhreitheach de rè sònraichte; agus uile a cheadaicheas e sinn a cho-dhùin, 'sann nach do lorg an cinne-daonna fhathast cruth ceart airson cho-aontachadh, air bun-stèidh co-mhaoineach, àiteachas le gnìomhachas leasaichte gu h-obann agus malairt eadar-nàiseanta a tha a' fàs gu luath. Nochdar an deireannach gu h-àraidh mar dhùil bhuaireach, o chionns nach e an luchd a-mhàin, neo bailtean, a dhèanas saidhbhir dhaibh fhèin le malairt cèin agus eas-tharraing; ach fàsar rioghachdan gu lèir beairteach aig cosgais na rioghachdan sin a dhèanas mairneal anns an fhàs tionnsgalach aca.

Ged-ta, ghabh na coraichean seo, a thoisich a nochdadh le deireadh an ochdamh linn deug, an leasachadh làn aca anns an naoidheamh linn deug a-mhàin, as dèidh mar a thàinig na cogaidhean Napoleonach gu crìoch. Agus feumaidh co-mhaoineas an latha an-diugh thoir cùntas air.

Aithnichear a-nis gu robh Ar-a-mach na Frainge, air leth bhon a' bhrigh phoiliteach, oidhirp a rinn na daoine Frangach, ann an 1793 agus 1794 ann an trì àirdean eadar-dhealaichte cha mhòr coltach ri sòisealachd. B'e an toiseach, *sealbhann a dhèanamh co-ionann* le comas cis air teachd-a-steach agus diùtaidh cor-sheilbh, an dà chuid dhiubh gu trom adhartach, agus cuideachd le arfuntachadh dìreach an talamh air chor's gun roinneadh e, agus le cisean trom cogaidh a chaidh a leagail air na beartaich a-mhàin. Bha an darna oidhirp seòrsa de *cho-mhaoineas a' bhaile-mhòir* a thaobh chaitheimh ghrunn rudan a' chiad fheum, ceannaichte leis na bailtean mòra, agus reicte leotha aig prìs a' chosgais. Agus bha an treas oidhirp a thoirt a-steach *riaghailt farsaing nàiseanta phrìsean stèidhichte gu ciallach dhen uile bhadhar*, airson a dh'fheumadh prìs fhior na h-obrach agus prothaidean mheadhanach mhalairt a thoirt cùntas air. Dh'obraich an co-chruinneachadh gu cruaidh aig an innleachd seo, agus cha mhòr nach robh iad air an obair a thoirt gu buil, nuair a ghabh frith-ghluasad os làimh.

Coming Soon...

Wed 25th September - Black Flag Meeting on Community Organising at the John Maclean Centre.

Sat 19th October - 21st annual Anarchist Bookfair, London. See advert on Page 3.

Sat 9th November - Anarchist Day School in Glasgow. Venue tbc

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