

# resistance

## anarchist bulletin

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Issue 23



# Anarchy in the EU

ANARCHISTS THROUGHOUT IRELAND AND BRITAIN will be making their way to Evian in the next couple of weeks and not for the water. Between June 1-3, the G8 summit will take place there, and as part of the recent global trend, tens of thousands of protestors throughout Europe will make sure the elite of the planet's eight wealthiest and industrialised nations will be given as much adverse publicity as possible.



Recently, the Anarchist Federation gave its support to the "Convergence of Anti-Authoritarian and Anti-capitalist Struggles" (CLAAAC), the French-Italian based network which has been set up to counter the G8 at Evian.

From their statement online at <http://www.claaacg8.org8>:

*"We believe that between human beings, there should exist relationships other than that of the market, of domination, alienation and exploitation. Pollution, the waste of natural resources and differences in wealth are ever more catastrophic. Globalisation translates into a degradation of living and work conditions and an increase in social control. The bosses, with the connivance of the State, are on the offensive with the destruction of public services, attacks on labour rights, job precariousness, flexibility, layoffs and the dismantlement of social rights (welfare, pensions etc.). This capitalist system cannot be reformed as it inevitably leads to these effects. The break with capitalism is, in our opinion, the only possible way to prevent a human and ecological economic catastrophe".*

We couldn't have put it any better ourselves! See you there!



**Organise #60**, magazine of the Anarchist Federation now available. Contact us for a copy.

## Euro round-up



*Greeks greet Blair and Aznar with their favourite cocktail*

**Greece:** AS UP TO 20,000 police guarded the EU meeting in Athens, Greece, 8,000 anti-war protesters clashed with police and smashed shops and banks. Police responded with tear gas and savage beatings, and were met with stones, bottles and petrol bombs. Elsewhere several other blocs of demonstrators managed to get near to the meeting. Several undercover police were beaten by protesters and expelled from the demonstration. The British, Italian and French embassies were attacked, and British Airways' office was occupied. The day ended with 106 arrests.

The EU enlargement will involve increasing "liberalisation" of the economy, to the benefit only of the rich.

**Spain:** The city of Barcelona was shaken on Thursday 10th April as thousands of people took to the streets in a day of protest against the killing in Iraq and the permanent war. Many businesses were closed, following a call by several anarcho-syndicalist unions (CGT, CNT-AIT, SO) for a general strike of 24 hours. Actions were continuing until the late evening. Strikes and demonstrations also happened in Madrid and across Spain.

**Italy:** One million people responded to a general strike call put out by the rank and file unions such as the CUB, COBAS and the anarcho-syndicalist USI-AIT. Marches and demonstrations took place in most towns and cities.

## ON THE FRONTLINE

### Water, Fire and a bit of Wind

WELL, IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN sooner or later. Water charges in the north could be in place by 2005 (under EU law Northern Ireland needs to have a charge for water by 2010). But what are the water charges?

Until now we have been permitted the privilege of drinking water through payment of household rates (the rate we pay is currently under review but likely to go up). A separate water charge will essentially involve paying twice for something which we already pay for once. This is nothing short of double-taxation which will, as usual, affect low-income families the most. Charges are likely to amount to as much as £250 per household, and this for a service, which according to the General Consumers' Council (GCC), loses 37% of treated water every year through the failings of the current pipe network. The charges will lead to more privatisation, and the further decrease in the standard of drinking water.

What is needed is a campaign of resistance to prevent the new charges from being imposed on us against our wishes, or a widespread refusal to pay the new charges if they are. This should be organised along non-party and non-hierarchical lines and coordinate at local levels across our community. Non-payment, and any other means of direct action, is the only language big business understands.



Meanwhile, the fire-fighters dispute rumbles on, despite desperate attempts by the Union bureaucrats to bring about a humiliating 'settlement' and deliberate morale weakening statements from the same.

At a Brighton Conference delegates voted to reject the 16% offer recommended by the executive and setting up the very real prospect of 'rebel strikes' once the War is over - clearly sticking two fingers up to the FBU chiefs whose mishandling of the dispute has highlighted the danger of relying on well-paid representatives to fight our battles - they've more in common with the bosses across the table than the workers.

## ARG UPDATE

THE ARGENTINEAN STATE continues its attack on the occupied factories and neighbourhood assemblies over there:

*"The sisters and brothers workers of Brukman have suffered another attack at the hands of the justice system, the government and the bosses. In a brutal police operation, with more than 250 police, attack vehicles, ... and the presence of infantry, our factory was evicted."*

*"During the last year and a half of occupation and production under workers' control, we workers demonstrate that we are the only ones interested in sustaining the workplace abandoned by the bosses. We have taken charge of the factory, we put it into production, we have been receiving a decent wage all these months and have even hired workers fired by the bosses. This has led to our receiving immense solidarity from the people of the capital and especially from the movement of popular assemblies, trade unions and other organizations of employed and unemployed workers."*

*"We call on all of them to stay rallied at the door of our factory. Since the first moments hundreds of brothers and sisters got here, now we are almost a thousand defending the factory. Here we will stay until we regain it."- Sister and brother workers of Brukman.*

As we go to press the workers of Brukman are fighting hundreds of police for control of the factory.

Meanwhile, the occupied space of Lezama Sur, home of the local community assembly and Indymedia, was evicted as part of a terror campaign against the occupied spaces in Buenos Aires - buildings taken over by activists and families for safe housing and cultural centres. The organisers inside the building were forced out by police but not detained.

The government is cracking down on protests and community projects to intimidate activists. The atmosphere of brutal police control seems to grow more intense daily. Almost everyday there are cases of police repression - worker controlled factory evictions, protesters being beaten, police blockades in the streets, and most frighteningly assembly members being kidnapped. In recent weeks the media has only sensationalized these acts.

## TIME BOMB

*Continuing our series on the history of workers' councils -the Polish Uprising 1956*

IN JUNE 1956, workers in Poznan, the main industrial city of west-central Poland rebelled. The city had been the epicentre of resistance to Prussian-German occupation in the nineteenth century, and historically had an experienced working class with a penchant for direct action.

The revolt began as an industrial protest: 15,000 workers at the Cegielski engineering plant demanded higher wages and the reversal of new production targets which they simply refused to meet. After a street demonstration on 28 June, there followed a day and night of riots with the security forces and the army -80 people lost their lives, and thousands were injured. According to one commentator:

*"The shock of Poznan heaved the whole Polish situation into crisis. At the base, Party membership began to dissolve. Party groups in the factories realised that of they did not start fighting for a better standard of living, they too could be caught between worker revolts and the guns of the Internal Security Corps'.*

Meanwhile workers at a car factory in Zeran organised themselves into councils that soon spread throughout the country. These councils were powerful centres of workers' control and the culmination of years of frustration with Party policy. Influenced by the Yugoslav example of workers' self-management at plant level, the workers' councils also claimed the right for workers to manage their own enterprises.

In July, a frightened Party decided to give legal recognition to the councils, but this merely served as a ploy to buy enough time to dismantle them at a later date. In October, the reformist Gomulka (who had been purged by Stalin) returned to the ranks of the Polish United Workers' party (PUWP) and defied the threat of invasion by Krushchev's forces just across the border.

As it turned out, Krushchev had nothing to worry about. In return for acceptance of Gomulka's leadership of the PUWP, Gomulka sold out the councils, overseeing, by 1958, their grinding down into purely economic bodies, a smokescreen where real power lay...in the hands of the Party elite.

Because of the AF's position on the Trade Unions, it is often alleged by those with an axe to grind against us, that we are purists based in an ivory tower as far as industrial strategy goes and that we "won't get our hands dirty" in the day to day struggle against the bosses in the workplace. This accusation however, tells us more about the lack of revolutionary thought and imagination in those who make such idiotic accusations.

They are quite right, in that we are not only critical of the unions but that we argue that the unions are nothing more than a tool of the capitalists, and the union bureaucrat is nothing more than the pimp of the labour movement, whose role it is to mediate with our masters and negotiate the rate - and maybe allow us a fair day's pay for a fair day's wage slavery. Yes, we see the unions as a barrier to the construction of any viable revolutionary consciousness and movement within the working class. And true, we believe that before we can get anywhere against the boss class, the trade union movement will need to be swept aside.

Yet at the same time, although I strongly hold the above views on the unions, I've always been a member of a union.

Now some readers might see this as a contradiction, but I would disagree. Look, as anarchists, we hope to one day see the abolition of the money and the wages system. This doesn't mean we give back our wage packets to the boss on a Friday because we don't like money. Similarly, when I'm out of work, I sign on the dole. I think the benefits system stinks and know full well it is a tool of the capitalists, and a warning to those in work to watch out, to keep your heads down or you'll end up on the dole as well, replaced by someone else off the dole queue.

For similar reasons, it's worth joining the union. Conditions are generally better in unionised shops than in non-unionised places. And yes, there's usually more freedom to speak out, agitate, organise, in unionised workplaces. But do we have to become good little trade unionists because of this? Of course not.

Although AF-ers join unions, we do NOT stand for positions in the union bureaucracy. I suspect many anarchists not already in the AF wouldn't disagree with this. Added to this, we in the AF are also sceptical of becoming shop stewards or union reps. And this scepticism of ours is often a problem for many non AF anarchists. (This however does not prevent our members from becoming shop-stewards if they so wish)

It shouldn't be. To be a good shop steward, you have to be able to REPRESENT your fellow workers and mediate with the boss (and the union) at the local level. Why revolutionaries should want to mediate with the boss (or union) is beyond me. Even if we did such a thing, then surely, as revolutionaries, how long do you think we'd be able to deal so antagonistically (and it should be antagonistic) with the boss before our fellow workers get edgy and decide they want someone a bit more "reasonable" or "compliant"... or before the boss decides the same, or realises it's high time to get shot of the nasty anarchist agitator.

So what do us AF-ers do then, when it comes to organising in the workplace?

I used to work at Hackney Council in London - before being made redundant with loads of others workers - and I'll outline some of the things I was involved in then. This should hopefully give the lie to all those revolutionary critics who seem to like to get their hands dirty while

mediating in some cosy meeting with management or the regional organiser.

I was a member of Hackney Unison for about four years. On at least three occasions, I was asked to "stand" for union rep of my section - knowing full well that

this would have meant my being elected unopposed. The reason I was so frequently asked to fulfill this role was because I was known as someone who was active, vocal, and it was also pretty well known that I was a member of the Anarchist Federation. During several

strikes, I was active in getting people out on strike, organising picket rotas, picketing, and on one occasion indulging in fisticuffs with scabs. I attended and participated in mass strike meetings, and often spoke from the platform on these occasions. My position at such meetings however was always ANTI-UNION, and I would call on people to be vigilant against the union hierarchy and leadership, and be ready for any attempts to sabotage the strike. Generally, the died in the wool bureaucrats and a few trots would be unhappy about this, and would try to cut my message short. On the whole however, this viewpoint would be fairly well received.

Our critics should note that in Hackney Unison hardly anyone failed to grasp my anti-union position. In fact many there were not unsympathetic. And these weren't politicians but pissed off workers who by and large belonged to no party or political group.

But as anarchists, we need to be spreading discontent and rebellion, fanning the flames of discontent. We should be organising outside of the union structures with other malcontents, and this is what I tried to do in Hackney - admittedly with only limited success. And in such a massive branch as Hackney Unison (which had several thousands of members), it was possible to work in this way, with other anarchists from the Solidarity Federation, ex-Class War and some non-aligned anarchists and malcontents. Yet in the end, the strike was lost, the union defeated and seriously weakened.

Had we won however, maybe we could have seen an increase of a new kind of workers' organisation, something like the idea of workplace resistance groups, which the AF advocates as part of its industrial strategy.

And to all our critics, I can only say this: come out of the trade union closet, and join us in organising some autonomous workplace resistance.

*(The writer is a member of Leicester AF)*



## BOMBARDIER BOMBS WORKERS

**MORE JOB LOSSES AT BOMBARDIER.** After downsizing 3000 workers onto the scrapheap in March, it predicted further cutbacks on expendable labour in April when revealing losses of £280m and a radical "action plan" to raise money and re-shape the company. Well, as long as the company is alright!

This month though it won itself an order worth £5 billion for up to 255 regional jets from U.S. airways. The planes arrive in June. Great news, eh?!

Well, not quite. Michael Ryan, general manager of Bombardier Aerospace in Belfast, said:

"While the news is welcome it will not result in additional jobs. It will help sustain current production rates, making the remaining jobs more secure, provided

we can improve our competitiveness."

So, no more jobs, and the jobs that remain are on shaky ground. After all, it all depends on how well Bombardier competes on the capitalist market, the vagaries of which no one understands, never mind predict. And if profits do start rolling in, a nice wee war will always hide the fact they're not!

A time for the unions to save the day, exercise a bit of industrial muscle?

Again, not quite. Instead Amicus union elite are meeting bosses to hammer out a package of 'cost savings' which the workforce can then put to a ballot...and so thanks to Amicus, workers who have lost their jobs, or will probably lose their jobs some time soon, have been negotiated out of the equation.

**INSIDE  
INFORMATION**

**SOLIDARITY WITH HAROLD H. THOMPSON APPEAL**

The Anarchist comrade Harold H. Thompson, who's been suffering in his ownflesh the Usan jails horror since 1979, has been devoting all his forces to help other prisoners with their trials and to lodge appeals on his own aswell to get so basic rights such as receiving political literature (banned in the Yankee prisons since the mid 80's) recognized for prisoners. His commitment has brought him the hatred and harassment from warders, prison officers and extreme right organizations as the Aryan Brotherhood, but nothing of this has succeeded in making him give up his solidarian labour up to now. However, the last blow the Tennessee Department of Corrections has struck him with has stopped totally his legal work. The Department has removed typewriters and word processors from the authorized

prisoners property list, which means they won't be able to have them repaired or substituted if they break down. Since no court circuit in the U\$A accepts handwritten documents, it's obvious this measure is intended just to prevent inmates from going on enjoying the autonomy they used to have to manage their trials- in another words, to make Usan prisoners still more imprisoned, as if it wasn't enough with all the things they must bear every day. Harold's word processor got broken down a short time ago, and due to this repressive measure, he can't go on with the trials, both his and of other inmates', he was taking, some of which could suppose the recovering of elementary rights for the Usan prisoners. Being things as they are, he and we his comrades have decided to raise a solidarity campaign to get this ban retired and thus help Harold to get another processor. One of the ideas we've had is sending protest letters as the one appearing below to the Tennessee Department of Corrections Commissioner. You can write

another one if you want to, but if you decide this, please avoid any expression that may seem threatening to them (you know how paranoid these Yankees are...) or that may point a finger directly on Harold.

If you want to write to Harold, do it to this address:

Harold H. Thompson  
#93992, Northwest Correctional Complex, Route 1 Box 660, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079, U\$A.

To get in touch with his support group, the address is:

FOHHT, 59 Alderson Crescent, Formby, Merseyside, L37 3LY, England.  
Give this message the biggest diffusion possible. UPWARDS AND ONWARDS!



**Subvert and resist**

Take precautions when going on demonstrations and don't take cameras, booze or drugs. If you're nicked give your name and address then say 'no comment' to any other questions.

**MAY:** Mark Barnsley Speaking Tour - prisoners survival and prison support - contact the campaign to help and organise an event in your town. JfMB, PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX, England. Email: markbarnsley@mail.com Tel: 07944 522 001

**JUNE: 28-1:** Anti-G8 summit, Evian in France. Visit: www.claaacg8.org. Anti-capitalist village, Visit: www.vaaag.org

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**Join the resistance**

The **Anarchist Federation** is an organisation of **class struggle** anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is **Anarchist Communism**.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the **ruling class** which controls all the power and wealth, and the **working class** which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the **direct action** of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the whole world, its destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it, such as working through parliament and national liberation movements, as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

**Organisation** is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above. Contact us at:

**Anarchist Federation,**  
PO Box 505 Belfast  
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