Labouring under illusions

THE LABOUR PARTY must be the most mis-named organisation in the world, equalled in that respect only by Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazis) and the “Communist” Party. From the moment of its birth, it has done as much to destroy the wellbeing of working class people as it has done to promote the interests of capitalism. Now, Tony Blair has taken this to new depths.

In support of an extreme right-wing American government, Blair has dragged us into a brutal conflict that has laid waste to an already poverty-stricken Iraq. There are spin-offs here in Britain: in the budget, £300 million has been allocated to countering the threat of “terrorism” (as defined by the British State, which has plenty of weapons of mass destruction, and has just been found guilty – officially – of supporting the loyalist murder of Republicans in Northern Ireland). The people in Britain are already one of the worlds most spied upon and now surveillance measures are to be dramatically increased. We will be watched and harassed even more.

Tony Blair’s Labour Party is the party of big business, greed, and hypocrisy. Millionaires have been falling over themselves to fund New Labour and you can bet that it is nothing to do with generosity. They want, and will receive, a pay-back for their investment.

Of course, the working class has always had to subsidise business. The very nature of employment requires that the workers who make the wealth only get a fraction of the wealth that they create. The rest goes to the bosses. Now, with a bloody war and its aftermath to pay for - £3 billion plus - the new increase in National Insurance contributions will do nicely.

By the way, avoid having a serious accident! Stocks of blood donated to the transfusion service have been prioritised for troops in Iraq, thanks to the government.

New Labour’s “Third Way” is nothing of the sort. Old Labour was in reality a third way between (private) capitalism and state-capitalism. New Labour is unashamedly pro private capitalist. An example of this cosy state/business relationship will be the huge profits private firms will make in the so-called public-private partnerships which are being promoted everywhere.

New Labour Gangsters

New Labour is being shown for the set of gangsters that they are – bashing strikers at home, and butchery abroad (an average of a war a year).

Regardless of their backgrounds, whether working class like Prescott or upper middle class like Blair, Labour is our enemy, they must be defeated by working class action in workplaces and the community, which does away with all bosses and governments permanently.

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.
THE DAY-TO-DAY class war has been continuing as normal, demonstrating the nonsense behind the idea that the country has united around the bosses in a time of war.

• More trouble for management in the Midlands car factories – MG Rover workers have overwhelmingly voted for strike action over the offer of a paltry 2.2% pay rise – in the same week that Chief Parasite – sorry, Chief Executive Kevin Howe was awarded a £500,000 bonus.

• 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're more in common with the bosses across the table than the workers.

• Wales & Borders, Central Trains, Virgin West Coast, Virgin Cross Country and Midland Mainline and ScotRail were all hit by strikes by guards and conductors over Easter (one of their most profitable weekends) over safety worries (the companies want a 'looser' safety-book to save money). Most of the lines were only able to operate less than 50% of their scheduled journeys and suffered financial losses probably in the millions.

• Hospital cleaners, porters and catering workers are on strike at hospitals in Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Goole in protest at receiving lower wages from the private sub-contractors (Carillion) than those directly employed by the NHS. These deliberate attempts at dividing workers and also increasing profits are increasingly common tactics by the NHS Trusts.

• There's serious trouble brewing for bosses in the state sector with teachers on the verge of their first national strike since 1994 if any jobs are lost because of the present funding crisis – caused by "Ministers making fundamental miscalculations to the education budget" with half a billion pounds gone "missing".

The prospect of a council workers strike is also looking likely if the government presses ahead with plans to end national pay bargaining.

EARLY THIS MONTH, council elections will take place throughout Britain as well as elections to the Scottish Parliament. Turn out at the polls has been lower than at national elections for many years. The chances are that mass disillusion with the electoral process will grow. This disenchantment may well be fuelled by recent events, when the Blair regime virtually ignored even token recognition of Parliament.

Despite this, some may decide to show their disgust with Labour by a vote for the Greens, or even the Lib Dems, as a result of anti-war sentiment.

At the same time, the fascists of the BNP will be standing a record number of candidates in the council elections, hoping to profit from an increasing disillusion with Labour within the working class.

In response to this disillusion which opens up a vacuum in British politics, and against the threat of the BNP, some groups have decided to run as left alternatives to Labour. This includes the Independent Working Class Association in various areas around England, and the Bristolian electoral alliance in Bristol. The latter appears to be an alliance of community activists, ex-Labour and ex-Liberal Democrats and radical liberals.

Some anarchists seem mesmerised by these electoral challenges to Labour, and appear to have lost their critical faculties. Some of these groups have highlighted the need to build effective community organisation within working class areas, especially in opposition to the fascists, who are trying out this tactic themselves. We heartily agree that now is the time to develop community organisation, to act locally – within a broad general strategy - to organise among tenants, to develop counter-organisation and self-organised welfare groups.

But there is no difference between a vote for a parliamentary candidate and a vote for a council candidate: the local state – as represented by councillors – is the same as the national state as represented by MPs. Organisation in the community should not mean a vote for an uncontrolled candidate but should involve the empowerment of all.

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 infantery, 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 sensationalised these acts.
IRAQI “FREEDOM”

OPERATION “IRAQI FREEDOM” has supposedly liberated Iraqi Arabs and Kurds. The trouble is, what is freedom and peace can this sort of war bring?

It was the creation of Iraq by colonial powers, their backing for Saddam against Iran, the war and sanctions when he stopped behaving as the US wanted and the blind-eye turned to the suffering of Kurds that has also been responsible for the misery of ordinary people. So this is a war not to right those wrongs but to improve the US economic and political influence in the oil-rich region. We all know this, and millions of people have told the UK and US governments “Not In Our Name”, but were still unable to stop it.

Meanwhile, now more US involvement is called for even by leaders who said they opposed the war, to “restore order”. The western and Iraqi middle classes patronisingly call looting unfortunate and misguided. In the space between repression and poverty under a tyrant and an equally uncertain future, it makes sense to take what you can and need. It is survival, not theft. Of course there are people acting against working class interests - the contract stealing of what should be common resources for personal profit. But government at the point of a gun has removed opportunities for more constructive self-organisation and community based solutions. This is what war - any statistic war - does. The rich and the brutal get richer and more brutal at the expense of the rest. The Iraqi working class doesn’t need US troops to impose order but peace to organise autonomously.

ANTI-WAR ACTION IN MANCHESTER

WHAT BEGAN AS a heavily controlled anti-war demo in Manchester (29.3.04) ended up as something completely different. And wasn’t it a lot more fun!

The march through Rusholme was supported strongly by passers-by, shopkeepers and drivers. The initial, well publicised, aim was to demonstrate outside the BBC, criticising them for their censored dishonest reporting of the Iraqi war. The crowd sat down and blocked the road.

We walked down to the Peace Camp...a large banner in the camp with “Fuck Capitalism” on it was ripped down by the cops and people started to get angry.

A quiet word went round to lead off down towards Market Street without the police. This is a pedestrianised area full of shoppers. Now also full of demonstrators, coppers and bloody massive police horses.

We were doing what we wanted – a little bit of mayhem in a normally hemmed in, consumer driven, Saturday afternoon. That was too much for them. You can’t let people see that they can do what they want and get away with it. Too dangerous. So now the cops started to get nastier.

Some people went down a side street which was really narrow. It was easily blocked off by the horses. The police corralled a group onto the grass. Loads of coppers, many with horses, kept the rest away, but inadvertently made a great amphitheatre for their production.

Significant numbers of people who had previously scoffed at the demo or not understood what the police were doing started to make connections.

Self organised action leads to much more thought and understanding all round and doesn’t half authority them off.

From Greater Manchester AF
Ray Gilbert
Seven debilitating long years beyond an initial tariff of 15 years black Liverpool prisoner Ray Gilbert still protests his innocence. They won't release him until he admits to the crime. How can he? Would you? A discussion forum to push Ray's case for freedom is to be held on Thursday, May 29, 8pm at Friends Meeting House, Pradise Street, Liverpool (opposite Holiday Inn). Come along in support of Ray if you can.

Prisoners of War against War
Bristol Prisoner of War Against War, Josh Richards is now out on bail. He sends his thanks to all those who wrote to support him and should be out until September. Don’t forget others still inside, including:

Philip Pritchard-J T5131
HMP Gloucester
Barracks Square
Gloucester GL1 2JN

Angie Zelter – Charged for trespassing onto a US air force base near nuclear capable F-15 Strike Eagle aircraft, for more info contact David on 01508 550 446.


Arthur Milling and Dr Margaret Jones will be in court on 23 May for cutting their way into Fairford airbase and causing £50,000 of damage to B52 support vehicles. More info: media@tridentploughshares.org.

Other peace prisoner info: www.peacenews.info and www.j-n-v.org/prisoners.htm
For Legal info check out www.gwi.org.uk/legal.htm

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. J MB, PO Box 381, Huddersfield, HD1 3XX, England. Email: markbarnsley@mail.com Tel: 07944 522 001
8: Disarm DSEI public meeting 7:30pm Venue: to be confirmed - Tel: 07817 652 029
17: 4th Manchester Radical Bookfair, 11am onwards-Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick St, Ancoats, Manchester. www.radicalbookfair.org.uk
7: Manchester Peoples’ Assembly, 1pm - 5pm, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, City Centre (behind Central Library). For more info Tel: 07986 305 320 or Email: peoplesassembly@manchesterstopthewar.org

New Wales AF Email Address: afedcyrmu@yahoo.co.uk

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

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

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

Organisation is vital if we’re to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations. The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above. Contact us at:

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

ACTION S IN HEREFORD
ON TUESDAY 15TH MARCH 20 people held a vigil outside the Magistrates Court in Hereford in solidarity with a member of the Herefordshire Anarchist Group who was on trial for walking in the road at an anti-war demonstration the week before. The member was released with an unconditional discharge.

The following day around 50 people met in Hereford city centre to protest against the war. Dispersing and then regrouping to evade police surveillance. The group then successfully blocked a main road outside the Armed Careers Office for an hour with police barely redirecting traffic. From Hereford AF (contact hereford@afed.cjb.net) ★

SUPPORT RESISTANCE
THOUSANDS OF COPIES of resistance are produced and distributed for free each month by the Anarchist Federation. We have no rich backers so if you like what you read please help us by sending a donation to the address below.

Support to resistance
I enclose £4 (£6 EU, £12 Rest of the world) for the next 12 issues of resistance bulletin (cheques payable to “AF”) and send to AF, PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey, GU21 2XL
I enclose £4 for a year’s subscription to Organise! the magazine of the AF.
I am interested in the Anarchist Federation and would like more information.

Name. ........................................................
Address. ....................................................

I enclose a donation of £.............................