THE PEOPLE OF South America have been betrayed by those they put their hope in to deliver real social change to their terribly impoverished living conditions. Their illusions that the popular leaders they gave office would bring them what they desired were dashed as it became clear that only the rich and powerful were being served (reminds you of Tony “Thatcher mark II” Blair, doesn’t it?). Just a few years back there seemed to be a lot of hope for the oppressed workers of that poverty-stricken continent. After decades of largely peaceful struggle many thought that they were about to achieve a breakthrough. In many countries the so called ‘leaders of the dispossessed’ were gaining office in government.

Venezuela was first, with the presidency of Hugo Chávez and the “Bolivarian revolution”. Then came Brazil, with Lula da Silva becoming prime minister, after nearly two decades of running, and losing, elections. Lastly, Evo Morales, the Bolivian leader of the cocaleros (coca-leaf growing peasants) and of the MAS (Movement Towards Socialism), who came second in the general elections. Many people thought that something was about to change.

Several years have passed since then, and we can now look back and take stock. Venezuela is a divided country, with a president that poses as the most stringent anti-imperialist, while making business with the same corporations that ran-sacked the country for its natural riches. All the money from the massive oil exports have ended up in the hands of American corporations, of which Enron is only one example. The relentless application of monetarist recipes for recovery has only plunged the country deeper into poverty.

In Brazil practically nothing has changed. Many were suspicious when Lula seemed favourite to win so early in the election. Soon they found out why. The secret deal he had brokered with bankers and international businessmen won him the position, and he dutifully began to apply the measures they advised. Cuts in welfare programs for the working class, cuts in taxes for the rich… Again, disappointment.

In Bolivia, after the so-called gas wars, Morales started backing the new government with it’s neoliberal policies, to the frustration of the peasants - who kicked him out of the COB general union in mid July.

There is a common thread running throughout these diverse experiences. The working class backs a leader to parliament, builds up a mass movement directed by a party, places the bloke in office ... only to discover that they are to be traded for a bigger share of power. The problem is not in backing one or another politician, or backing this party rather than that. The problem is in accepting leaders, and believing that parliamentary politics is going to bring about any meaningful change.

It is about time that we ordinary people started to organise ourselves collectively without leaders, using delegates rather than representatives. Many of us are already doing just that and we can learn from each others’ struggles. In Latin America, as much as here.
This strike is over crap pay and conditions. The dispute is over a pay freeze disguised as a reasonable pay increase and also the exactly the same salami chopping tactics to divide the workforce against each other as above - tactics that BAs management have become very skilled at during the cut-backs of the last few years. These are the same workers who managed to shut down the airports in a mass wildcat last year, so we already know they’re prepared to put up a fight to maintain their conditions.

The fire-fighters might be coming out again as well, as they’re still in dispute over their promised pay-raise, but with management still withholding the money.

Workers at Scotland’s largest whiskey bottling plant (which produces Famous Grouse) are striking over a pay row - they are in a particularly strong position as each day of strike action costs the company £7 million - 94% of the workforce voted to support the action, so this could develop into a rather bitter little conflict.

WHO KILLED SHEFFIELD JOHN?

A TEENAGE WORKER has died after being buried under tons of rubble on a construction site in Sheffield. Eighteen year old John Morton was suffocated under rubble when a ten foot deep trench collapsed on top of him. A co-worker, Dan Thompson, suffered multiple injuries. Firefighters had to haul away mountains of shale, bricks and stones to get to them, but too late. The ‘accident’ is now being investigated by the police and the Health and Safety Executive. The safety record of construction firm TG Beighton Ltd - who made no comment - is under scrutiny.

In incidents like this - all too common, unfortunately - the word ‘accident’ is both overused and often just plain wrong. Unskilled, inexperienced - and therefore cheap - youngsters frequently work at the outer edges of safety and are often sent into dangerous situations because more experienced workers won’t go there. Such refusals are the last line of defence for workers. The company health and safety reps turn a blind eye on danger, union reps are rarely seen on sight and shop stewards sacked as soon as they question working methods. Workers who know the danger do sometimes refuse to do the work but only get away with it because the developer wants his profit and won’t risk a walk-out or delays. Teenage workers who don’t are the ones who pay the price in crippling injuries or - in John’s case - a horrible death, with choked mouth and crushed limbs.

The sad fact is that such deaths are becoming more common, not less, as time and money - not safety or sound construction - rule the building sites. But construction firms are rarely blamed and almost never prosecuted, except in really blatant cases. Laws and union lobbying have not changed a thing in fifty years. Its time for building workers to take their workplaces back, and that means getting organised around the real issue: will they be alive when its time to knock off? Or will they be just another statistic and a time-consuming insurance claim at corporate HQ?

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MANCHESTER ANARCHIST FEDERATION went to a picket outside Marks and Spencer in the city centre on 24th July. The pro-Palestinian Victory to the Intifada (VI) has picketed every Saturday for the past three years. They chose M&S because of its financial support for the Israeli State. A few weeks before, Likud (right wing Israeli Zionist party) began an aggressive counter picket. If we had not known, we would have thought Likud were fascists from the British National Party or Combat 18.

VI have adopted a policy of not talking to Likud, not wishing to be involved in violence and knowing that M&S would use this as an excuse to slap Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) on them. Amongst the Zionist group were big, aggressive men resembling football thugs hiding behind baseball caps and high-buttoned jackets.

Their role was to provoke VI through racist and homophobic insults. ASBOs would suit them just fine. Also present were ordinary Jewish people with their sons. Few Zionist women were there. The kids handed out leaflets referring to the ‘apartheid state’ or ‘apartheid with the middle class’ and anti-British. Little kids handed out leaflets referring to the “apartheid state” or “apartheid with the middle class” and anti-British.

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ON JUNE 28th, protesters successfully disrupted George Bush’s visit to Ireland at Shannon airport. A participant writes...

We assemble at the peace camp at the Clonmany fly-over, the head of the march formed by the Mid-west Against Military Aggression banner, next a cluster of red and black flags, and alas but a solitary green and black.

Heading off up the open road with energy and enthusiasm, a zeal tempered with only a little trepidation, the stock of hooters recently acquired from Catalonia added a celebratory cacophony to the chants of ‘Whose Streets? Our Streets!’.

As we advance up the Dual Carriageway a desultory attempt is made to stop us, police hurriedly erecting a steel crowd control barrier. A few people run to its sides, a few more run to it and hop over, or push it aside, and we are through, the path cleared for the main body of protesters.

As we approach the junction and flyover of the section of road reserved for the leaders of the free world, a more serious attempt at blocking our path is made.

About one hundred riot cops sealed off both lanes of the road.

The Prime Time special live from Drumoland showed the American press corps running to take their seats, and this was the headline news across the United States i.e. protesters delay summit press conference, with mentions elsewhere, e.g. Lebanon, Turkey, Mexico, Portugal.

Now as riot police resolutely blocked our path, as had previously been agreed it was time to find an alternative route.

We turn; head back in the direction from whence we had came, back towards the peace camp.

At Ballycasey Beg, we turn and go cross country through wasteland at the rear of the industrial estate at Smithstown, and reaching a Lufthansa building ran straight into two Irish Army armoured cars. Breaking through the so-called “security cordon”.

Refusing to be intimidated by armour or lines of balacava clad riot cops, the mood was festive and celebratory as well as defiant. We expressed our feelings about the ridiculous coercive apparatus unveiled by the Irish state by surrounding and blockading the two armoured cars. It was probably the best demonstration in Shannon since the mass trespass on October 12th 2002, or perhaps even the best.

The extent of popular support that the protesters had restrained the police and army, forcing them to adopt a softly-softly approach. The action worked because it wasn't planned or organised by a small group of people, but was a product of many groups who were able to respond creatively and dynamically as the situation changed.

Finally the 3 people in a boat, who breached the security cordon according to Garda, plus the woman who was to play Lady Macbeth and was arrested on a harassment charge, as well as one person arrested on Friday night in unclear circumstances, all these people will need support. Our naval unit makes it’s appearance on 3rd of September in Ennis courthouse.

PORT TRUCKERS ACROSS the US have been taking direct action in response to declining conditions. Spikes in fuel costs, together with generally worsening conditions as truck brokers undercut each other - passing the losses onto the owner/operator drivers - drove truckers in Los Angeles to blockade freeways during the early morning commute on April 30th. This inspired other truckers to picket shipping lines at the ports of Stockton and Oakland. The Oakland picket lasted eight days until the port authority obtained a court injunction which intimidated the truckers from blocking the main gate of American President Lines.

The State’s latest tactic has been to pick three of the de-facto Oakland leaders and charge them with disruption. A nationwide event was planned to start on June 28th, calling on Non-Troqueres to picket- “Economic torture can be used by the workers as well... The Oakland 3 are victims of economic imprisonment, a state of the art tool to keep workers from organising”.

COUNCIL TENANTS LIVING in a tower block in Stockport are opposing recent “upgrading” of their security system which, along with the installation of extra CCTV cameras, has also seen the introduction of “electronic PAC fobs” in replacement of the old key system. The use of these swipe-keys to gain entry to the building is closely monitored, providing security with information on exactly who is in and out, and when the flat is empty.

All visitors and tenants will now be monitored, as they now have to gain access through security.

One tenant has already had their fob blocked for dropping it out of their window to a visiting relative. Tenants are fighting back against the system by swapping fobs with other tenants on their block on a regular basis, so as to preserve access but disrupt the monitoring of their movements by the council security guards. This new system isn’t exclusive to this area, and other tenants experiencing the same invasion of privacy are encouraged to follow a similar line of action.

For more information, contact mrwinstonsmith@msn.com

AM-BUSH-ED!!
War resisters released

Five young men imprisoned in Israel for refusing to kill for the state, are to be released on September 15th. A military committee has recognised their substantial support for other inmates, and been forced to acknowledge that they are committed conscientious objectors.

The Refusers Parents’ Forum wishes to express gratitude for support received, as it undoubtedly contributed to the decision to reduce their sentence by a quarter. A public campaign will commence shortly, as they need continuing support.

For more information visit: www.refuz.org.il

UK Prisoners

James Borek

James Borek

James Borek

James Borek

James Borek

LL6803, HMP Blundeston, D-108, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5BG

James Borek

Suffolk, NR32 5BG

Sentenced in January 2004 to four and a half years for injuring a cop during the June 18th 1999 “Carnival against Capital” riot in London’s financial district.

John Bowden

6729, HMP Glenochil, King O’ Muir Road, Tollibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 3AD

Long time prison resister.

Keith Pringle

CB0078, HMP Whitemoor, March, Cambs, PE15 0PR

Keith has been inside for 11 years and continually harrassed for standing up for himself and other prisoners, rioting, dirty protests, and general disobedience. Recently fitted up for threatening to kill a screw landing him with another 3 years just when he was due for release.

European Prisoners

There’s a steady stream of reports of extensive repression from Italy. Ecological anarchists, squatters and ALF activists are more and more active, but are also facing more arrests, raids and random fit-ups.

The following five anarchists were accused of belonging to a fictional armed anarchist organisation, and fitted up by the infamous prosecutor Marini in a trial ending on April 20th, 2004.

Gregororian Garagin, Via G. Leopardi 2, 61034, Fossombrone (PU), Italy (sentenced to 30 years)

Francesco Porcu, Via provinciale San Biagio, 81030 Carinola (CE), Italy (sentenced to life)

Carlo Tesser, c.c. La Dozza, Via del gomito, 2, 40100 Bologna, Italy (sentenced to 3 years 10 months)

Alfredo Maria Bonanno, Via Papiniano 1, 34133 Trieste, Italy (sentenced to 6 years)

Tagged

Seventy asylum seekers in Scotland are guinea pigs in a pilot scheme in electronic tagging.

They will be tracked by satellites. The Home Office say they will be able to pinpoint which side of the street a person is walking down. The government have plans for three contracts in England and Wales, and one in Scotland, which aim ultimately to cover 18,000 asylum seekers. Entire families fleeing persecution could land here, only to be tagged - further victimising people already at rock bottom.

For more prisoner information, please contact the Anarchist Black Cross at www.brightonabc.org.uk ★

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.

Join the resistance

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

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

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

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

The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world outlined above. Contact us at: Anarchist Federation, 84B, Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QX: Tel: 07946 214 590 Visit: www.afed.org.uk Email: info@afed.org.uk