

RESISTANCE

anarchist paper
No. 116

October 2009
Free/Donation

The war in Afghanistan - what are we fighting for?

Anarchists oppose the war in Afghanistan. We don't do this because we are pacifists. We believe it is often necessary to defend yourself. We oppose the war because it is not being fought to protect our streets but for

money and power.

If one lie doesn't work...

The excuse for the war was the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11th 2001. George Bush promised a War on Terror

that would root out the terrorists and make our cities safe. Since then, about 251 times as many people have been killed in Afghanistan and Iraq than in those horrific

Continued Inside ►

Solidarity with the Calais Migrants

The eviction of the Migrants' camp in Calais known as "the jungle" has seen a chorus of protest from different parts of the political spectrum. For human rights groups, the destruction of the camp was worthy of condemnation because human beings were being "treated like animals." For right-wing papers like the Daily Mail, the problem was that now the hated camp they have raved about for years is

Continued Inside ►



Inside: Tower Hamlets College Strike, DSEI, English Defence League, and more!

► Continued from cover

attacks.¹ Each week brings news of more soldiers dying in the effort to defeat the Taliban. The number of Afghan casualties is colossal – at least 20,000 dead and 50,000 injured.

It soon became clear that the War on Terror was a cover story to expand American power and to grab Iraq's oil fields. Having done that, the main war effort shifted to Afghanistan. This time we were told it was to protect democracy, to improve the rights of women and stop the flow of heroin to the West.

Drugs, votes and women

The reality is different. The Afghan government is run by drug cartels. The recent election was fixed. Votes were bought and sold for \$20 a time. Ballot boxes were filled with fake votes. Women were forced to stay at home while their husbands and fathers sold their votes to the highest bidder.² Both sides in the war, government and Taliban, finance their armies and rule with drug money. Women's rights are now worse under Karzai's government than before – new laws allow husbands to legally rape their wives.

1. <http://www.unknownnews.net/casualties.html>

2. The Guardian, 19th September.

To make this war possible, young British men and women from working class families are flown half way around the world. There, they fight and die – over 200 so far, with almost 2000 wounded this year alone. Every week we hear of more being killed, along with horrific, botched attacks on the Taliban which result in hundreds of Afghan deaths and other casualties. Denied proper press coverage, we can only begin to picture the horror of the war.

Oil, gas and power

So why are the troops really there? What is the war about? To understand the reasons behind it it helps to look at a map and see who Afghanistan's neighbours are. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have huge oil and gas fields. Afghanistan's other major neighbours are China and Iran. Turkmenistan contains the world's fourth largest reserves of natural gas, but it is completely landlocked.³ Uzbekistan is the world's 8th largest producer of gas. Controlling Afghanistan would give the USA a route for new pipelines to export this gas.⁴ The alternative is that it goes through Russia or China.

3. <http://www1.american.edu/ted/turkmen.htm>

4. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/uzbek-energy.htm>

Trading partners they may be, but the USA and China are fierce rivals too. Holding Afghanistan keeps China at arm's length from the oil and gas rich states and from Pakistan. Building pipelines for gas and oil also prevents the near total domination of gas supplies that will otherwise fall under Russia's control.

Once again war is really about controlling natural resources. We all know this is why Iraq was invaded. The death and suffering in Afghanistan are to maintain the profitability of the big oil and gas companies and also to ensure the continuing domination of the world by the USA.

A different way?

Like in all wars it is never the rich and powerful who fight and die. It is working class men and women and poor peasants and villagers who suffer. Anarchists believe that the answer to this is for us to get rid of the profit system which benefits only those in charge. We believe that in a world controlled by people where they live, working for themselves and not for the state or the rich, that poverty can be eliminated and war will become a thing of the past. Making that kind of change will not come about by going on marches or signing petitions, it will need a social revolution by working people. We urge you to join with us in making this happen.

► Continued from cover

being pulled down the migrants have to go somewhere, and that might well be Britain!

The attack on the camp comes after the French Immigration Minister Eric Besson declared that Calais was to become a "migrant free zone." He has been lent support by his British counterpart, Phil Woolas, who has claimed that the very fact that these migrants are in Calais shows that they are not genuine - as migrants are supposed to seek asylum in the first "safe" country they reach.

Many of the migrants are Afghans, fleeing the chaos of the country as the ongoing war between NATO troops and insurgents grinds on. Though many are just looking for a better, less dangerous life in the same way any of us would if we were in the same situation, it would make sense to assume that one of the countries which has brought war to your home country, compounding its status as one of the most dangerous in the world, might have some responsibility for their welfare. This, unfortunately, is naive, Afghanistan has been declared 'safe' like the most dangerous country in the world, Iraq, for propaganda reasons.

The French state is offering to "help" the migrants back to their country of origin, or help them make an asylum claim. This is being presented as a reasonable deal, indeed, the French government has changed emphasis and is now portraying itself as saving the migrants from people smugglers. This "help" means that the migrants have the option of seeking asylum in the first country they reached, or being deported. This means that many will have to claim asylum in Greece, a country where 99.6% of claims are turned down, where an asylum camp was recently burned to the ground, where racist brutality against immigrants is common, and where police and neo-nazi gangs act in unison in attacking immigrants.

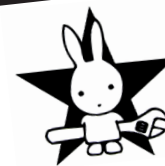
Whether it's jobs, homes or public services, immigrants are taking the blame for a system centred on profits, not needs. We must stand against the scapegoating of immigrants for the problems of capitalism, and its brutal results, such as this raid.

Foreign secretary David Milliband has argued about the importance of winning in Afghanistan for Western democracy. Troop levels have been increased accordingly. The majority of British people however support withdrawing some or all troops from Afghanistan.



On the Front Line

workplace roundup



Workers have borne the brunt of the recession. Unemployment is rising to near record levels. Workers across the economy have reluctantly agreed to pay freezes and cuts in hours. Perhaps not surprisingly the last year has seen the number days lost to industrial action fall close to historic lows. Now though there are signs that the economy is beginning to turn the corner. Despite this assault on workers' jobs and conditions by the bosses and the state continue unabated.

Union leaders have shown how little they have to offer; cosy-ing around Gordon Brown at Chequers, as they did just before TUC Congress last month; pouring millions into Labour's coffers just as the party announces it is going to cut public sector jobs; or proposing the creation of yet another new workers party (thanks Bob Crow, that's just what we need!). Despite this, there are encouraging signs that workers are willing to fight back.

Royal Mail Strikes

In response to threats to jobs, hours and pay postal workers are gearing up for the first national postal dispute in two years. Actions so far in sorting offices, which have included sit-ins, has seen some 20 million letters being undelivered. In the words of the CWU, "Royal Mail's head-in-the-

sand attitude to the problems in our industry is now severely damaging service for customers - with backlogs bigger than in the national strike of 2007."

Black Country: Anti-racist strike

Elsewhere workers at a Black Country food-processing firm are hailing the success of an unofficial walkout, forcing management to sack a security guard accused of making racist comments and to come to the negotiating table. More than 100 staff at Smethwick-based Two Sisters Foods staged a wildcat strike and police were called as their protest threatened to get out of hand.

There were a further demonstration outside the firm's premises in Bevan Way before bosses agreed to meet senior officials from trade union Unite.

Anti-PFI Victory

Unison members at a hospital in Yorkshire are also celebrating success as threatened industrial action led to employers backing down on threatened changes to terms and conditions. As part of the new PFI hospitals project in Wakefield & Pontefract, Mid Yorkshire NHS Hospitals Trust managers connived with the contractor Balfour Beatty (BB) to draw up new Job Descriptions for hospital support staff,

who would be transferring to the PFI hospital. Despite protests from UNISON and Unite the Trust and BB refused to negotiate any changes to terms and conditions with the staff concerned, saying they were "new jobs" which did not need to be agreed with the staff side. In a ballot 94% of the affected workers voted for industrial action. The result? Management backed down.

Action at the National Grid

Gas workers in Newcastle struck last month over National Grid bosses' decision to make mass sackings and consider outsourcing. 100 per cent of the 181 shared services staff at the city site, who stand at risk of joining the dole queue, voted in favour of industrial action. The strikes may be set to spread, as staff at offices in Warwick and Northampton, which also face being hit, are among 2,500 other National Grid members who voted 40 to one in support of the action in a ballot.

Refuse workers refuse to work

Leeds City Council plans to cut the wages of refuse workers by one third - on average from £18,000 to just £13,000 a year. Not surprisingly UNISON and the GMB members have re-

sponded by taking strike action after the Council refused to negotiate any alternative to these massive pay cuts. The union said of the proposed cuts, "if they were imposed on our members, hundreds of workers and their families would lose their homes."

Whatever happens at the next election it will business as usual for bosses as they try to drive down pay and cut jobs. Workers are beginning to show that they are not willing to stand for this. The current wave of strike action, sit-ins and occupations need to be built on. And while union support for industrial action is to be welcomed, union bosses will need to be watched carefully to make sure they do not stifle this growing militancy.



Read more news
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Smash the English Defence League!

A group calling themselves the English Defence League (EDL) have recently started a national tour of the UK, protesting in major cities and declaring their opposition to "Terrorists and Sharia". They have already visited Whitechapel, Wood Green, and Luton, and they like Birmingham so much that they have pitched up in the city centre three times. Where they have mobilised, it has been clear that despite their rhetoric about being nothing more than concerned, patriotic individuals, mobilising against Muslim extremism, they are an exclusively white mixture of football hooligans, drunken thugs and fascists. And when fascists feel confident enough to march through our streets, it is certainly a fact that the anti-fascist movement here in the UK is in a sorry state.

Though the EDL have been very keen to distance themselves from more overt fascist organisations such as the British National Party (BNP), this denial would of course be much more convincing if they didn't share the same hate-filled politics.

Recently EDL ring-leader (should that be 'zoo-keeper?') Paul Ray made clear the EDL's true intentions when he spoke of their "opposition to all Muslims

practising their faith in Britain." This is not the first time Ray has spoken out against Muslims, having earlier appeared on American radio speaking of his opposition to "paki muslims" - a phrase he chooses not to use when speaking on behalf of the EDL.

Fascists have long been known for their lack of intelligence, and in true form the EDL are no different. Although they deny any links to fascism, their nazi-salutes at demos, their attacks on anti-fascist campaigners and their chants of "no more mosques" and "we hate pakis more than you" leave no-one fooled. And if further proof were needed of the EDL's fascist roots, their web designer is none other than BNP activist Chris Renton. But even if this was not the case, a street-based nationalist group existing to defend Britain's supposed Christian identity, and whipping up hostility to Muslims must be opposed.

All anti-fascists should mobilise against fascism in our streets and couple this with a message that immigrants, Muslims and all other scapegoated sections of society should not be blamed for the short-comings of capitalism.

The EDL have announced plans to demonstrate in Manchester

city centre on October the 10th and Leeds on the 31st at 1pm. The EDL will no doubt be planning more demonstrations after this, so keep an eye out for updates on their website. We encourage all anti-fascists to make it clear that we won't accept racism wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head.

EDF HUMILIATED IN HARROW

After the sight of groups like Unite Against Fascism claiming that the banning of all marches and demonstrations in Luton following EDL activity - anti-fascist ones included - was a great victory, the people of Harrow showed how to deal with fascism in fine style.

After the EDL announced a demonstration against a mosque in Harrow last month, thousands of mostly Asian counter-protestors turned up with the intention of kicking them out. The few dozen fascists who turned up were unable to do anything but hide in a pub, as the locals outflanked the police and controlled the streets.



The EDL's street-based politics have seen an angry street-based response, usually led by the black and asian youths they target.

Carlos Presente!

Trial over anti-fascist's murder begins

A comrade in Spain reports:

Around 10,000 antifascists demonstrated on Saturday 12th of September in Madrid, two days before the trial of the neo-Nazi who murdered Carlos Palomino was due to begin. Carlos was 16 when he was stabbed in the heart in November 2007 while making his way to an antifa rally. The demonstration paid tribute to the youngster on the street where he was killed. At the opening hearing, the Nazi claimed that he acted in self-defense, despite the evidence against him, including underground CCTV footage which showed him stabbing the unarmed Carlos.

Thank you to all those in London who attended the rally called by Afed and Antifa a few days after the murder took place. We are determined to continue his struggle and eradicate racism and fascism from our streets. No Pasaran!



Carlos Palomino

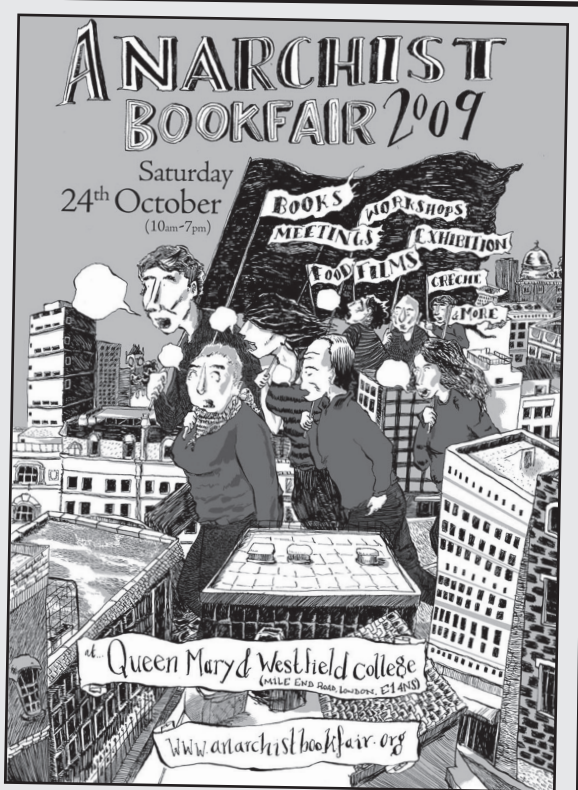
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Nepalese Maoists to ban strikes

Maoists who recently swept to power in Nepal have passed laws restricting workers' action in their proposed Special Economic Zones. They are now planning a national ban on strikes in Nepal. They say that they are doing this because they must attract foreign investment. Under these proposals workers would be able to join unions, but would not be allowed to take any action that would disrupt production or "normal industrial operations". In April the Maoist finance minister told Nepal's International Chamber of Commerce that street protests and demonstrations as well as strikes would be forbidden.

So goodbye to any pretence that these people were ever any friend to workers and peasants.

It's Good To Talk: Giving Arms Dealers an Earful

From the 8-11th September, arms dealers (and government representatives) from all over the world converged on London for the "Defence Systems & Equipment International" (DSEI) - the world's largest arms fair. And, as in previous years, their presence provoked a healthy upsurge of anti-capitalist and anti-war anger. This year, in keeping with the growing distrust and resentment of the global financial system, and recognising how the arms trade is linked in with every other aspect of capitalism, militant anti-arms group Disarm DSEI called for a demo in the heart of the City of London, targetting firms with investments in the arms trade.

In a marked contrast to previous protests, the police were on their best behaviour, having clearly been warned to avoid anything that might lead to yet more bad publicity for them. We can't say how long this will last, but we would urge everyone to make the most of it while they can. Thanks to the laid-back policing, demonstrators had direct access to their targets, so Legal & General (who have £795m in the UK arms industry

and £2199m in the global arms trade) had their headquarters redecorated with messages such as "Stop profit from death" and "A single non-revolutionary weekend is infinitely bloodier than an entire month of permanent revolution". More impressively still, British Telecom (who have nearly £59 million in the arms trade) were unprepared enough that protesters, complete with banners and sound system, actually managed to pile into their headquarters. It may well have been the first time that the red and black flag of anarchist communism was raised inside BT HQ, but we hope it won't be the last. A few other investors were also visited, but the last major stop on the tour was at the investment managers AXA (who have £6207 million in arms), who weren't so willing to allow visitors in, and ended up getting their revolving door smashed in for their lack of hospitality.

Protests continued throughout the week, so that despite a last-minute change of location, a special dinner for war profiteers at the Park Lane Hilton on the Thursday still attracted a noisy and disruptive presence outside

it. Perhaps due to the fact that there were so many delegates actually there, the police were considerably more aggressive on this occasion, with 10 people arrested for breaching the Public Order Act.

Overall, the event was very positive - the police evidently feel unable to control and repress dissent the way they're used to, so the actual targets of the protest took a battering,

instead of everyone having to focus their energy on resisting the police. And the focus of the Disarm DSEI protest showed a strong awareness that the problem isn't just a few dodgy firms - it's the insanity of the entire capitalist system, where the logic of the market can make investing huge amounts of resources in death and destruction seem like a reasonable decision.



Tower Hamlets ESOL workers all out

Following the emergence of management plans to make job and course cuts at Tower Hamlets College in London, workers there have undertaken indefinite strike action with the support of the local community, fellow workers, and activists from around the city.

Tower Hamlets college lies at the centre of the local community; the 'access' courses it provides are a vital route for many working class people into further education, while its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are of great importance in aiding migrants pick up the skills they need to find their way in Britain. Tower Hamlets is a hub for Bangladeshi migrants, possessing a longstanding Bangladeshi population which makes it a destination for new arrivals. As a result the college's ESOL courses are very popular, mostly with female working class migrants.

Unsurprisingly, management plans to axe staff and course numbers have been met with outrage from workers and locals. 13 jobs are earmarked for compulsory redundancy, while another 40 are lined up for the axe. At the same time, college bosses want to hire another 15 managers. On top of all this, 1,000 places on ESOL courses are to be cut.

Workers have responded bravely, beginning indefinite strike action. Such action is rare in the UK, where discontent is more often channelled into setpiece one-day stoppages by unions. The ESOL workers have been making use of mass meetings to thrash out strategy, a vital tactic in keeping control of struggles in the hands of the workers concerned rather than union bureaucrats. Daily strike committee meetings have been similarly important, and workers have shown their willingness to flout anti-strike laws and take unofficial action.

The strike has caused significant problems for the college. Enrolment hasn't been completed on time, and classes are grinding to a halt. Posties are refusing to cross pickets, and affected sites aren't receiving mail. The workers have sought and received support from the wider community and students, and have emphasised the effects of the cuts on the local area. They have also shown creativity and enthusiasm in their action, even forming a band (the UCU all-stars)!

Anarchists have supported the struggle, visiting pickets and attempting to spread the struggle into their own workplaces. The London Education Workers Group, which exists to co-ordinate activity between anarchists and libertarian communists in the education sector has circulated a leaflet on the struggle, and has undertaken other valuable solidarity work, such as fundraising. We reproduce the leaflet here, as it offers valuable analysis.

Victory to the Tower Hamlets strikers!

Solidarity with Tower Hamlets ESOL workers!

The recession may be over if some reports in the press are to be believed, but on the ground the cuts are still coming in thick and fast. Not surprisingly, the Labour government on their sinking ship are scrambling for the lifeboats. With cuts planned across the public sector and especially in further education it's clear they're happy to push the rest of us into the icy waters below.

The defence of jobs and student places (especially on the vitally important English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses) at Tower Hamlets College is certainly important in its own right. However, this strike is not just about one college. Its clear management thought they could target an isolated workforce but have been met by workers with strong resolve, backed by the community and other workers in the area. This last point is key.

The cuts in question here are only one part out of the millions of pounds being taken away from further and higher education. The most important thing is to continue spreading the struggle, to continue getting support and solidarity from other colleges facing cuts and anyone else next in the firing line.

Part of this means going beyond the boundaries set by membership of different unions and professions. Having meetings open to all staff regardless of union affiliation increases our strength as workers and keeps actions under our control. We must seek out each other's support, even if that means not waiting for the unions to make those links for us and doing it ourselves.

The Tower Hamlets strikers have set a fantastic example for the rest of us in education to follow. Through their direct action and solidarity they have shown Michael Farley and all those seeking to make cuts in education that we will not go down without a fight.

-London Education Workers Group



We in the Anarchist Federation have strongly pushed for more effective organisation within the British anarchist movement ever since we were set up in 1985. Our own organisation has grown quite considerably over the last year or so, but we aim this article at other anarchists in the movement who are either thinking of committing to joining a national organisation but have not as yet done so and those who do not see the benefits of such a national organisation.

Alternatives frequently offered to the national organisation are 1. local groups and 2. networking, that is, relying on loose networks that come together over specific issues or campaigns.

We in the AF have never been opposed to the setting up of local anarchist groups. In fact we see the putting down of roots in the local neighbourhood and workplaces as vitally important. Within the AF we strive to be involved in local activity and local issues as much as possible. However we do not subscribe to the idea put forward by some advocates of such groups that on their own local groups are enough for a vibrant anarchist movement. We often need to respond to attacks from the bosses and the State on a national level and that's one good reason why we need national organisations. Some advocates of the local group idea are not completely opposed to the setting up of national organisations but they say that it must come from the coordination and coming together of local groups on a regional and national level. Whilst we in the AF support all efforts for greater effectiveness either regionally or nationally, we have to confess that we have not yet seen such a process coming about. National organisations and strong local groups are not incompatible, they should be part of the same process. Too often local groups with no connection to national structures can emerge in an area and then disappear followed by the appearance in the same area of another one later on, with no reference to the previous activity and history of groups that came before. Having a national perspective does not mean that this won't happen again, but at least a national structure can ensure some continuity in terms of local contacts and the memory of what local groups had done before.

Similarly with networking. Whilst some networking has been effective, all too often, thanks to the lack of structures that ensure maximum and equal participation of its members, decision making and control of such networks are taken by informal hierarchies. There is not necessarily any permanence to such networks, with them coming and going, appearing and disappearing, just like local groups can.



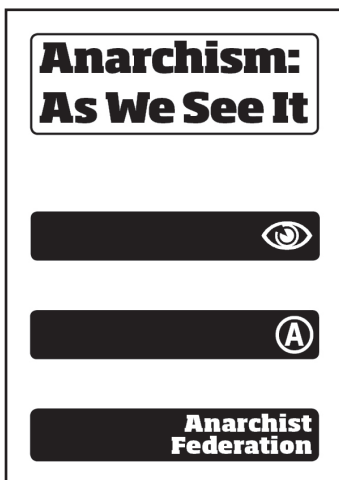
We don't think that the liberation of the working class, and through it the liberation of humanity as a whole, will come about on a purely spontaneous level. The road to revolution has not yet been built. It will come about through the development of a mass movement. That does not remove the need for specific organisations. The role such an organisation can play is not one of making the revolution on behalf of the masses, of being the single and centralised instrument of the revolution. It is above all an assembly of activists who seek to work within struggles and movements. It seeks to act as a memory for the working class, searching out and recalling the history of past struggles, and attempting to draw the lessons to be learned from their successes and failures. One of its functions should be to act as a propaganda grouping, ceaselessly and untiringly putting over a revolutionary message. It acts as a liaison for its militants, conveying information both here and abroad. It acts as a place for debate for militants, where ideas and experiences can be synthesised. By offering this place for debate, it counters localism, and fixation on single issues. It puts into practice its own strategies. It fights for the independence of struggles, for their self-organisation, against their co-option by reformism and electoralism. It puts forward initiatives for practical

unity and debate wherever possible. Defending the independence and self-organisation of mass movements does not mean that the revolutionary organisation does not seek to spread its ideas in these movements.

More than ever we need a strong and effective anarchist movement in this country ready to take part in the struggles that must come as capitalism in crisis attempts to impose its austerity programmes and cuts on our class and try to make us pay for its own crisis. This cannot come about through a loose and badly organised movement. It has to come about through greater and greater coordination and organisation where anarchists can more effectively coordinate, act and strike together against the enemy.

We urge all anarchists to seriously think of joining a national anarchist organisation. Obviously we would like that choice to be the Anarchist Federation. However we are aware that some anarchists might have different emphases and points of view and might be attracted to another national organisation like, for example, the Solidarity Federation. Whatever the choice, think seriously about making that commitment. More and more we need to be seen as a serious movement, one that can begin to grow and to fight back against the many attacks that have come and will come upon the working class. Organise!

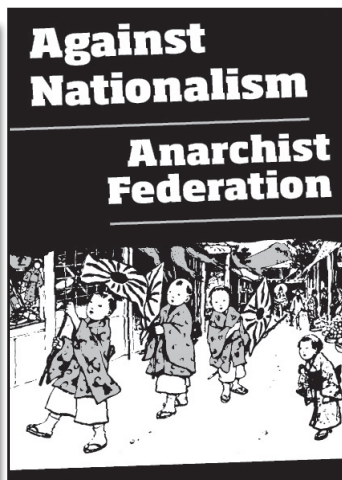
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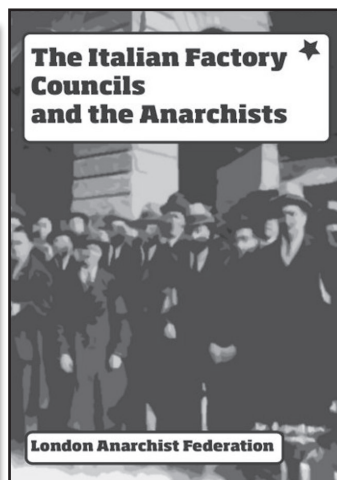
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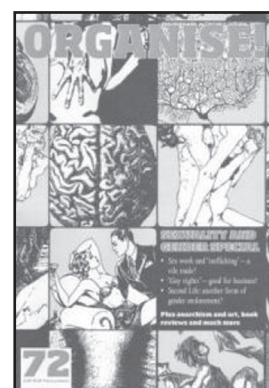
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The latest issue, #72, is a gender and sexuality special, with articles on sex work, 'gay rights' & business, neuromyths & neurosexism and much more besides.

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The **Anarchist Federation** is a growing organisation of class struggle anarchists which aims 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.

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