

Against War and Terrorism

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Anarchist writings on the war from struggle.ws

Against war and terror

This pamphlet was written by anarchists from four continents in the period between the September 11th terror attacks on the US and the (public) start of the 'War on Terrorism' announced by the US government. We know war means death, destruction and oppression for the working class internationally.

While we deplore the attacks on the USA and the deaths of thousands of people we are also aware that the 'retaliation' to this attack is designed to advance the control of the USA and other western powers over the people of the world. Not just the people of Asia and the Middle East but also in the imperialist countries as the war is used as a 'loyalty' test and to introduce repressive legislation. Already it has been the excuse for the sacking of tens of thousands of workers, particularly in the airline industry.

We refuse the choice that is offered by both sides in this conflict – you are either for us or against us. As anarchists we obviously see little attraction in the sort of religious state fantasised about by bin Laden and enacted by the Taliban, where the individual is controlled right down to forbidding the trimming of beards! But we also oppose the fake democracy of the western states where politicians are bought by oil companies, refugees are criminalised and where corporations rule.

We hope these articles will stimulate some discussion about the causes and real goal of this war. We also hope it will help those who, like us, seek to undermine the war efforts of all sides. But beyond that, this is just another war in a long series – we need an alternative to the capitalist system that breeds wars just as surely as it breeds severe inequality. War is not an aberration – war is the health of capital and the state.

We make no claim that these articles

represent a collectively agreed position. Each represents the opinion of the author. What the authors (mostly) have in common is agreement with the Anarchist Platform statement to be found on the web at <http://struggle.ws/platform.html>.

Anarchism is our collective alternative to capitalist war and terror. We want an equal society, one without classes, without sexism, without racism. We want a society where each workplace and community is self-managed and where everyone contributes according to their abilities and receives according to their needs! We want a libertarian society, one which is really democratic, where there is freedom of movement for all. We want a society without borders, based on solidarity and mutual aid. We want a society where liberty, justice and dignity are a reality.



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The tragedy of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a tragic country. The Soviet-backed coup and subsequent invasion in 1979 ushered in more than two decades of brutal war. During the 1980's, the US supplied at least USD 32 billion [1] of military aid to the mujahadeen, the Islamic opposition to the Soviet regime. The US explicitly channelled their funding to the most fanatical and violent islamists in an attempt to cause the maximum damage to the Russians.

When the Soviets withdrew in 1989, the Western states turned their attention away from this barren wasteland. While the US had been willing to pump billions of dollars of weapons into the country, their concern for the oppressed population did not extend to the same generosity in funding reconstruction. The UNHCR's budget for Afghanistan in 1999 - as part of the Common UN Appeal for Afghanistan - was \$17 million[2]. The decade after the Soviet retreat was dominated by constant war as the heavily armed warlords fought it out for the meagre resources of this forgotten land.

During the past 20 years about 2.5 million Afghans have died as a direct or indi-

rect result of the war - army assaults, famine or lack of medical attention[3]. This makes up over 10% of the population or one death every 5 minutes. Those who have survived have often been maimed by bombs and landmines. A sign at the Doharoon border post reads: "every 24 hours 7 people step on mines in Afghanistan". UN estimates in 2000 put the average life expectancy of Afghans at 41, and since then this has undoubtedly sharply declined. Afghan children have one chance in five of dying before their second birthday. Increasing repression has accompanied the slaughter, and women in particular have found themselves even further excluded from public life and locked in the

Chekov Feeney is an Irish revolutionary anarchist writer living in Melbourne Australia. He has visited and written about many of the most unfortunate parts of the globe in an attempt to understand the hidden foundations of suffering on which our world order is built.

prison of the home by the fundamentalist ideology of the 'holy warriors.'

Refugee

According to UN statistics the number of Afghan refugees living in Iran and Pakistan is 6.3 million[4] or one refugee every minute over 20 years. These people have fled despite the fact that all they can look forward to is a life of misery in one of the squalid and hopeless camps across the border. So during this period of war some 10% of the population has been killed and 30% have been forced into exile, a tragedy on a monumental scale and one that has been almost totally ignored by the West.

In the last year the harsh situation has become dramatically worse. The worst drought in 30 years has seen the virtual extermination of the country's only productive resort - their livestock. Famine

and starvation are sweeping through the land.

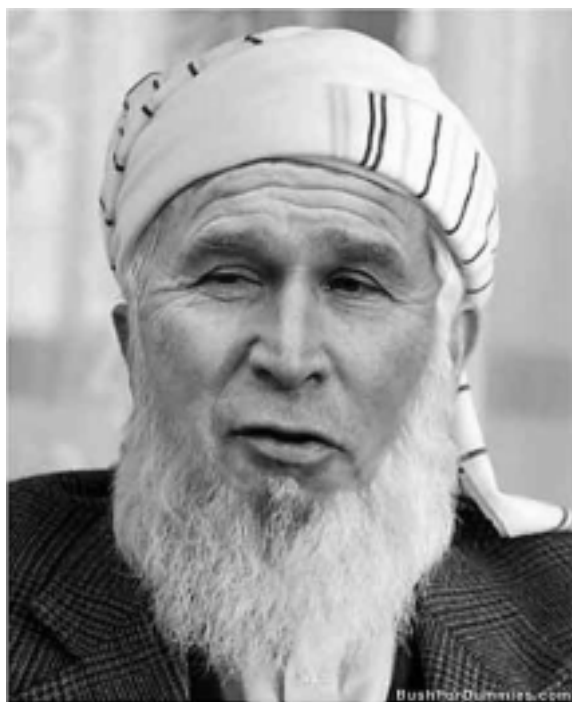
The UNHCR estimates that there are at least one million Afghans starving to death at the moment [5]. Now even the last chances of survival for many of these appear to have disappeared as the neighbouring countries are refusing entry to refugees and deporting 'illegal' immigrants. The Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf is one of the rare outsiders who has taken an interest in this disaster zone: *"I witnessed about 20,000 men, women and children around the city of Herat starving to death. They couldn't walk and were scattered on the ground awaiting the inevitable...In Dushanbeh in Tajikistan I saw a scene where 100,000 Afghans were running from south to north, on foot. It looked like doomsday. These scenes are never shown in the media anywhere in the world. The war-stricken and hungry children had run for miles and miles barefoot. Later on the same fleeing crowd was attacked by internal enemies and was also refused asylum in Tajikistan. In the thousands, they died and died in a no-man's land between Afghanistan and Tajikistan and neither you found out nor anybody else"* [6]. Afghanistan is fast becoming a vast extermination camp, with armed guards on all the exits so that nobody can escape.

The Taliban

The Taliban leaders were formed in Islamic religious schools while refugees in Pakistan, and have continued to recruit students to these schools based mainly upon the fact that they offer bread and the only education available to the hungry masses. If the 'civilised' world had spent a tiny fraction of the billions of military funding on providing food and rational education to these victims, it is very unlikely that the Taliban would ever have existed as a serious force. Instead they channelled funds through Saudi Arabia and aid organisations such as USAID [7], into these religious schools (although they would more accurately be described as political training camps for a movement based upon hatred and fanaticism).

However, they flourished and as they progressively took over between 1994 and 1998, they were generally accepted by the populace, at least among their fellow Pashtuns, who saw in them the most realistic hope of security, albeit at the expense of freedom. The dead have little freedom anyway. They were formed explicitly as a reaction to the rule of warlords, a return to 'pure,' unifying religion [8]. They were well organised, relatively free from complicity in most of the hated warfare and drug trading of the previous 15 years and were relatively well educated in this country where rural illiteracy runs as high as 90%.

However, while the Taliban's harsh regime



initially appeared capable of offering some hope of security and stability, Afghans quickly learned that they could expect more of the same brutality. The Taliban forces indulged in massacres in the towns which 'welcomed them' (the euphemism which they use to describe their conquests of opposition towns). In 1998 the Iranian consular staff was among the thousands of people massacred after the fall of Mazar-i Sharif to the Taliban. They come from Afghanistan's largest tribes, the Pashtun who make up about 35% of the population. They have been accused of brutally imposing their harsh religious laws on other tribes, but it is women who have suffered most at the hands of their horrific religious regime.

While they may have largely failed in their promise to provide security and peace, their failure to provide food and work for the population is at least as important. The Taliban have, like all governments, concentrated primarily on supplying their own forces. So now during this time of mass famine they are the only people with food and resources. The fundamentalists' blatant attacks on women and individual liberties might have been tolerated by the people of this traditionally patriarchal and strictly religious society, if they were able to provide bread and safety. However, there were no solutions to these problems in the Taliban's religious code, and their abject failure to even address the economic problems of the people cost them any real support amongst Afghans. As the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan state: *"The people of Afghanistan have nothing to do with Osama and his accomplices [they] have no plans for socioeconomic reconstruction. Nor do they have a decent concept for the country"* [9]. The Taliban have constantly faced serious opposition in Afghanistan, especially from the marginalised non-Pashtun peoples. However, a people devastated by 20 years

of extreme suffering and starvation have hardly the capacity to mount effective opposition to this band of heavily armed and ruthless soldiers. For there to be any hope of replacing them, there would have to be a massive flow of resources to the impoverished Afghans. If they were supplied with food, education, health and civil infrastructure, they would not tolerate long the burden of Taliban misrule. However, this course of action, which would actually damage the men of violence, is not even remotely considered by the US warlords. Instead they propose a storm of death and destruction against the very people who are, in the words of Afghan-American Tamir Ansary, *"the first victims of the Taliban"* [10].

A war of the rich states against Afghanistan will inevitably lead to the deaths of millions of Afghans who have as little responsibility for the Taliban's or Bin Laden's acts as the workers of the World Trade Centre had for the much greater crimes of the US government. The first demands of the US included an order for Pakistan to stop food aid from crossing into Afghanistan [11] - essentially a call for mass murder on a scale that dwarfs the bombings in the US. War against Afghanistan will especially hit those who are already the gravest victims of the 'fundamentalists.' The only people with the facilities to evade the West's weapons of mass destruction, especially starvation, are the Taliban soldiers and it is them and the fundamentalists like Bin Laden who are most likely to gain in strength with every bomb that falls on this shattered country.

The idea of the richest states in the world going to war against the most destitute and helpless is monstrous. If you feel that innocent people shouldn't be slaughtered then you must oppose this barbaric war, or become complicit in another of the great crimes against humanity perpetrated in the name of Western 'civilisation' in the few tragic centuries of capitalist global expansion.

Footnotes

1. The menace of Islamic fundamentalism and the hypocrisy of imperialism Lal Khan Pakistan, October 2000 http://www.marxist.com/Asia/islamic_fund_ism1100.html
2. UNHCR report on Afghanistan march 1999: <http://www.unhcr.ch/world/mide/afghan.htm>
3. UN report quoted by Iranian film-maker Mohsen Makhmalbaf June 20, 2001 The Iranian <http://www.iranian.com/Opinion/2001/June/Afghan/index.html>
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid
6. Ibid
7. Helga Baitenmann, "NGOs and the Afghan War: The Politicisation of Humanitarian Aid", Third World Quarterly, Vol. 12 (1990), pp. 1-23
8. UNHCR report quoted on Afghanistan 1998 <http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/country/writenet/wriafo3.htm>
9. Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan at <http://rawasongs.fancymarketing.net/index.html>
10. See article at www.salon.com
11. Noam Chomsky in interview with Belgrade radio B92 at: http://www.struggle.ws/issues/war/chomsky_b26_sept19.html

Capitalist terror and madness: George bin Laden & Osama son of Bush incorporated.

Towers may blow up and crumble, while fortifying the very social structures they stood as a symbol for. The words *You can't blow up a social relation*, ring truer than ever.

There are good reasons to begin talking about terror as such and within a global context. To a large extent terror can also be viewed apart from whatever motives that may hide behind particular expressions of it, or whether it is carried out of states or not. If the end result is the same, in both a shorter and longer term perspective, such distinctions become less important. Which does not mean we should overlook the question of ideological legitimisation. It is no coincidence that terror has formed such a central part within fascist movements. Nor that words such as class are absent in Osama bin Laden's as well as George Bush's legitimisation of terror.

Terror has a long history in the service of counter-revolution, and will always work towards undermining the very foundations of a new, free, postcapitalist, society, or even one where forces of death, oppression and exploitation are significantly weakened. The Red Terror orchestrated by the Bolsheviks, directed against, they claimed, the old ruling classes, had essentially two effects, apart from that of immediate, indiscriminate death. It brought into existence the repressive forces of the new state which were again redireced against the workers and peasants, and served as the most "vital" recruiting ground for the White Army (or armies). For the rest of the Civil War period, the terror within these two armies, combined with and constituted a precondition for the terror directed against workers, and even more so against the peasants masses. This produced an even greater army of deserters, but also a situation where two camps, becoming increasingly indistinguishable from each other, in effect recruited solidiers for the other side. The Red Army victory was finalised through a massive war against the peasantry and the working class, and the greatest famine that the Russian Empire, had seen. 5 million starved to death. Further down this historical blind alley, followed the rule of Stalin.

Terror can be reduced to the following: **To rule through fear.** The target is not the persons directly hit but those who fear they might be the next. Thus the more indiscriminate the better. Terror produces or reinforces counter-terror, and imposes internal terror in both camps. In the late Yugoslavia, this Rule was played out as civil war. On another level, in Northern Ireland, the sectarian killings are not only in themselves a manifestation of terror but also its trueborn children. While having

roots and precedents further back in Irish history, organisational terror of more recent date have been effective in reproducing this madness. Any terror group, even those who start out with social revolutionary pretensions, will tend to reproduce the state from within, as well as reinforcing the one whose power they set out to "ex-terminate;" a favorite expression of Lenin, who tended to confuse social relations with biology. However, to have assassinated Hitler during World War II or Stalin in his might, would not have constituted terror if carried out from the conviction that their removal alone could lessen sufferings and save many more lives. These are two of the rare historical cases where this very likely also would have been the result.

In what follows it is important that readers clearly distinguish between Islamism as a political project (with numerous historical precedents in the history of European Christianity, the time when such a term still had a real meaning as a Rule and not only exception) and muslims as fellow workers and friends.

The abstract words of **justice** and **honour** of Islamists such as Osama bin Laden and feyadeen of Imperial Order, as George Bush, turns to corpses within and without the United States. Like the national socialism of the Ba'th, Islamism shares with the governments of the United States of America and Israel, in being far more effective in taking the lives of "muslims" – or **human beings** of flesh and blood and lifegiving kaffir (heathen) dreams, as I would say – than other such human creatures, as Israeli "jews," or U.S. "christians". That is not likely to change. Nor is this a coincidence.

In 1981, Lafif Lakhdar wrote in *Khamsin: Journal of revolutionary socialists of the Middle East*:

"In a Moment of frankeness, Hasan al-Banna' admitted in 1947 to the members of his [Muslim] Brotherhood [in Egypt] that the first obstacle they would meet on the path to the re-Islamisation of secular Muslim society, in his opinion, would be the hostility of the people. 'I must tell you,' he said, 'that your preaching is still a closed book to the majority. The day when they discover it and realise what it aims for, they will resist violently and oppose you tentaciously.'"

This the Taliban knows, and this is also the reason for their state-building terror. What they do not recognise is that they in

Written by Harald Beyer-Arnesen, born and living in Oslo, Norway. Anarco-syndicalist and anarchist communist. Inspired by social revolutionaries from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and India, and the reading of too many books during the last decades about the past and contemporary history of this troubled part of the world.



a longer perspective are paving the road for the McDonaldisation and secularisation of Afghanistan. Thus Lafif Lakhdar could write 20 years ago about a country bordering Afghanistan: *"Contrary to what Islamic propaganda claims, and many western leftist believe, today's Iran does not represent the reinvogation of Islam but its swan song, except that it lacks any beauty"*

Our social revolutionary friend made another significant observation:

"The cult of death may well fascinate a large number of middle class youths, who are the victims of emotional blocks, and are frightened of freedom and and libertarian ways. It is however no solution in the face of the real problems which shake the very foundation of the Iranian society. A person such as Khomeini, who suffers from historical scleroris, and who in his book "Islamic Government" deals with such serious problems as the buggery of a poor donkey by poor muslims, and who is incapable of creating an Iranian bourgeoisie, can only return to to the American fold or fall under Soviet influence. "We are less independent today," admits Badi Sadr; "than we were under the Shah. Our budget depends on the credit of foreign banks. Our dependence on arms and foreign military experts is quite simple tragic." Has Bani Sadr; the spiritual son of the Imam, finally grasped that in a world unified by the violence of the laws of the market Iran cannot be independent, whether the Imam is present or absent, likes it or not? ... The middle classes, who first idolised Khomeini in the belief that they had found in him an universal miracle cure, now turn away from him to await the coup d'État. The sub-proletariat who served him as cannon fodder, now suffer more than ever with the repression of the Khalkhali. The proletariat are engaged in a permanent struggle in their workplaces to counter the intervention of the Islamic committees, and only stop specific strikes to return their permanent go-slow."

Through one of those ironic twist of history, Osama Bin Laden and Taliban are

preparing the incorporation of Afghanistan into the "American fold." If a further tens of thousands of Afghans do not die in the process, it is through no merit of theirs. Nor should we thank them if September 11 does not produce an inflation of death, carried further to other countries and continents as massacres, civil wars, pogroms and famine, nationalist and religious hysteria, foreign military intervention and terror. Whether or not the verdict of history will show al-Qaeda was directly responsible for the World Trade Center graveyard is not the question here, but that this expression of Islamism have been disseminating a Culture of Death, Terror, Oppression, Self-oppression and Stupidity, which nurtures such acts. All with the complicity of global financial institutions, the governments of "the West," as well as of Israel, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the military regime of Algeria, Iraq, and others. In implicating all these other actors, I am not promoting some weird conspiracy theory, but an understanding of how social forces de facto tend to reinforce each other, knowingly or unknowingly. The extremely central role Saudi Arabian petroleum money has played, and very likely will continue to do, is almost comical but also very telling.

The World Trade Center massacre must be comprehended within an agenda of nurturing xenophobic hysteria. As a means for ends that geographically lie elsewhere. That the airborne suicidal guiders of the will of God were human beings with crushed dreams, and victims of capitalist alienation as much as everyone else whose lives exploded, like the numerous children who suffer a far less spectacular death in Iraq under the rule of Washington, D.C. and Baghdad, does not change this.

Within such an agenda, US might and wealth and the settler colonialism of Israel, become the best of allies, but can only function as such by being portrayed as the incarnation of "Satan" within an endless rhetorical monologue, where the distinction between rulers and ruled, and every class perspective, is wholly blurred. Just as the US propaganda apparatus never can make any real critique of Islamism, the Islamist leaders, as the Panarabic before them, cannot put forth any real critique of the global social order that the United States is a manifestation of. This would have undermined their own power basis and ends. Instead their "anti-imperialism" and Jihads serve as a means to enslave their "own" working classes: to reproduce "Satan," as the rule of fascist terror within an Islamic or nationalist ideological framework, even more oppressive in many aspects than "Satan himself." Only to soon be fully reintegrated into the capitalist world order they always were a particular expression of. And in the meantime, all social struggles pointing beyond the present order, all efforts of bringing into life a confederation of globalised workers-to-workers solidarity, is

undermined.

Terror works in seemingly mysterious ways. If looked at not from the perspective of New York, but from people coming from regions where Islamist terror forms part of, or is on the verge of becoming, part of daily fear, the message of September 11 spoke loud and clear. The turning of the World Trade Center into a graveyard was from this point of view a de facto declaration of war by rulers and would-be-rulers against the masses in the Middle East and Central Asia, North Africa and beyond. Not a struggle against oppression and exploitation: but a call for total submission through terror, and an expression of inter-capitalist competition. A terror that did not start and will not end in New York, which never was its real target. Which is yet another reason to oppose NATO's war-efforts.

Simultaneously this act of terror is exploited as a means to impose "security" on the working class of "the North," and throughout the globe. Around and *within* Fortress Europe, and all the other Fortresses of the world, the walls are now being built taller, and a whole new level of control is being imposed. Refugees, legal and illegal immigrants – and those who from their appearance can be suspected to belong among "Them" – will be hit worst. Increasingly they will become victims of a more subtle terror, a phenomenon which started long ago but which now has gained force. Without ever reaching the headlines, a greater number of human beings seeking a better future for themselves and their children, trying to reach the shores of Spain, Italy, Australia and elsewhere, will drown, be shot (as happens on the US-Mexican border), or die for other reasons. Increased "security" will extend worldwide, and lead to the full imposition of a global capitalist world (dis)order.

Nothing of this is predetermined, but such an agenda has gained force after September 11, 2001. It has become even more critical to wage also an ideological struggle against forces of terror, state-sponsored or not, on a local and global level. We are all part of the one same bloody civilisation, of alienation and silent and spectacular death and boredom, but also of compassion, love and broken hearts, tears and laughter, hopes and dreams, and a capacity for globalised solidarity.

The capitalist world order is an order that rules by being everywhere, and increasingly so, and not only in a restricted economical sense. If all its force was concentrated in the Pentagon it would have been easy to overcome. Instead it rules as much through small and large Ayatollahs, small and large Saddam Huseyns and Assads, Milosovics and Tudjmans, Sharons and Arafats and, as well as through the "humanitarian" rulers of the Scandinavian countries. The latter is true as well. But terror is still among

the phenomenons that most effectively reproduces the monster, state-sponsored or not. Afghanistan has been one of this centres of capitalist world disorder in the last decades. There another manifestation of **modern** alienation was born, created out of many worlds, of old and new ones, linked to the global market in numerous ways. That the Taliban soldiers, together with Pakistani border guards, in these very days are being bribed to turn their heads the other way, so to let refugees pass a closed border, and that this is all organised as an enterprise, selling the fear of famine and death for what amounts to several months salary, is just another example on how the force of commodity production and the spirit of George Bush is very much alive in the realm of Taliban.

The world is increasingly moving towards a triadic American-European-Asian Empire. The enforced alliance-building we are now seeing around the Pentagon's campaign of Infinite Terror (which magnitude is still quite unclear), and the seeking of legitimation for this through the United Nations, is not just a facade. We are moving towards a global order, also politically, in a whole new sense. Just as the increased speed and magnitude of communication and transportation on a global level is increasingly also furthering a blurring between terror, policing and war. But we should also be aware of the new positive possibilities for a struggle of global resistance founded on solidarity this opens for us, with a potential to take us beyond capitalism.

Capitalism is a complex, globally interlinked social system that only can be surpassed through a collective **creative** effort on the basis of human communication and practical, non-hierarchical and globalised solidarity of the working classes. There never was and never will be any other road. Now less than ever.

A last word about terror. In a play of words: Out of the ruins of anarchy, anarchy cannot arise, only the rule of the Market and the State in their most brutalised, authoritarian manifestations. In its proper sense, anarchy of course does not signify disorder and the struggle of each against all, however common such a belief may be, but the overcoming of the Rule of the Siamese Twins of Market and State through the *human creation* of a global classless society, where people in cooperation rule over their own lives and destinies, and the freedom of all becomes the condition of the freedom of each, as the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all.

Lafif Lakhdar's article "Why the return to Islamic archaism?," quoted from above, was published in the first of two Khamsin special issues on "Politics of Religion in the Middle East." ("Khamsin: Journal of revolutionary socialists of the Middle East" no. 8 + 9, Ithaca Press, 1981. Possibly still available through Zed Books.)

www.struggle/stophthewar.html

"Why do they hate us?"

Written by Wayne Price, a long-time revolutionary anarchist and libertarian socialist who lives in New York City, near the heart of the storm

A small group of militants, hundreds or a few thousand, hated the U.S.A. so much that they spent years planning their attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. They did not care that they would murder thousands of people, mostly working people. They were so perversely dedicated that they were willing to die themselves in the attacks.

Around the world a great many people were pleased by the assault, to the point of celebrating. Many, many more did not support the explosion of the Twin Towers, and even condemned it, but still expressed understanding for the motives of the terrorists. There were few or no political or religious leaders in mostly-Muslim countries or elsewhere who endorsed the attacks. Even the assailants kept quiet; no one took "credit" (if that is the right word). Osama bin Laden denies responsibility and the Taliban regime claims that he is innocent. Yet many people also showed some satisfaction at the attack, a sort of pleasure in seeing the school yard bully get his nose bloodied.

Why do "they" hate "us"? ask many bewildered US workers. The US population is generally ignorant, mis-educated, and deliberately lied-to, about international affairs even more than domestic politics. They see the US as a peaceful and friendly country, which helps other nations out of good-will, and otherwise wants to be left alone. Suddenly, as they see it, out of the blue, the US was attacked. US working people identify with the national state; since they are kindly and decent people, they assume that their national government is also kindly and decent. Like the terrorist attackers, US workers mentally make a nationalist bloc between the US state (and ruling class) and the US working population. They think of themselves as "America" and say, "we" and "us" when speaking about the national state of which they really know little and have less control.

The "explanation" offered by the US government and media is that "they" hate our "freedom," our "democracy," and "our way of life." This supposed explanation is given most strongly by US figures on the right, who agree with the worst Islamists in opposing separation of church and state, equality for women, and rights for Gays and Lesbians. However, the charge that "they," in their poverty, resent US wealth, is closer to the truth. (Of course, to understand why so many hate the US is not to justify the few who committed mass murder at the World Trade Center and Pentagon.)

That the USA. is the most powerful state on earth today is well known, but few think through what this implies. For one thing, it means murderous military intervention in the affairs of other countries.

The criminal Vietnamese war killed millions of Vietnamese and fifty thousand US soldiers. The Vietnamese people have never really recovered. Then, in the last twenty years, the US has bombed or invaded Haiti, Panama, Grenada, Yugoslavia, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and, of course, Afghanistan. These military interventions were mostly done against the will of the existing governments, and often in an effort to overthrow the existing governments. There have also been military interventions by proxy, in which the US gave large scale support to "rebel" groups against established governments. The most well-known (and "successful") were the U.S.-supported contra war against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and, again, the US support of extreme Islamists in Afghanistan ... including Osama bin Laden and the predecessors of the Taliban. Now the US state complains when the monster it created in Afghanistan turns on it.

The US state's military missions, military alliances, and "peacetime" military bases cover the globe. Its European military alliance, NATO, has actually expanded despite the collapse of the Soviet Union. Three decades after the end of the Korean War, a large number of US troops remain in South Korea. US troops remain in Panama, even after the canal was "given" back to Panama. They were useful in seizing Noreiga, the Panamanian president, for trial in the US Bizarrely, a US base remains in Guantanamo, Cuba, all through the reign of Castro. The US was a major supporter of the Pakistani military through the Cold War, including the Afghanistan struggle. The US continued to be friendly to Pakistan, even as that state built up the Taliban. Each of these instances could be argued about, but altogether, they make a pattern of a superpower which throws its military weight around.

The US government remains the most heavily armed nuclear power, with nuclear missiles capable of exterminating human life on earth many times over. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many liberals called for seizing the opportunity to create world-wide nuclear disarmament. Instead, the US plans to break all existing arms control agreements by setting up an unworkable "missile defense shield," which will only create a new arms race.

Behind this mountain of military might



is an economic drive, a need to dominate the world economy and draw wealth from all the world. That the US is so much richer than the "Third World" countries is widely admitted. Not admitted is that the US is rich because these other nations are poor. Their ruling classes may share in the riches of the US/European/Japanese ruling classes, but the poverty of their masses is the wealth of that world ruling class. The US is the main beneficiary of modern imperialism. Unlike the old colonialism, there are few countries which the US state owns outright, except for Puerto Rico and several islands and peoples in the Pacific, peoples who have as much right to self-determination as any large nation.

Otherwise, US capitalism's domination of the world is neo-colonial: the oppressed nations have "independent" national states, with their own governments, flags, and postage stamps, but their economies are still completely dependent on the world market. They cannot develop their industries, plan their economies, or decide on a balance of production and consumption, by themselves. Which national economy dominates the world market? Only one, that of the US capitalists. The US economy serves as a giant magnet, pulling all other economies toward it (and its junior partners and sometime competitors, the Western European and Japanese national capitalism's). Loans to build up national economies? Go to US banks or to world financial institutions (World Bank or International Monetary Fund) dominated by the US. Want to build modern industry? Get investments from US capitalists. Need modern chemicals or machinery or medicines? The international patents are owned by US companies. As a result, the poor, exploited, nations are deeply in debt to the richer, imperialist nations, especially the US. The nations of Africa have had to fight hard to get the slightest break from US firms to produce cheaper medicines for AIDS.

The Soviet Union controlled its empire in Eastern Europe by military force, as the British used to control their world-wide empire. But US capitalist imperialism

only uses force as a last resort. First, it holds the world together through its economic might. In the poverty-riddled lands of the Arab East and in other oppressed nations, there is enormous resentment of the domination of US wealth over their economies. Often this comes out as hostility to US cultural products, such as movies or music or foods. Whatever the faults or virtues of US movies or fast-food, what is really being expressed is a fury at imperialism, not necessarily a dislike of international culture.

In over 50 years since the end of World War II, world capitalism has simply been unable to industrialize the poor nations of the South. Most of Africa remains destitute. A few world regions have developed some industry, especially in Southeastern Asia. But even these, the most successful, remain developed in a most uneven and unstable fashion, as becomes clear in any economic crisis. The people of Eastern Europe and Russia thought that overthrowing Soviet state-capitalism would make them like Western Europe. Instead, they are like Latin America. The industrialized nations of before World War I were the US, Western Europe, Russia (barely), and Japan. Today, these are still the industrialized nations - with Russia still barely among them. World capitalism has maintained the international imbalance of economic development.

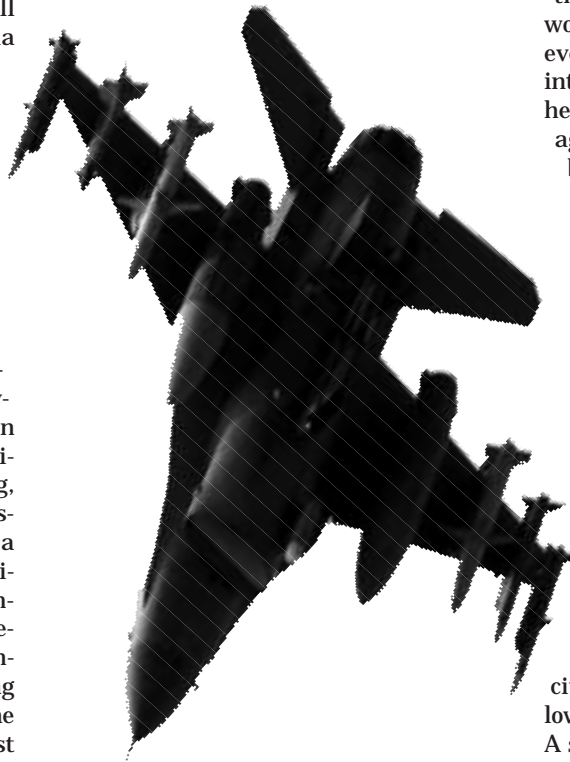
In the Arab and Muslim regions, this inequality is easy to see. There are many nations filled with desperately poor people. The vast wealth of petroleum oil has helped a layer of people in a few nations—but even these nations have been unable to develop even relatively independent economies. The US industrial economy is built on cheap, widely-available oil. Transportation depends on gasoline. Food depends on oil-based fertilizer and pesticides. Clothing, housing, and other things widely use oil-based plastics. Considering that this is a nonrenewable resource, as well as terribly polluting and a cause of the greenhouse effect, this oil-using habit will someday have to be cut way back. But meanwhile, Westerners' high standard of living requires this cheap, available oil, while the people of the Arab East, the source of most of the oil, remain marginalized, unindustrialized, and poor.

Inside these poor countries, the political results are what would be expected, namely a lack of democracy and freedom. The US state prides itself on its democracy, but this has only been possible because of its great wealth, built in part on the poverty of other peoples. Due to its wealth, US corporate rich have been able to give up some crumbs to the working classes, when the working class forces them to. To prevent revolutionary struggles, the US ruling class has been willing, under pressure, to provide some of its bounty to buy off layers of the middle class and working

class. This creates popular contentment and a willingness to channel grievances through the political process. But the rulers of the poor nations of the South do not have the wealth to buy off their working populations. To keep them down, they must be repressed. At best they go through cycles of government, from corrupt, authoritarian, "democracies," to overt dictatorships (kings, generals, ayatollahs, mullahs, leaders of socialist parties, or little brothers of the poor)—and then back again. They may go from a fake "democracy" to a revolutionary or Islamic dictatorship, and go back again, never really winning self-management for working people.

The exploited people of the Arab East know full well that the US state props up the kings of Saudi Arabia and Jordan as it once helped the Shah of Iran, and now works with the dictator of Syria. All over the world, the US state has supported dictators. When US leaders declare that the "terrorists" oppose us because of our values of "democracy" and "freedom," it is a sick joke.

US rulers pick and chose which dictator-



ity, including the torture of Kurdish leaders and the extermination of whole villages. The US public is not aroused about this because the US government and media have not emphasized it. The Turkish military has been a useful ally against Iraq, Yugoslavia, and now Afghanistan.

Similarly, the Bush administration has welcomed the support of the present Russian government against the Afghan rulers. Meanwhile the Russian state has been running a years-long assault on the people of Chechnya, which is still within the Russian borders. To deny the Chechens' independence, the Russians have been waging a most vicious war against them, destroying much of their nation. But Chechnya, a nation with many Muslims, is near Afghanistan and the Afghan people know all about it.

But what most angers people in the mostly-Muslim nations has been two things: US support for Israel and the continued US war against Iraq. Israel is the result of the Zionist movement, an effort to plant European people in the "Third World" land of Palestine. Zionism's aim was to create a Jewish State, a state of "the Jewish people" everywhere in the world, as opposed to the people of whatever religion who actually lived there. It intended to occupy all the land supposedly held by the ancient Hebrews 2000 years ago. Its justification was the Jewish bible - and a promise by the British empire (the "Balfour Declaration").

The main people who were actually living there were not to be consulted of course and could not be, because these goals required dispossessing those Palestinian Arabs. A Jewish population, fleeing from the after-effects of Hitler's genocide, was channeled into Palestine to replace the original population (who had had nothing to do with European atrocities). Through a series of wars, massacres, and supposedly legal actions, the Palestinian peasants and workers were mostly dispossessed. Their lands, their farms, their orchards, their villages, and their cities were taken away. They are not allowed to return nor granted compensation. A small number still live in Israel as second class citizens, Muslims and Christians in a (by definition) "Jewish state." Half of the others live in the West Bank (of the Jordan River) or on the Gaza Strip, under Israeli occupation. The other half is scattered among the Arab nations and elsewhere.

For some time now, most Palestinians and their organizations have accepted the reality of Israel. They know it will not go away and cannot be militarily defeated. Therefore they have only asked for self-determination on what is left of Palestine, on the West Bank and Jordan. The Israeli state has controlled these areas for 35 years now, the longest military occupation

ships to be horrified at and which to make allies. They pick and chose which atrocities to condemn and which to ignore. For example, they publicized the horror of Yugoslavian "ethnic cleaning" of the Albanian Kosovars in order to justify their bombing campaign against the Milosevic regime. Meanwhile, they have ignored the decades of almost genocidal war waged by the US ally Turkey against its Kurdish citizens. Turkish Kurds have been denied the right to speak their language, to associate in political parties, or to determine their national fate. This has been backed up by military campaigns of great brutal-



of another land in recent history. While pretending to negotiate (the Oslo "peace process"), actually the Zionists have expanded the number of their settlements in the these Occupied Territories, as well as the size of the settlements. This has been spearheaded by reactionary Jewish fanatics, the mirror image of the Islamic fanatics. But it has had the support of the various Israeli governments, both liberal and conservative. The state has linked the settlements by a network of roads and military garrisons. The Palestinian areas have been carved into unviable islands. Meanwhile, the Israeli state has insisted on the right to own virtually all of Jerusalem, while the Palestinians have only asked for half. Not surprisingly, the so-called peace process died of its own hypocrisy.

Throughout this awful history, the US state has been the major ally of Israel. The Palestinians fight with stones or small arms. Israel fights with US-made helicopters and weapons, as well as its own (it is an open secret that Israel has nuclear bombs). All US politicians assert their undying support for Israel. Billions of dollars have been given to Israel by the US state. This is partly due to the domestic strength of the pro-Israel lobby, but Israel is useful to US imperialism in controlling the Arab states. In war after war, Israel has beaten the Arab armies. In fury and frustration, many Arab workers and peasants have turned from the secular movements which are willing to recognize Israel. Some look toward fanatical religious parties who are willing, in their military weakness, to use terrorist attacks on Israeli workers. As long as the Israeli government, with US support, does not adapt to living with Palestinians (by withdrawing both troops and settlements from the Occupied Territories, for example), it will continue to enrage Arabs and Muslims against both itself and the US.

The other issue which has particularly angered many Arabs and others has revolved around the US war with Iraq. Like many other dictators, Iraq's Saddam Hussein was supported by the US state when it seemed convenient. For eight years, the Iraqi regime was in a pointless but bloody war with its neighbor Iran. The US rulers were pleased that Iraq was weakening the

Iranian regime. The US provided intelligence to the state of Iraq, permitted Hussein to buy hard-to-get weaponry, and helped him in other ways.

But, as bin Laden was later to do, Hussein turned on the US He decided to invade Kuwait, a small but oil-rich country. It had one of those monarchical-feudal regimes, which oppressed the large number of Palestinians and non-Arabs who worked there. Due to the oil, and to the challenge to its authority, the US state made an issue about this particular atrocity.

Suddenly Saddam Hussein was declared a very bad man and a vast military force was assembled to defeat Iraq. And it was defeated, partly because the Iraqi soldiers (workers and peasants) would not fight for their government.

In response to this defeat, Iraqis rose up to overthrow the government, especially Shiite Muslims in the South and Kurds in the north of Iraq. But the US state did not want a revolution. It might destabilize the region, upsetting all those friendly dictatorships. Freedom for Iraqi Kurds might stir up the Kurds under the control of the Turkish allies. The US rulers hoped to replace Hussein with another military ruler, different from him only in being more cooperative with the US So the US army stopped short of destroying the Iraqi

military. It left Hussein enough to reestablish his role. Instead the US military continued to watch over and "protect" the Kurds and southern Muslims by flying US planes over a large part of Iraqi airspace. Many people do not realize it, but ten years after the Iraqi war, the US is still flying planes over Iraq and still bombing it.

The other method the US used, to pressure Hussein, was an embargo. The Iraqi rulers can only sell a controlled amount of its oil, and buy only a limited amount of food and medicine and other goods. This is supposed to either make Hussein behave or to inspire the military to replace him. As an effective dictator, Hussein has kept his officers under control. Meanwhile, he really does not care that his people starve or lack medicine, so this does not pressure him. At least a half million children have died from this embargo policy. That is many more people than died in the recent attacks on the US The US rulers are continuing to wage a war on the Iraqi peasants and workers. This is widely known in Europe and in the mostly-Muslim nations, but the US working class has been kept in the dark.

So, there are good reasons for many people to hate the US, in the Muslim nations and elsewhere. Even those who are favorable to the US are usually ambivalent, liking something and hating others. Perhaps some of the hatred is irrational, due to way US imperialism has broken up traditional societies but replaced them only with poverty, chaos, and dictatorship. The program of many oppressed people has sometimes gone into the dead ends of terrorism and religious dictatorship. But they have legitimate grievances. Their working people have suffered far more than working class people in the US have any idea. "Americans" should not be surprised if the evil their ruling class has done abroad should be returned to them.

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"In this struggle, only the workers and peasants will go all the way to the end"

Towards a history of anarchist anti-imperialism

The anarchist movement has a long tradition of fighting imperialism. This reaches back into the 1860s, and continues to the present day. From Cuba, to Egypt, to Ireland, to Macedonia, to Korea, to Algeria and Morocco, the anarchist movement has paid in blood for its opposition to imperial domination and control.

However, whilst anarchists have actively participated in national liberation struggles, they have argued that the destruction of national oppression and imperialism can only be truly achieved through the destruction of both capitalism and the state system, and the creation of an international anarcho-communist society.

This is not to argue that anarchists absent themselves from national liberation struggles that do not have such goals. Instead, anarchists stand in solidarity with struggles against imperialism on principle, but seek to reshape national liberation movements into social liberation movements.

Such movements would be both anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist, would be based on internationalism rather than narrow chauvinism, would link struggles in the imperial centres directly to struggles in the oppressed regions, and would be controlled by, and reflect the interests of, the working class and peasantry.

In other words, we stand in solidarity with anti-imperialist movements, but condemn those who use such movements to advance reactionary cultural agendas (for example, those who oppose women's rights in the name of culture) and fight against attempts by local capitalists and the middle class to hijack these movements. We oppose state repression of anti-imperialist movements, as we reject the right of the state to decide what is, and what is not, legitimate protest. However, it is no liberation if all that changes is the colour or the language of the capitalist class.

AGAINST NATIONALISM

This is where we differ from the political current that has dominated national liberation movements since the 1940s: the ideology of nationalism.

Nationalism is a political strategy that argues that the key task of the anti-imperialist struggle is to establish an independent nation-state. It is through these independent states, nationalists argue, that the nation as a whole will exercise its general will. In the words of Kwame Nkrumah, who spearheaded the formation of the independent nation-state of Ghana, the task was to *"Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all else shall be given unto you."*

In order to achieve this goal, nationalists argue that it is necessary to unite all

classes within the oppressed nation against the imperialist oppressor. Nationalists tend to deny the importance of class differences within the oppressed nation, arguing that the common experience of national oppression makes class divisions unimportant, or that class is a "foreign" concept that is irrelevant.

Thus nationalists seek to hide class differences in a quest to found an independent nation-state.

The class interests that hide behind nationalism are obvious. Nationalism has, historically, been an ideology developed and championed by the bourgeoisie and middle class in the oppressed nation. It is a form of anti-imperialism that wishes to remove imperialism but retain capitalism, a bourgeois anti-imperialism that wishes, in short, to create for the local bourgeoisie more space, more opportunities, more avenues to exploit the local working class and develop local capitalism.

Our role as anarchists in relation to nationalists is thus clear: we may fight alongside nationalists for limited reforms and victories against imperialism but we fight against the statism and capitalism of the nationalists.

Our role is to win mass support for the anarchist approach to imperial domination, to win workers and peasants away from nationalism and to an internationalist working class programme: anarchism. This requires active participation in national liberation struggles but political independence from the nationalists. National liberation must be differentiated from nationalism, which is the class programme of the bourgeoisie: we are against imperialism, but also, against nationalism.

BAKUNIN AND THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

Support for national liberation follows directly from anarchism's opposition to hierarchical political structures and economic inequality, and advocacy of a freely constituted international confederation of self-administrating communes and workers' associations. At the same time, however, anarchism's commitment to a general social and economic emancipation means that anarchism rejects statist solutions to national oppression that leave capitalism and government in place.

Lucien van der Walt is an anarchist activist based in Johannesburg, and involved in struggles and movements against privatisation, neo-liberalism and racism. Contact him through the bikisha@mail.com (Bikisha Media Collective, South Africa) address if you are interested in reprinting this text.



If anyone can be named the founder of revolutionary anarchism, it is Mikhail Bakunin (1818-1876). Bakunin's political roots lay within the national liberation movements of Eastern Europe, and he retained a commitment to what would nowadays be called 'decolonisation' throughout his life. When Bakunin moved from pan-Slavic nationalism towards anarchism in the 1860s, following the disastrous 1863 Polish insurrection, he still argued in support of struggles for national self-determination.

He doubted whether *"imperialist Europe"* could keep the colonial countries in bondage: *"Two-thirds of humanity, 800 million Asiatics asleep in their servitude will necessarily awaken and begin to move."* [1] Bakunin went on to declare his *"strong sympathy for any national uprising against any form of oppression"*, stating that every people *"has the right to be itself... no one is entitled to impose its costume, its customs, its languages and its laws."* [2]

EAST EUROPE

The crucial issue, however, *"in what direction and to what end"* will the national liberation movement move? For Bakunin, national liberation must be achieved *"as much in the economic as in the political interests of the masses"*: if the anti-colonial struggle is carried out with *"ambitious intent to set up a powerful State"* or if *"it is carried out without the people"* and *"must therefore depend for success on a privileged class,"* it will become a *"retrogressive, disastrous, counter-revolutionary movement."* [3]

"Every exclusively political revolution - be it in defence of national independence or for internal change... - that does not aim at the immediate and real political and economic emancipation of people will be a false revolution. Its objectives will be unattainable and its consequences reactionary." [4]

So, if national liberation is to achieve more than simply the replacement of foreign oppressors by local oppressors, the national liberation movement must thus be merged with the revolutionary struggle of the working class and peasantry against both capitalism and the State. Without social

revolutionary goals, national liberation will simply be a bourgeois revolution.

The national liberation struggle of the working class and peasantry must be resolutely anti-statist, for the State was necessarily the preserve of a privileged class, and the state system would continually recreate the problem of national oppression: "to exist, a state must become an invader of other states ... it must be ready to occupy a foreign country and hold millions of people in subjection."

The national liberation struggle of oppressed nationalities must be internationalist in character as it must supplant obsessions with cultural difference with universal ideals of human freedom, it must align itself with the international class struggle for "political and economic emancipation from the yoke of the State" and the classes it represents, and it must take place, ultimately, as part of an international revolution: "a social revolution ... is by its very nature international in scope" and the oppressed nationalities "must therefore link their aspirations and forces with the aspirations and forces of all other countries." [5] The "statist path involving the establishment of separate ... States" is "entirely ruinous for the great masses of the people" because it did not abolish class power but simply changed the nationality of the ruling class. [6] Instead, the state system must be abolished and replaced with a coalition of workplace and community structures "directed from the bottom up ... according to the principles of free federation." [7]

These ideas were applied in East Europe from the 1870s onwards, as anarchists played an active role in the 1873 uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina against Austro-Hungarian imperialism. Anarchists also took an active part in the "National Revolutionary Movement" in Macedonia against the Ottoman Empire. At least 60 gave their lives in this struggle, particularly in the great 1903 revolt.

This tradition of anarchist anti-imperialism was continued 15 years later in the Ukraine as the Makhnovist movement organised a titanic peasant revolt that not only smashed the German occupation of the Ukraine, and held off the invading Red and White armies until 1921, but redistributed land, established worker-peasant self-management in many areas, and created a Revolutionary Insurgent Army under worker-peasant control.

EGYPT AND ALGERIA

In the 1870s, too, the anarchists began to organise Egypt, notably in Alexandria, where a local anarchist journal appeared in 1877, [8] and an anarchist group from Egypt was represented at the September 1877 Congress of the "Saint-Imier Interna-

tion" (the anarchist faction of the post-1872 First International). [9] An "Egyptian Federation" was represented at the 1881 International Social Revolutionary Congress by well-known Errico Malatesta, this time including "bodies from Constantinople and Alexandria." [10] Malatesta, who lived in Egypt as a political refugee from 1878 and 1882, [11] became involved in the 1882 "Pasha Revolt" that followed the 1876 take-over of Egyptian finances by an Anglo-French commission representing international creditors. He arrived specifically to pursue "a revolutionary purpose connected to the natives' revolt in the days of Arabi Pasha," [12] and "fought with the Egyptians against the British colonialists." [13]

In Algeria, the anarchist movement emerged in the nineteenth century. The Revolutionary Syndicalist General Confederation of Labour (CGT-SR) had a section in Algeria. Like other anarchist organisations, the CGT-SR opposed French colonialism, and in a joint statement by the Anarchist Union, the CGT-SR, and the Asso-



ciation of Anarchist Federations on the centenary of the French occupation of Algeria in 1930, argued: "Civilisation? Progress? We say: murder!" [14]

A prominent militant in the CGT-SR's Algerian section, as well as in the Anarchist Union and the Anarchist Group of the Indigenous Algerians, was Sail Mohamed (1894-1953), an Algerian anarchist active in the anarchist movement from the 1910s until his death in 1953. Sail Mohamed was a founder of organisations such as the Association for the Rights of the Indigenous Algerians and the Anarchist Group of the Indigenous Algerians. In 1929 he was secretary of the "Committee for the Defence of the Algerians against the Provocations of the Centenary." Sail Mohamed was also editor of the North African edition of the anarchist periodical *Terre Libre*, and a regular contributor to anarchist journals on the Algerian question. [15]

EUROPE AND MOROCCO

Opposition to imperialism was a crucial part of anarchist anti-militarist campaigns in the imperialist centres, which stressed that colonial wars did not serve the interests of workers but rather the purposes of capitalism.

The *General Confederation of Labour*

(CGT) in France, for example, devoted a considerable part of its press to exposing the role of French capitalists in North Africa. The first issue of *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, which appeared on the 27 April 1911, exposed the "Moroccan syndicate": the "veiled men" who dictated to the ministers and diplomats and sought a war that would boost demand for arms, lands, and rail and lead to the imposition of tax on the indigenous people. [16]

In Spain, the "Tragic Week" began on Monday 26 July 1909 when the union, *Solidarad Obrero*, which was led by a committee of anarchists and socialists, called a general strike against the call-up of the mainly working class army reservists for the colonial war in Morocco. [17] By Tuesday, workers were in control of Barcelona, the "fiery rose of anarchism," troop trains had been halted, trams overturned, communications cut and barricades erected. By Thursday, fighting broke out with government forces, and over 150 workers were killed in the street fighting.

The reservists were embittered by disastrous previous colonial campaigns in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, [18] but the Tragic Week must be understood as an anti-imperialist uprising situated within a long tradition of anarchist anti-imperialism in Spain. The "refusal of the Catalan reservists to serve in the war against the Riff mountaineers of Morocco," "one of the most significant" events of modern times, [19] reflected the common perception that the war was fought purely in the interests of

the Riff mine-owners, [20] and that conscription was "a deliberate act of class warfare and exploitation from the centre." [21]

In 1911, the newly founded, anarcho-syndicalist, *National Confederation of Labour* (CNT), successor to *Solidarad Obrero*, marked its birth with a general strike on the 16 September in support of two demands: defence of the strikers at Bilbao and opposition to the war in Morocco. [22] Again, in 1922, following a disastrous battle against the forces of Abd el-Krim in Morocco in August, a battle in which at least 10,000 Spanish troops died, "the Spanish people were full of indignation and demanded not only an end to the war but also that those responsible for the massacre and the politicians who favoured the operation in Africa be brought to trial", expressing their anger in riots, and in strikes in the industrial regions. [23]

CUBA

In the Cuban colonial war (1895-1904), the Cuban anarchists and their unions joined the separatist armed forces, and made propaganda amongst the Spanish troops. The Spanish anarchists, likewise, campaigned against the Cuban war amongst peasants, workers, and soldiers in their own country. [24] "All Spanish anarchists

disapproved of the war and called on workers to disobey military authority and refuse to fight in Cuba," leading to several mutinies amongst draftees.[25] Opposing bourgeois nationalism and statism, the anarchists sought to give the colonial revolt a social revolutionary character. At its 1892 congress in Cuba, the anarchist *Workers' Alliance* recommended that the Cuban working class join the ranks of "revolutionary socialism" and take the path of independence, noting that

"...it would be absurd for one who aspires to individual freedom to oppose the collective freedom of the people..." [26]

When the anarchist Michele Angiolillo assassinated the Spanish President Canovas in 1897 he declared that his act both in revenge for the repression of anarchists in Spain and retribution for Spain's atrocities in its colonial wars.[27]

In addition to its role in the anti-colonial struggle, the anarchist-led Cuban labour movement played a central role in overcoming divisions between black, white Cuban, and Spanish-born workers. The Cuban anarchists "successfully incorporated many nonwhites into the labour movement, and mixed Cubans and Spaniards in it", "fostering class consciousness and helping to eradicate the cleavages of race and ethnicity among workers." [28]

The *Workers Alliance* "eroded racial barriers as no union had done before in Cuba" in its efforts to mobilise the "whole popular sector to sustain strikes and demonstrations." [29] Not only did blacks join the union in "significant numbers," but the union also undertook a fight against racial discrimination in the workplace. The first strike of 1889, for example, included the demand that "individuals of the coloured race able to work there." [30] This demand reappeared in subsequent years, as did the demand that blacks and whites have the right to "sit in the same cafes," raised at the 1890 May Day rally in Havana.[31]

The anarchist periodical *El Productor*, founded in 1887, denounced "discrimination against Afro-Cubans by employers, shop owners and the administration specifically." And through campaigns and strikes involving the "mass mobilisation of people of diverse race and ethnicity," anarchist labour in Cuba was able to eliminate "most of the residual methods of disciplining labour from the slavery era" such as "racial discrimination against non-whites and the physical punishment of apprentices and dependientes." [32]

MEXICO, NICARAGUA AND AUGUSTINO SANDINO

In Mexico, anarchists led Indian peasant risings such as the revolts of Chavez Lopez

in 1869 and Francisco Zalacosta in the 1870s. Later manifestations of Mexican anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, such as the Mexican Liberal Party, the revolutionary syndicalist "*House of the Workers of the World*" (COM) and the Mexican section of the *Industrial Workers of the World* (IWW), Mexican anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism continually challenged the political and economic dominance of the United States, and opposed racial discrimination against Mexican workers in foreign-owned enterprises, as well as within the United States.[33]

In the 1910s, the local IWW's focus on "bread and butter" issues combined with the promise of future workers' control struck a responsive chord among workers caught up in a nationalist revolution that sought to regain control from foreigners the nation's natural resources, productive systems and economic infrastructure".[34]

In Nicaragua, Augustino Cesar Sandino



(1895-1934), the leader of the Nicaraguan guerrilla war against the United States' occupation between 1927-33, remains a national icon. Sandino's army's "red and black flag had an anarcho-syndicalist origin, having been introduced into Mexico by Spanish immigrants." [35]

Sandino's eclectic politics were framed by a "peculiar brand of anarcho-communism," [36] a "radical anarchist communism" [37] "assimilated ... in Mexico during the Mexican revolution" where he received "a political education in syndicalist ideology, also known as anarchosyndicalism, libertarian socialism, or rational communism." [38]

Despite political weaknesses, Sandino's movement, the EDSNN, moved steadily leftwards as Sandino realised that "only the workers and the peasants will go all the way to the end" in the struggle. There was thus increasing emphasis on organising peasant co-operatives in the liberated territories. The US forces were withdrawn in 1933 and the EDSNN largely demobilised. In 1934 Sandino was murdered and the collectives smashed on the orders of General Somoza, the new, pro-US ruler.

LIBYA AND ERITREA

In Italy in the 1880s and 1890s "anarchists and former anarchists" "were some of the most outspoken opponents of Italian mili-

tary adventures in Eritrea and Abyssinia." [39] The Italian anarchist movement followed these struggles with a significant anti-militarist campaign in the early twentieth century, which soon focussed on the Italian invasion of Libya on 19 September 1911.

Augusto Masetti, an anarchist soldier who shot a colonel addressing troops departing for Libya whilst shouting "Down with the War! Long Live Anarchy!" became a popular symbol of the campaign; a special issue of the anarchist journal *L'Agitatore* supporting his action, and proclaiming, "Anarchist revolt shines through the violence of war," led to a roundup of anarchists. Whilst the majority of Socialist Party deputies voted for annexation,[40] the anarchists helped organise demonstrations against the war and a partial general strike and "tried to prevent troop trains leaving the Marches and Liguria for their embarkation points." [41]

The campaign was immensely popular amongst the peasantry and working class[42] and by 1914, the anarchist-dominated front of anti-militarist groups - open to all revolutionaries - had 20,000 members, and worked closely with the Socialist Youth.[43]

When Prime Minister Antonio Salandra sent troops against anarchist-led demonstrations against militarism, against special punishment battalions in the army, and for the release of Masetti on the 7 June 1914,44 he sparked off the "Red Week" of June 1914,45 a mass uprising ushered in by a general strike led by anarchists and the *Italian Syndicalist Union* (USI). Ancona was held by rebels for ten days, barricades went up in all the big cities, small towns in the Marches declared themselves self-governing communes, and everywhere the revolt took place "red flags were raised, churches attacked, railways torn up, villas sacked, taxes abolished and prices reduced." [46] The movement collapsed after the Italian Socialist Party's union wing called off the strike, but it took ten thousand troops to regain control of Ancona.47 After Italy entered the First World War in May 1915, the USI and the anarchists maintained a consistently anti-war, anti-imperialist position, continuing into 1920, when they launched a mass campaign against the Italian invasion of Albania and against imperialist intervention against the Russian Revolution.[48]

IRELAND AND JAMES CONNOLLY

In Ireland, to cite another case, the revolutionary syndicalists James Connolly and Jim Larkin sought to unite workers across sectarian religious divides in the 1910s, aiming at transforming the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, which they led, into a revolutionary "One Big Union." [49] Socialism was to be brought about through a revolutionary general strike:

"they who are building up industrial organisations for the practical purposes of today are at the same time preparing the framework of the society of the future ... the principle of democratic control will operate through the workers correctly organised in ... Industrial Unions, and the ... the political, territorial state of capitalist society will have no place or function..." [50]

A firm anti-imperialist, Connolly opposed the nationalist dictum that "labour must wait," and that independent Ireland must be capitalist: what would be the difference in practice, he wrote, if the unemployed were rounded up for the "to the tune of 'St. Patrick's Day'" whilst the bailiffs wore "green uniforms and the Harp without the Crown, and the warrant turning you out on the road will be stamped with the arms of the Irish Republic?" [51] In the end, he insisted, "the Irish question is a social question, the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself, in the final analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, in Ireland." [52]

Connolly was sceptical of the very ability of the national bourgeoisie to consistently fight against imperialism, writing it off as a sentimental, cowardly, and anti-labour bloc, and he opposed any alliance with this layer: the once-radical middle class have "bowed the knee to Baal, and have a thousand economic strings ... binding them to English capitalism as against every sentimental or historic attachment drawing them toward Irish patriotism," and so, "only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland." [53] Connolly was executed in 1916 following his involvement in the Easter Rising, which helped spark the Irish War of Independence of 1919-1922, one of the first successful secessions from the British Empire.

ANARCHIST REVOLUTION IN KOREA

A final example bears mentioning. The anarchist movement emerged in East Asia in the early twentieth century, where it exerted a significant influence in China, Japan and Korea. With the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, opposition to the occupation developed in both Japan and in Korea, and spilled over into China. In Japan, the prominent anarchist Kotoku Shusui was framed and executed in July 1910, in part because his *Commoner's Newspaper* campaigned against Japanese expansionism. [54]

For the Korean anarchists, the struggle for decolonisation assumed centre-stage in their political activity: they played a prominent part in the 1919 rising against Japanese occupation, and in 1924 formed the *Korean Anarchist Federation* on the basis of the "*Korean Revolution Manifesto*" which stated that

"we declare that the burglar politics of Japan is the enemy for our nation's existence

and that it is our proper right to overthrow the imperialist Japan by a revolutionary means". [55]

The Manifesto made it clear that the solution to this national question was not the creation of a "sovereign national State" but in a social revolution by the peasants and the poor against both the colonial government and the local bourgeoisie.

Further, the struggle was seen in internationalist terms by the *Korean Anarchist Federation*, which went on to found an *Eastern Anarchist Federation* in 1928, spanning China, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam and other countries, and which called upon "the proletariat of the world, especially the eastern colonies" to unite against "international capitalistic imperialism". Within Korea itself, the anarchists organised an underground network, the *Korean Anarcho-Communist Federation*, to engage in guerrilla activity, propaganda work and trade union organising. [56]

In 1929, the Korean anarchists founded an armed liberated zone, the *Korean People's Association in Manchuria*, which brought together two million guerrillas and Korean peasants on the basis of voluntary farming co-operatives. The *Korean People's Association in Manchuria* was able to withstand several years of attacks by Japanese forces and Korean Stalinists backed by the Soviet Union before being forced under-



ground. [57] Resistance continued throughout the 1930s despite intense repression, and a number of joint Sino-Korean operations were organised after the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. [58]

IN CONCLUSION: TOWARDS THE DESTRUCTION OF IMPERIALISM

Anarchists cannot be 'neutral' in any fight against imperialism. Whether it is the struggle against the third world debt, the struggle against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, or opposition to US military attacks on the Middle East, we are not neutral, we can never be neutral. We are against imperialism.

But we are not nationalists. We recognise that imperialism is itself rooted in capitalism, and we recognise that simply replacing foreign elites with local elites will not solve the problem in a way that is fundamentally beneficial for the working class and peasantry.

Establishing new nation-states means, in effect, establishing new capitalist states that, in turn, serve the interests of the local elite at the expense of the working class and peasantry. Thus, most nationalist movements that have achieved their goals have turned on the working class once in power, crushing leftists and trade unionists with vigour. In other words, internal oppression continues in new forms.

At the same time, imperialism cannot be destroyed by the formation of new nation-states. Even independent nation-states are part of the international state system, and the international capitalist system, a system in which the power of imperialist states continues to set the rules of the game. In other words, external repression continues in new forms.

This means that the new states - and the local capitalists that control them - soon find themselves unable to fundamentally challenge imperialist control and instead set about trying to advance their interests within the overall framework of imperialism. This means that they maintain close economic ties with the western centres, whilst using their own state power to build up their own strength, hoping, eventually, to graduate to imperialist status themselves. In practice, the most effective way for the local ruling classes to develop local capitalism is to crush labour and small farmers in order to be able to sell cheap raw materials and manufactured goods on the world market.

This is no solution. We need to abolish imperialism, so creating conditions for the self-government of all people around the world. But this requires the destruction of capitalism and the state system. At the same time, our struggle is a struggle against the ruling classes within the third world: local oppression is no solution. The local elites are an enemy both within national liberation movements and even more so after the formation of new nation-states. It is only the working class and peasantry who can destroy imperialism and capitalism, replacing domination by both local and foreign elites with self-management and social and economic equality.

Hence, we are for working class autonomy and unity and solidarity across countries, across continents, and for the establishment of an international anarcho-communist system through the self-activity of the global working class and peasantry. As Sandino said, "In this struggle, only the workers and peasants will go all the way to the end."

Footnotes:

For the footnotes to this article see the full version on the web page <http://struggle.ws/stopthewar.html>

Beyond the Undifferentiated Mass Diversity in Islam for Absolute Beginners

Roughly 1 in 5 of the world's population is muslim - that's over a billion people. Yet for all the talk about a global society with the telecommunication revolution bringing knowledge to the masses, what most westerners from christian backgrounds know about Islam can be written on the back of a small postage stamp. So here then is a crash course.

Fundamentalism?

Islam, like christianity is an expansionist religion rather than the traditionalist beliefs of a closed community. Conscious of itself as a new initiative, it seeks to preach to and convert pagan and unbeliever. However, whereas christianity found itself growing within a pre-existing state system (the Roman empire) and made concessions to a separate political power, Islam, starting as a means of filling a political vacuum, was the creative force of a new state.

As such the tension (and eventual division) between church and state that marks christianity does not occur within Islam. Hence the "fundamentalist" label is misleading. In the modern western tradition the tension between church and state has come to be expressed as a belief in a "novus ordo seclorum" where life is separated into two spheres - a secular public sphere of politics and a private sphere within which the individual can divide his or her time to the worship of god or mammon as they see fit.

The term "fundamentalism" originated in the US from a political movement of anti-progressive christians who wished to abolish the secular independence of the state from christian beliefs. It is misleading to apply the label of "fundamentalist" in this sense, to muslims as it is a formal part of their belief that no such division between matters social, political and religious should exist. That doesn't mean that there aren't differences as to how this formal unity between religion and politics should be put into practice, but the label fundamentalist only obscures the issue.

Religious or Cultural conservatism?

An important feature of the spread of Islam is the way it has accommodated itself to the pre-existing cultures it has come into contact with. Where pre-existing cultural practices are not explicitly in opposition to codified islamic practices, they have been adopted into the newly islamised culture. With the passage of time many of these pre-islamic cultural practices have retrospectively been labelled as sanctioned by islam by conservative forces in society.

Consequently it is often the case that what is claimed to be islamic practice is more often the pre-existing cultural and social traditions of a given ethnic society. Many of the declaredly islamic traditions of the

Pashtuns of Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan, for example, have much more to do with Pashtun cultural norms than islamic law.

A Unified Ideology?

Like any ideology that emphasises unity as a primary aim, Islam has in practice suffered any number of splits. There is no room for a full history in a piece like this but we must realise that what exists today is the result of long dialectic histories of orthodoxy, heresy, struggle, repression and reform.

Sunni

The Sunni branch of Islam is the dominant one to which 90% of muslims belong. Although the split between the two branches that would become Sunni and Shia was originally a matter of who should succeed Muhammed, they later evolved more substantial political and philosophical differences. As Muhammed failed to produce a son by any of his many marriages, the muslim community was left with no clear successor after his death.

The main body decided that the leadership (the Caliphate) should pass to whoever from within Muhammed's clan the muslim establishment best felt represented continuity. The Shias, in contrast, supported the claim of Ali, the husband of the prophet's favourite daughter. They insisted that the legitimacy of the Caliphate came only from god, not the religious establishment.

In time as those who had known the prophet and remembered his sayings and acts began to die off, this oral tradition of guidance supplementary to the Koran (the sunnah) was written down into several books, six of which became recognised as authoritative sources of guidance - the Hadith. For Sunnism then, society's laws must be determined through reference to the Koran and the Sunnah. For Shi'ites, however, the true path can only be found through the divinely appointed intermediaries - the true Caliphs or Imams.

Kharawaj - too radical by far

As well as Sunni and Shia there was originally a third force, since eradicated, whose negative influence has profoundly shaped Sunni political philosophy. These were the Kharawaji, radicals who held that any sufficiently worthy muslim could hold the position of Imam, whether a descendant of Muhammed or a member of his Quraysh

The writer Paul Bowman is an internationalist, anti-fascist, anarchist and libertarian communist active for over 15 years in Yorkshire, Northern England.

tribe or not. They also held that people were responsible for the good or evil of their acts personally, and that anyone who did evil was no longer a muslim, regardless of what they or anybody else decreed. The effects of this political philosophy was to challenge all authority and encourage all, especially the poor and dispossessed, to see the struggle against injustice as being divinely sanctioned.

Since the time of the Kharawaj, the history of the rise and fall of various dynasties of Caliphs and different empires has led the Sunni tradition to view orthodoxy as something that needs to be tempered with a pragmatism of tolerating differences between muslims and not being over hasty in determining who, of the people who identify as muslims, is or is not a muslim. This catholicity along with an emphasis on the established majority opinion as the source of religious authority has helped to mitigate some of the destabilising effects of radicalism while allowing economic prosperity to be paralleled by a flowering of cultural, scientific and philosophical diversity and enquiry. However, even within the Sunni mainstream, revivalist and puritan sects have arisen both in the past and in more modern times.

Sufi - It's not my Jihad if I can't dance to it

As well as the various sects of Sunnis and Shias as Islam developed, some came to be more interested in the personal spiritual aspect of religion. The struggle to achieve some kind of direct personal union with the divine. This tradition shows the influence of contacts with eastern traditions of the search for enlightenment whether Hindu, Buddhist or Daoist. The Sufi traditions, often seen as borderline heretical by the centres of authoritarian Islamic power, have historically prospered in remote and mountainous regions. Especially towards the east where similar mystical traditions have been strong.

The introspective struggle of the Sufis is, according to them, a form of Jihad (devout struggle), one against the false, earthly self - the Nafs. These strivings have produced some of Islam's most loved poetry, but is also most famously associated with ascetic disciplines such as physical exertions including music and wild dancing to induce visions and spiritual breakthroughs - something which has always made them unpopular with those who believe that music, dancing and celebration in general is the work of the devil.

Shia or Shi'ite

The original underdogs, the Shi'ites today make up only 10% of the muslim world, they are a minority in nearly all muslim

countries, except for Iran, where they are the state religion. They have at times been linked to a desire by non-arab muslims (e.g. Persians) to reject the tendencies for arab domination over islam that are sometimes expressed in the established sunni tradition with its power centres in arab lands. The Shia originated from a split amongst Muhammed's followers after his death with no male heir. The "traditionalist" Sunnis decided to appoint a leader (the Caliph). The "legitimist" Shias thought that Ali, the husband of Muhammed's favorite daughter, was the legitimate heir and Muhammed's privileged role, not only as earthly leader but spiritual too (the Imamate) was passed down this line. They are divided into:

Ithna 'Ashariyah (Twelvers) or Imamis

Who believe that there were twelve legitimate Imams after Muhammed and son-in-law Ali. They believe the twelfth Imam disappeared in 873 and is thought to be alive and hiding and will not reappear until judgement day. The Imamis became the dominant Shi'ite form in the east, particularly in Persia where it became the official state religion in the 16th century. The Iranian revolution of 1979 was taken over by the Shia clergy and their followers who believed in the Imamate of Khomeini. The fact that Shi'ism is an oppressed minority in virtually all other states in the muslim world helped to isolate the Iranian Islamic Republic and limit their ability to export their 'revolution'.

Isma'ilite

After the sixth Imam there was a dispute over whether the legitimate successor was his elder son Isma'il or his younger son Musa al-Kazim. The majority supporting the young son went on to be the mainstream leading to the Twelvers. Of those who stuck with Isma'il they split into those who decided he was the last Imam (the Sab'iyah or Seveners) and those who believed the Imamate carried on in that line. Of these latter, various splits later left groups which still follow people today they consider to be the legitimate successor to Muhammed - the Aga Khan is one such (via, obscurely, Hassan e Sabah of Assasin fame). Other schisms led groups out of Islam proper, such as the Druze (of Lebanon fame) and the Baha'i.

We now move on to the two modern sects who have most influence on the story we are today interested in Afghanistan and related networks throughout the world.

Wahhabi - the only good innovator is a dead one

The peninsula of Arabia has since before Muhammed's time held two contrasting societies together. On the Red Sea coast trade routes from the south from Africa carrying gold, ivory, slaves and valuable

crops meet routes from the east carrying spices and silks. Rich merchant settlements in Mecca and Medina have profited from the riches brought by these trade routes, travellers and pilgrims to holy relics such as the mysterious black rock of the Kaaba in Mecca. In the arabian interior harsh deserts and barren uplands have dictated a meagre semi-nomadic herding existence to the tribal peoples that inhabit the region.

A nomadic herding economy, with its main animal wealth being so easily carried off, lends itself to continual strife between tribes based around livestock rustling and struggles over access to grazing land and limited watering holes. This existence has formed a population where impoverishment sits together with a high degree of mobility and martial experience. Throughout history those people who have been able to unite the warring tribes against an external enemy have been able to mobilise a highly effective military force for conquest of the outside world. This was Muhammed's achievement, in getting the merchants of the trading cities of Mecca and Medina to pay taxes (zakat) to buy off the raiding tribes and lead them in a campaign of conquest across the middle east and North Africa. Although a great and wealthy empire eventually resulted,



by the beginning of the 20th century conditions in the Arabian interior remained pretty much as impoverished and undeveloped as they had in Muhammed's time.

On January 15 1902 a tribesman from the interior in his twenties, accompanied by 15 hand-picked men, scaled the walls of the city of Riyadh in the dead of night. Taking the garrison of the regional governor of the Ottoman empire completely by surprise, this daring band of Bedouin warriors, overwhelmed the garrison and their leader, who the world would come to know simply as Ibn Saud, was proclaimed ruler by the townsfolk. Ibn Saud went on to unite the tribal leaders of the interior and lead them in the conquest of the rich cities and holy centres of Medina and Mecca. He did so not only in the name of the House of Saud, but in the name of a new puritan brand of Sunni Islam - Wahhabism.

Wahhabism is named after the religious reformer Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab who teamed up with the founder of the

house of Saud for a plan of conquest back in the 18th century. This double act had managed to cause the ruling Ottoman empire serious grief beforehand and had been almost wiped out several times previously. Now with Ibn Saud the old plan would finally be put into action again. By 1911 Saud was putting into plan an ambitious scheme to forge the disparate and eternally warring Bedouin tribes of the interior into a united and ideologically committed force.

With the tribesmen having no common national identity beyond their tribe, the zeal of Wahhabism would act as the unifying glue that held the new state together in place of nationalism. In 1912 he founded the first Ikhwan (Brethren) colony with Bedouin from all tribes in new model settlements where they would undergo education and indoctrination by Wahhabi clerics along with military training. In time this would forge an unstoppable new military force that would sweep across Arabia and conquer the holy cities. By 1921 this process was complete. However Saud now faced the usual problem of those who mobilise new radical forces to conquer political power - how to demobilise them before they started to destroy the very bases of political power itself.

The problems had already become apparent when the Ikhwan had taken Mecca. On hearing some unfortunate who had decided a welcoming blast on a trumpet should greet the conquerors, the Wahhabis, for whom music is anti-islamic, rioted and mass destruction and slaughter ensued. Convinced that any innovation since Muhammed's time was anathema, they tore down minarets (developed, like much mosque architecture since Muhammed's time) and, believing that any worship of relics, saints, or tombs of holy men was an affront to the doctrine that only god can be worshipped, they went round smashing up many such pilgrimmage sites, much to the distress of those who made their living of the pilgrims that came to visit them. The wahhabi religious police (mutawa) led a reign of terror in the cities, crashing into people's homes and, if so much as sniffing the scent of tobacco, would thrash the unfortunates senseless.

More importantly for Ibn Saud, the Ikhwan wanted to continue military expansion, attacking the areas to the north occupied by the British and French since the end of WW1 and the collapse of the Ottoman empire. Saud wanted to avoid war with the British, both to keep what he had gained and also because he was rapidly running out of money for the payments to the tribal chiefs he needed to keep them in his grand coalition. The possibility of selling an exploration concession to western explorers interested in looking for oil in Saudi Arabia was too interesting to pass up.

By 1927 the Ikhwan were denouncing Ibn Saud for selling out the cause and eventually rose in rebellion against him. The ensuing struggle was bloody, one ultra-zealous band nearly managing to destroy the tomb of the Prophet himself, but the radicals were eventually put down. Their leaders fled to Kuwait, only to be handed back over to Saud by the eager to please British. Thus ended the first phase of the Wahhabi's jihad.

Although the Ikhwan's military campaign was halted, the Wahhabis continued to export their religious revolution. The most successful first stop was across the Red Sea in Egypt, where they supported the formation of Hassan al Banna's Muslim Brotherhood (Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimun). The Brotherhood was formed to combat Egypt's secular constitution of 1923. After the defeat of Egypt and other Arabs trying to stop the creation of Israel in 1948, they rose against the government and were part of the revolution that brought the secular pan-arab nationalist Nasser to power. Nasser's programme was for an anti-imperialist struggle against the western powers (he nationalised the Suez Canal in 1956) combined with 'socialist' industrial development and modernisation.

This latter part was heatedly opposed by the Brotherhood and the ensuing failed assassination attempt brought about their suppression by Nasser and the undying opposition between militant Islamism and pan-arab nationalism ever since. Nasser's "socialist" rhetoric and friendliness towards the Soviet union, panicked the western powers, particularly the US who were holding the ring for western imperialism since the British bowed out of the region after the 1956 Suez fiasco. The US involvement with the militant Islamists as a bulwark against Soviet influence in the Middle East dates from this period.

Deobandis - back to basics

The Taleban, although a modern puritan Sunni sect, are not Wahhabis. They are part of a separate school that has its origin in the 19th century in India under British Imperial rule. After the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, which the British blamed primarily on muslims, muslims found themselves excluded from all institutions, including schools, of imperial society. Being excluded from official schooling meant exclusion from any role in the civil service which ran the country. In other ways too the mutiny forced a rethink on Indian muslim society.

In many ways the rising had been the last attempt to go back to the pre-colonial social order of India under the Mughal empire. The traditional leaders and ruling class had demonstrated incompetence or even refused to back the soldier-led mutiny at all. If Indian society was to escape

from British clutches it would have to find a new way forward, rather than simply looking back.

Amongst muslims two main directions emerged. The first, intent on adopting some of the western methods, created new secularised schools where a similar education to the civil service schools could be provided to young muslims, so they would eventually be able to re-enter the administration of the country. The second approach was to create a revivalist islamic education that would return the power of their faith to young muslims and make them strong to reject the corrupting force of westernisation in preparation for throwing out the British oppressor. This second school took its name from the Indian town of Deoband where its leading religious juridical council (ulemma) was based.



Like the Wahhabis, the Deobandi's faith is a severe puritan one which bans music, dancing, worship of saints or holy relics and sees an external, physical Jihad (Jihad bis Saif) as a central pillar of the faith. They took part in the struggle for independence from the British and for the partition of India to create Pakistan. The Deobandis are one of the main Sunni communities in Pakistan and have been constantly in struggle both against the Shi'ite minority in Pakistan and the other main Sunni community the Brelvis.

These latter are more influenced by Sufi traditions that have long persisted in the harsh mountains of the Hindu Kush that dominate Kashmir and Afghanistan as well as in the mountainous Caucasus regions including Chechnya. Although the Sufi muslims of Chechnya and Afghanistan have certainly shown that the "inner" jihad for enlightenment (Jihad bin Nafs) is no contradiction to the external jihad of the AK47, in Pakistan the "Jihadis" that have fought the Indians in Kashmir and the Russians in Afghanistan, are almost exclusively drawn from the Deobandis. It was their religious schools (madrassas) set up on the frontier that took in the orphans of the Afghan war, that no one else would feed, and turned them into Taliban soldiers. Since the end of the war in 1989 hostility between Deobandis and Brelvis and both against Shi'ites, has resulted in a rising number of bomb and riot attacks on rival mosques and assassinations in Pakistan.

The Afghan War 1979 - 1989

The current situation is above all the result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent US proxy war fought there. This was fought both through Afghan factions and an international network of ideologically committed islamists ready to fight the Soviet forces in the name of Islam. The US State Department, wary of Iran's Shi'ite Islamic revolution, were more than happy to find their Saudi allies were able to mobilise, through Wahhabi networks, militant islamists who were as hostile to Iran as they were to the Russians. This would allow them, to fund the creation of a fighting force that would be strong enough to take on the Russians, yet were not in any danger of spreading the Iranian model, especially given the seeming loyalty many of the young radicals showed to the royal families of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

In this way the US and Britain helped build up a veritable International Brigade of Islamist fighters, funded by the proceeds of Gulf oil, sheltered and trained by the Pakistani intelligence services of General Zia ul Haq's regime and Western special forces. It was this network that brought together Wahhabis and Deobandis to create an international Jihadi movement of which Al Qaeda and its brother organisations like

Egyptian Jihad (formed from the Muslim Brotherhood mentioned above). So what motivates this network?

The Al Qa'eda Programme

Al Qa'eda's activities may be illegal, immoral and indefensible but they are neither motiveless nor mindless. They have a programme and this is it:

The demands are:

1. Troops Out Now - that is, US troops out of Saudi Arabia
2. End Israeli oppression of Palestinians
3. End sanctions against Iraq
4. End western support for corrupt regimes in muslim/arab countries - control of oil wealth
- (5. Anti-Communism and Statism)

The fifth demand is not stated but it is the foundation of the campaign against the Russians in Afghanistan that gave the movement its birth.

The defence of private property is part of the sayings of the Prophet and the subsequent Caliphs. Anti-communism is a matter of doctrine for orthodox islamists. Secondly, the creation of a state to enforce islamic law - Sharia - is the defining demand of modern islamism and has, as we saw at the very beginning, always been central to islam as a whole.

It follows then, that despite the seeming radicalism of the demand to stop western powers propping up corrupt despotic re-

gimes in the muslim world (or more particularly, the arab world, because for all its islamic internationalism this particular network remains very much in the tradition of arab-centric sunni thought), this network has no agenda for the destruction of capitalism and the extraction of profit. Indeed of all the demands number 4 is most suspect. Osama bin Laden was friendly with his family's traditional patrons, the Saudi royal family, right up until they invited the US forces into Saudi during the Gulf war.

These demands are framed as a religious struggle to "*free the holy places of islam*", pretty much the same slogan that Ibn Saud used to rally the original Wahhabi Ikhwan fighters for the conquest of Arabia. However, much as bin Laden would no doubt like to refer back to such historical precedents, we must not let the surface similarities blind us to the significant differences. The original Ikhwan, coming from a world which had, not only religiously but technologically remained almost unchanged since the time of Muhammed, were fighting against modern technology and industry. Ibn Saud's allowing telephones into the country was one of the grievances for their revolt.

Bin Laden, by contrast has his own satellite phones, a modern education in civil engineering and no aversion to setting up modern factories, construction businesses or making millions on the international financial markets. Of course these modern means are all justified by the ends of jihad. But whichever way you look at it, bin Laden is a member of the local industrialist bourgeoisie chafeing at the bit to build up commodity production in the Middle East, not knock it down.

For all the pre-modern language of his movement, the content is for more technological and industrial development, not less. The military airbases and command posts that the US troops moved into in 1990 were built by bin Laden for the Saudis to use to build an independent military force against the threat of Saddam's Iraq (for much as the current Al Qa'eda demands include the dropping of sanctions against Iraq, we must remember that bin Laden was warning against Hussain's aggressive intentions from the late 80s onwards). Bin Laden wishes to see an independently powerful islamic Middle East, and if that requires technological and economic development then he is all for it.

Beyond Al Qa'eda and Osama bin Laden's clothing of a industrialising developmental agenda in pre-modern clothing, we need to look at the social recruiting base and background of the footsoldiers of today's militant movements. In the time of Ibn Saud they were desert nomads from an essentially pre-capitalist existence. No more.

Material Foundations

Most of the islamic societies across North Africa and the Middle East were subjected to European colonialism or Ottoman rule at some stage from the 19th to the 20th centuries. Socially these regions, although containing some of the greatest urban centres of civilisation, remained primarily subsistence economies for the majority of the inhabitants, whether settled farmers or nomadic herders. While colonial rule started the process of forcing the population off the land, this social transformation really got into gear under the rule of the post-colonial regimes after WW1 and, even more so after WW2.

The new post colonial regimes modelled themselves on their erstwhile colonizers, introducing a secular state and institutions, and often promoting western dress and culture. But many of the trappings of the new states, whether transport infrastructure, motor cars, telephones, etc. had to be bought from overseas. In the gulf states this could all be paid for by oil wealth without any need for the development of local industry or production. In the oil-less states the balance of payments pressure produced a need to go into commodity production in return, in order to pay for the imported materiel. But starting from a level of industrial development unable to compete with the west, the only industry ready for conversion to commodity production was agriculture. Combined with strong tariff barriers protecting western food crop production, the "balance of payments" cash crop has played the major role in throwing the peasantry off the land.

This mass of newly landless peasants, drifting towards the shanty towns surrounding the urban centres, looking for wage work, is the sleeping giant of politics in the Islamic world. Any rising by this new proletariat would be an earthquake strong enough to shake the foundations of all the established powers, mostly despotic as they are, in the region. It is amongst this multitude that the islamists have worked hard to establish a base.

They have done so by setting up a religious based welfare system. Most of the post colonial states are too concerned about paying their debts to western banks and the IMF to spend any of their meagre tax revenues on social welfare. Further the standard IMF "structural adjustment" terms prohibit any such social spending, even were any of the regimes farsighted enough to consider them. Islam has a redistributive "social democratic" taxation system built into its foundations as zakat, one of the five obligations of the religion. Islamists are able to lean on the beneficiaries of trade with the west, or oil rights, for money. In return they promise to keep a lid on popular revolt, particularly any socialistic or class war elements.

The current regimes, mostly being

founded by people who themselves dallied with socialistic or national liberation politics in their struggle to depose colonial power, are all too aware of the destabilising potential of such politics, not too mention the interests of the local capitalists. So they are happy for the islamists to hold ideological sway over the urban proletariat, so long as their anger is diverted to handy external scapegoats, such as Israel or America.

This welfare system though is dependant upon attending the mosque and being integrated into the whole islamist system of ideological formation. The system provides not only material aid, but also meeting places, places to hear news from co-religionists from afar and abroad. In a sense the islamist mission amongst the urban poor corresponds to the institutions that workers across the world have built for themselves (friendly societies, meeting houses, public speaking and international correspondence, etc.), except that in this instance these institutions and spaces are not the autonomous products of workers activity. Rather they are funded by the bosses and the rich and controlled by a power that mediates between the two, usually antagonist classes and the state. This state of affairs is not due to some innate failing of political consciousness amongst the urban proletariat, rather it is a product of the economic environment of mass unemployment and regime of accumulation that has not yet reached the stage of accumulating through relative surplus value, but remains founded on the absolute exploitation of those in work. The mass of the urban proletariat in many islamic countries does not have enough spare cash to set up their own autonomous spaces and aid projects, compared to the resources the islamists can access, especially for comparatively expensive services like modern health care.

But the creation of autonomous spaces in the islamic world is what is desperately needed by local workers and radicals. It is in this area that international solidarity can play the most important role in the future. Solidarity can help build up the spaces for the proletariat of North Africa and the Middle East to find a libertory path between the devil of rotten despotic regimes and the deep blue sea of militant islamic capitalism.

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Commissars of the Free Press

I'm not going to argue that there is a bias in the media, I'll let a journalist do that for me: "By the mid- 1980s, the AP [Associated Press – a news agency supplying reports to the international media] used 'terrorist' about Arabs but rarely about the IRA in Northern Ireland, where the agreed word was 'guerrillas'; presumably because AP serves a number of news outlets in the United States with a large Irish-American audience.

The BBC, which increasingly referred to Arab 'terrorists', always referred to the IRA as 'terrorists' but scarcely ever called ANC bombers in South Africa 'terrorists'; probably because the BBC, in its wisdom had decided that the ANC's cause was more 'justified' than the Palestinian's or the IRA's.

Tass and Pravda, [Tass being the Russian version of AP] of course, referred to Afghan rebels as 'terrorists'.

The Western press would never do this, even though the Afghan guerrillas – 'freedom fighters' or 'insurgents' were alternative descriptions – murdered the wives and children of Communist party officials, burned down schools and fired rockets onto the civilian population of Kabul.

A startling example of double standards occurred in September 1985, when a British newspaper reported that an airliner carrying civilian passengers had been 'downed by rebels'. Something wrong here, surely. Terrorists destroy civilian airliners. No one was in any doubt about that in 1988 when a bomb exploded aboard a Pan Am Boeing 747 over Scotland, killing all on board."

"But 'terrorism' no longer means terrorism. It is not a definition; it is a political contrivance. 'Terrorists' are those who use violence against the side that is using the word."

"To adopt the word means that we have taken a side in the Middle east, not between right and wrong, good and evil, David and Goliath, but with one set of combatants against another. For journalists in the Middle East, the use of the word 'terrorism' is akin to carrying a gun.

Unless the word is use against all acts of terrorism – which it is not – then it's employment turns the reporter into a participant in the war. He becomes a belligerent." (From "Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War" by Robert Fisk page 439)

Nor am I going to argue that the media often inhibits an understanding of situations, particularly in regard to foreign policy issues, where almost all of us are dependant on 'second hand' information and where most of us receive our 'second hand' information from the corporate media. Again, I'm going to let some one else do this. "in surveys carried out by the Center for Studies in Communication of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, those who watched the most television on the Gulf War were the least informed about basic facts of life in the region.

Among the most frequent watchers, 32 per cent thought Kuwait was a democracy; only 23 per cent were aware that there were other occupations in the Middle East besides Iraq's, and only 10 per cent had heard of the intifada, the most sustained revolt in modern Middle East history.

When queried as to which three nations vetoed the recent United Nations resolution calling for an international peace conference (the United States, Israel, and Dominica), 14 per cent correctly identified the U.S., but another 12 per cent thought it has to be Iraq. The Center's polls showed that only 13 per cent of these TV viewers were aware of what official U.S. policy was toward Iraq before the August 2 invasion." (From 'For Palestine' by Jay Murphy page iii)

What I'm going to do is ask 'Why?'.

Why don't we have a media which attempts to be unbiased and objective?

Why don't we have a media which presents all relevant information rather than selecting some information for prominent display and largely rejecting other information?

Why don't we have a wider diversity of opinion in the media?

Firstly, there is a weighty concentration of ownership.

We all know the media barons, the Blacks, Maxwells, Murdochs, Berlusconi, and O'Reillys.



Indymedia pic of S26 Washington DC anti-war demo

It requires a great amount of start up capital to get up and going in this business and that restricts ownership of major media to a tiny number of the super rich or to giant mega corporations themselves owned by a slightly larger circle of the super rich.

The point is not that the owner directly influences what goes into the newspaper, although that can happen as former *Daily Mirror* journalist John Pilger shows in his book *Hidden Agendas*.

The point is that there is not a 'level playing field' where anyone can set up a media outlet and compete – you have to be enormously wealthy to do so.

Secondly, the primary market for all media, at least all non-State owned me-

The author lives in Ireland and writes for the Free Earth web site <http://struggle.ws/freearth.html>

dia, is not the general public but advertisers.

Who places advertisements? Why corporations of course and it is to them the media is sold, which is why you can have T.V. stations and newspapers with out paying for them, or why T.V. stations and newspapers advertise themselves as reaching a large audience.

To look at what this means consider a recent issue of 'The Economist' (September 22nd – 28th).

On page 12 we have a clear rejection on the idea that there is any link between American power in the Middle East and the September 11th attacks – "the idea that America brought the assault on itself is absurd."

On page 5 we have a full page ad. extolling the virtues of investment in Saudi Arabia, paid for by 'The Ministry of Information' (you couldn't make it up!) of Saudi's ruling family aka government.

On page 27 you have a job advertisement on behalf of Saudi Aramco, the local branch of an American based multi-national oil company.

Clearly it is totally incompatible to sell yourself to these people and to run a piece to the effect that the Middle East has been a battlefield for the competing forces of American Imperialism and indigenous nationalism for decades, and that now that battlefield includes New York.

To say such is to be anti-American, or a supporter of Islamic fundamentalism, or to justify terrorism. Which means that at least one segment of the Pentagon is anti-American, supporters of Islamic fundamentalism and justifies terrorism.

How come? Because a 1997 U.S. Department of Defence study found that: "As part of its global power position, the United States is called upon frequently to respond to international causes and deploy forces around the world. America's position in the world invites attack simply because of its presence. Historical data show a strong correlation between U.S. involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States." (Quoted in the CATO website <http://www.cato.org/pubs/fpbriefs/fpb-050es.html>)

Now it is not that advertisers order the media not to run a certain story or put pressure on the media, although that can happen.

It is simply that a publication which even in just 25% of it's copy ran stories highly critical of corporate power, opinion pieces and editorials questioning the basis of our society, could hardly expect to get advertising revenue from those same corporations.

Thus a publication which did so could not compete in the market place.

Perhaps of more concern in regard to domestic issues is the fact that advertisers are aiming for groups in the 'high income' brackets with the greater disposable income to spend on consumer goods. 'The Irish Times' for in-

stance sells itself by saying "8 out of 10 senior business people read" it.

Thus newspapers, and media in general, which appeal to the interests and concerns of the better off are more likely to get advertising revenue.

Again doing the opposite will effect your ability to compete.

Thirdly the media, like any industry, is dependant on it's supply of raw material.

In this case information. Where does it get this information? What are it's sources? In the context of a war the primary sources are government/military, and they do their utmost to make sure it stays that way.

Journalist Peter Preston describes the situation during the Falklands War: *"Those of us who yomped through the Ministry of Defence in the Falklands soon got the changed hang of things. Top chaps in dark suits would summon up the full authority of their office and lie like troopers."*

"The Falklands war was more than a distant side show. It hugely impressed the Pentagon. Ensure that reporters are cooped upon on aircraft carriers or minded by Mod male nurses far from the front and, as long as you keep decent clamps on back at the political ranch, there is total information control." (The Guardian 8/10/01)

The United States military, as so often before, took the example from their British colleagues and employed it in Grenada, Panama and the Gulf.

Consider the coverage during the Second Gulf War, and the build up to it.

Firstly we had the reports of Iraqi troops massed at the Saudi border poised to invade the personal property of the House of Saud, a gang of oil rich religious fanatic despots. O.K. I'm lying Saudi Arabia was not described like that, but nonetheless Iraqi armour was about to sweep down into Saudi in a Hitlerian blitzkrieg. We were originally told that U.S. troops were going out there to protect Saudi Arabia. Except this story was completely false. As was later admitted by U.S. Generals, and known to be false both by the media (but never reported) and the Pentagon, because satellite photos existed which saw Iraqi withdrawals back into Iraq's pre-August 2nd 1990 borders.

Secondly we had the 'Iraqi soldiers kill babies by throwing them out of incubators' story. Again false. Not only had the Iraqi Army not done this but the hospital where it was supposed to have happened didn't even have enough incubators for the 300 babies supposedly slain.

Thirdly we had the "smart bombs". Which is probably the single thing which will be most remembered from the Second Gulf War (except for Iraqis who will remember deaths, injuries and fear). Except even if we accept the premise that these "smart bombs" only hit what they were supposed to and that what they were supposed to hit was not power stations, bridges, water works etc., still only 7% of the missiles and bombs used were "smart".

We saw just how "smart" these bombing cam-

paigns are during the air strikes on Yugoslavia. The difference then was that with a body of international journalists on both sides of the frontline it was far harder for the Pentagon and the MoD to impose total control on what was being reported. Nonetheless the factors detailed above still worked to ensure that when "accidents" happened the spin, slant, and interpretation given to events remained one which favoured the war effort.

In other words a report of an event which exposed the reality of war, but coupled with an interpretation which accepted the paradigm of the war party.

For example: 'the bombing is killing innocent people and not doing the job - we must send ground troops'(which assumes that a full scale invasion would not kill as many or more and which does not questioning the goals but just the means).

Or: 'what can NATO do to ensure that there are no civilian deaths?' (which supports the war effort, assumes that such a thing is possible and assumes that the apparatchiks of NATO give a fuck so long as their bloody handwork is not on the Six o'Clock news) .

We now have defence experts (creatures of Ministries of Defence and Defence industries), retired officers and serving officers pontificating upon what is happening in Afghanistan. Surely a more accurate answer to that question could be given by interviewing survivors from the bombing of Japan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq and Yugoslavia.

We are seeing maps with troop dispositions, bases, and aircraft carriers. Surely pictures of the effects of previous wars would be just as apt. We have diagrams of warplanes showing their attributes but no pictures of what they do to the bodies of human beings.

So what impact is this having on the American media?

As it stands today hardly a glimmer of dissent is tolerated. According to film director Michael Moore :

"Our media it's so pathetic and embarrassing"

"I've been called by the CBC, BBC, and ABC in Australia."

I've been on the nightly newscast of every Western country practically, and I've not had a single call from the American networks Because I'm going to go on there and say the things they don't want to hear: I'm going to be off message. I'm not going to sing with the chorus. And the media is part of the chorus now. They're wearing their ribbons and they're not being objective journalists and they're not presenting all sides." (Toronto Globe and Mail 6/10/01)

Michael Moore, has had, in a further silencing of dissent, the distribution of his latest book halted by the publishing company (owned by Rupert Murdoch) which was bringing it out.

Furthermore at least two journalists have been fired for criticising President George Bush Jnr. The boss of one of them wrote a front page apology for the fact a member of his staff had criticised Dubya ending it with: *"May God Bless President George W. Bush and other leaders. And God Bless America!"* (Toronto Globe and Mail 6/10/01)

Outside the United States, there has been more dissenting voices and more of a debate in the media.

Still it has been primarily dissenting voices questioning the means not the end of Western policy, questioning the injustice of sanctions on Iraq or the injustice of support for Israeli Defence Forces repression but not relating this to corporate investments in the Middle East oilfields.

Or debate within a very narrow spectrum which accepts the supposed goals of Western military intervention in the Middle East and Central Asia, with the dissenting voices merely asking for more United Nations involvement or to give more opportunity for the Taliban to hand over Bin Laden.

Never are the dots joined and the connection made between corporate investments and markets in the Middle East, military intervention to defend them, support for client states such as Israel and Saudi Arabia to do likewise, the rise of indigenous nationalist movements and September 11th's attacks. There is a war for control of the Middle East, and there has been for decades, but you might never know it.

Information on the war

<http://www.indymedia.org>

Indymedia is a network of independent web sites on which anyone may add articles, photos or even audio and video for others to access.

<http://www.ainfos.ca>

An anarchist newservice that carries some anarchist anti-war news.

<http://struggle.ws/stoptthewar.html>

A site maintained by the editor of this publication with dozens of links to background information on the war and anarchist analysis.

For news by email send an email to haltWAR-subscribe@yahoo.com

Building an antiwar movement

It's easy to feel despair, isolation and frustration at what's presented to us as an inevitable drive into an indefinitely long war. The key ingredients of success in building a successful anti-war movement are confidence in ordinary people's potential, solidarity with each other and a long-term view: we have not been able to prevent the first bombs falling, but over time we can reverse the dynamic and stop the war.

Historical experience – desertion and mutinies at the end of World War I, the international movement against the war in Vietnam, the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s – shows that movements can stop or divert even large-scale processes of militarisation, but only when large numbers of ordinary people are actively involved. The experience of active involvement in turn gives people more confidence in their own capacities to think and act for themselves, which is an important element in building a better world. This means:

1. Making space for a diversity of voices within the movement. To insist on expressing only the most radical line will isolate activists at the very time when many ordinary people are looking for a way out. To insist on being as “mainstream” as possible will stop the movement developing and restrict participation to a small section of the population. So a good “platform” will include as wide a range of anti-war voices as possible. This enables the movement to speak to different people and is part of learning from each other.

2. Making sure that the movement emphasises activities which everyone can take part in. It's important to remember that most actions don't have an immediate chance of stopping the war; but if they give people a chance to learn how to become active, to gain confidence and to develop their own understanding, they can help build a movement that does have a chance.

3. Taking care that the movement isn't run by a handful of experienced people to the exclusion of everyone else. While activists may have particular skills, their job is to share them and pass them on. Stopping this war is likely to be a long campaign, so we will need to develop everyone's ability to take part at every level.

In terms of strategy, it's important for people to mobilise within their own everyday contexts, both to root the movement in the real world and to change the existing social relationships that ultimately give rise to war. While the movement will also need to reach out into public space and develop a “political” face, this shouldn't become separate from the rest of the movement. The point is for ordinary people to politi-

cise themselves, not to develop a separate political élite. In practice, what we need to do is:

1. Start by talking to other people at work, in the shops, at home, on the bus, in school, online – anywhere where people already know us. This may seem challenging at times, but it's becoming clear that far more people are uneasy about the prospect of war than the media leads us to think. By opening up this new space for communication, we undermine some of the usual power relationships and creating space for new kinds of solidarity and friendship.

2. Offer people immediate, practical things to do: signing something, going on a march, coming to a meeting, putting up posters, circulating a letter. We're trying to “push people's boundaries” enough so that they feel they are becoming active, but not so much that they see activism as beyond their reach.

3. Encourage people to take the next step, and support them if they don't yet know how: ask them to speak at meetings or write leaflets, help them to put press releases or websites together, show them how to organise a public meeting or a march. Be careful of patronising people: the trick is to be confident that they can do whatever they set their mind to, and make sure they have the backup they need to do it. The second time somebody does something, we should leave them to it!

4. Educate ourselves: this movement is likely to last a long time, and most of us are going to have to find out more about all kinds of issues, from foreign policy to Islam to international law. This also gives us a chance to build connections by inviting speakers from other groups, from local Muslim associations to college lecturers to development organisations.

5. Make links: although (almost) anyone who opposes war should be welcomed, we should work and argue for making links to other issues, most importantly foreign policy, “development” and world economics, racism and intolerance, and civil liberties. To stop the war and leave the system ready for an-

Laurence Cox (Dublin) has been involved in social movements for nearly 20 years, including opposing the Falklands War, the nuclear arms race and the second Gulf War. He's an academic specialist in social movements research, currently studying working-class community politics in Ireland.



other war tomorrow is not enough.

6. Try to spread the movement, rather than build little empires. Encourage people to take independent action (and support them when they do); work to create networks between different groups and initiatives, without imposing a single “line” that everyone has to follow.

This war may run for years in various forms, and a movement that can stop it will need to include many different social groups. So there's space for all sorts of different action, and it's important to respect this, because it's how new people will both find their way to the movement and how other people can contribute something we might not have thought of. Different actions also have different purposes (though some overlap):

- Convincing ordinary people: meetings, posters, demos, street theatre, leaflets, videos, etc.
- Building the movement: newsletters, mailing lists, teach-ins, websites, gatherings, benefit gigs, etc.
- “Stopping the machine in its tracks”: 5-minute strikes for peace, occupations, peace observers, supporting deserters, blockades, etc.
- Influencing governments or the media: petitions, vigils, press releases, photo opportunities, etc.

We learn as movements, not just as individuals, and the dialogue between us is important. There is no book that can tell us authoritatively how we are going to stop this war; it's something we will work out together in practice. We can certainly learn from other movements and past history (several campaigns have produced excellent “how-to” guides that are a real goldmine of ideas), but at the end of the day none of us knows exactly what will work, and we won't know until we've managed to stop the war (if then!) In the process, though, we are also learning something else of immense value: how to treat each other as equals, how to cooperate and communicate without bosses and laws, and how to build the kind of world that we want to live in.

Capitalism is the disease – anarchism is the cure

We find ourselves once again on the brink of an abyss; facing the horrendous prospect of propulsion into war as the result of decisions made and actions taken by a relative handful of statist, authoritarian bigots and fanatics. Once again, on each side in the coming conflict, those in authority will expect (and receive) the ultimate sacrifice from those they govern – their lives for ‘the cause’. How is it that so few can cause such misery and terror to so many; and how can they be stopped?

Imperialism, the ability of countries to globally and locally dictate trade relations with other countries, is a feature of a small number of powerful capitalist states. The policies of imperialist nation states are largely dictated by the major companies based there. As the dominant world superpower, the government of the USA is in a very strong position to dictate trade relations with other countries, and does so (US foreign policy is dealt with in a separate article). The ultimate sanction of all nation states against rival nation states is war.

The military apparatus of the state (armed forces and associated hardware) means it is ideally suited to waging war on its rivals – the state *is* the ‘war machine’. The repressive apparatus (police, courts, prisons etc.) keeps any internal dissent under control.

At the same time as existing in a violent form, the state exists in our attitudes and interpersonal relationships – placed there by tradition on one hand and the media on the other. The mainstream media functions as a capitalist apparatus of consent, responsible for the mental subjugation of the people, and controlling of our hearts and minds. President W Bush’s call for a “*war against terrorism*” is self-contradictory, since war is the *promotion* of terror, bloodshed and death, in pursuit of military objectives (i.e. power politics, economics, religion). Most of the mainstream media didn’t question this however, and were quick to relay the war-on-terrorism message around the world, inflaming public opinion in the process.

War-time being a time of ‘national crisis’, the sense of ‘national identity’ is reinvigorated in people’s minds. Nationalism, racism, religious intolerance and hatred are much more in evidence in a nation at war. The climate for debate and dissent is somewhat stifled. As the anarchist Randolph Bourne wrote: “*The nation in war-time attains a uniformity of feeling, a hierarchy of values, culminating at the undisputed apex of the State ideal, which could not possibly be produced through any agency other than war*”.

To recap then, the state is the war-machine, the driving force of which is capitalism. The capitalist state also exists inside our minds by influencing our beliefs and values via the media. So working class people come to hold reactionary and false ideas such as nationalism, racism, xenophobia, sexism etc. This divides us from each other and weakens our ability to respond to the state’s destructive

and dangerous manoeuvres, including war.

Anarchist social revolution will smash the capitalist economy. Capitalist industry will be expropriated and private property abolished, along with currency, and exchange generally. People will socialise the means of production, distribution and communication etc. for the benefit of society as a whole. Production and distribution of goods and services will be organised by workers’ and community organisations: *from* each according to their ability, *to* each according to their need.

Useless enterprises (insurance and financial services, advertising, sales, lawyers, stockbrokers...) will be closed, workers councils will take over and run those that serve a useful purpose. In this way the capitalist engine of imperialism and war is wrecked. With banks abolished and debts cancelled the economic inequalities that exist between nations at present could at last be addressed. We must strive for and establish egalitarian social relations between all people in all parts of the world.

Equally fundamental to anarchist ideas of social revolution, the dismantling of all state apparatus is the disarming of the war machine. Only when people abolish church and state can they organise society in a non-hierarchical, equal and free manner.

The struggle for anarchist revolution is principally a struggle for the hearts and minds of working class people. We have to win the ‘battle of ideas’ in order to transform society, to demonstrate that anarchist and anti-authoritarian ideas about society and methods of working are the most useful and relevant for this purpose (although obviously we do not exclude good ideas simply because they have not been labelled ‘anarchist’). Clearly anarchist ideas must become much more popular, widespread and well-understood than they generally are now in order to achieve a stateless, classless social revolution. This means counter-acting the mainstream media of today, and working towards a society in which genuinely free and diverse media could flourish.

A successful anarchist revolution then, would result in society being organised by the free association and federation of workers (and peasants, in some countries), with decisions made directly by the people affected by them. A new era, of international solidarity, peace and co-operation is born. Relations between peoples unimpeded by

The author is an anarchist living in England

capital will improve, and solidarity increase to such an extent that future war becomes unthinkable to the citizens of earth. The people never declared war on any nation, but by our tacit acceptance and passivity we allow war to be waged.

As Chilean anarchists CUAC-Chile say: “*We know that the task of stopping barbarism is not one of governments, who play with us as with pieces of chess, and they are not interested in the human cost of this macabre game. This responsibility belongs to the actions of solidarity of the people, in reviving a new internationalist spirit that can face up to death. Today our call is for peace, but we know that if we want peace, we should declare war on capitalism and on state power. But we will categorically reject participation in any war that is not against our true enemies. No war between nations, No peace between classes! Stop irrationality and massacre!*”

The reason why so few have caused such misery throughout history to so many in wars is: a) because they occupy positions of wealth and authority, and b) due to the deception of and acquiescence by ordinary people. As anarchists we aim to: a) eradicate the principle of authority from human relationships and the state war machine from society, and b) demonstrate to people that collectively they are powerful, and that their real allies are their neighbours in foreign countries, not their local ruling class. The people of the world have far more in common with one another than with any variety of ruling class parasite. We should band together to overthrow all states (capitalist, ‘communist’, religious, or otherwise) and live in peace.

For general information on anarchism see the anarchist FAQ at <http://anarchistfaq.org>
For details of the anarchist platform <http://struggle.ws/platform.html>



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