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IF JOBS ARE THE ANSWER IT MUST HAVE BEEN A STUPID QUESTION

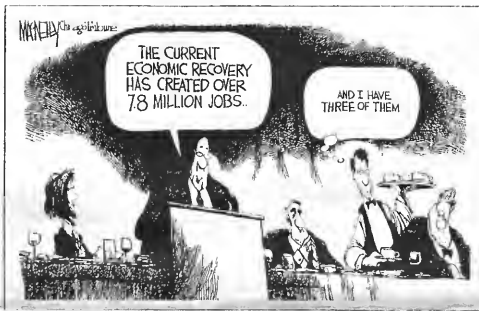
DOCKERS INTERNATIONAL BRINGING IT HOME!

How flexible can we get?

In January London will be hosting a G7 / EEC Summit meeting on Jobs, not that Londoners were asked about it. Blair will be trying to get the world dominators to take up his (well, the Tories') idea of flexibility to create more jobs, of Welfare to Work, Students to Work, Mothers to Chinnies, ... as the solution to the world's problems. The French leadership will be calling for more old-fashioned job creation policies, and seem surprised at not getting support from their fellow socialist. But whatever the twist, our leaders are sure that jobs are the answer.

Globally they want to ensure that nobody can survive without working for them in return, that everywhere the only choice is for us to hand over our skills and abilities, our bodies and our minds in exchange for just enough for us to get by and get back to work. Of course how little we'll accept depends on our history and our strength, but while it's true that in this country many wages are quite a bit above poverty levels, not only are many below, but increasing numbers are expected to work for free, as 'work experience', to get a job. After over a decade of Blairite policies, millions have been forced into taking on increasing numbers of jobs to survive, into 'self-employment', temporary and contract work, and are we happier for it?

"I WAS LOOKING FOR A JOB AND I FOUND A JOB - AND HEAVEN KNOWS IT'S FULFILLING NOW" - THE SMITHS



The level of dissatisfaction with jobs is shown by the fact that the kind of imagery of slavery, boredom, misery previously used in critiques of work, are now used by Job Agencies and newspapers plugging their jobs section. Maybe I will be happy when I get the right job, satellite TV, the latest CD/video/drugs/style. The way to a better future is supposed to be through better competition, more flexibility, lying better at interviews, working even harder than our colleagues....

"THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN HAVING A JOB IS NOT HAVING ONE" - O WILDE

Of course, forcing everybody to be active on the labour market doesn't guarantee that everyone manages to get a job (or two, or however many necessary to survive). In fact the system requires constant pressure and competition from the bottom, from those who have little or nothing. This has meant fifteen years of attacks on the unwaged, making life worse by cuts in income and services, increases in bills and taxes, and increased pressure to compete or lose everything. While unemployment is productive in their terms, Blair & Co dream of getting rid of the need for it by forcing us to be doubly productive - by being poor enough to have to constantly compete for other jobs, while working. Everyone will be forced into work schemes, 'training' by work etc. or forced off benefits (and statistics) for not proving they're 'actively seeking work' in case in the end the only way you can show you're doing enough to find a job is by finding one.

Very flexible -
now kiss
your job
goodbye!



Meanwhile those with jobs are under increasing pressure simply to keep them. The Liverpool Dockers, Hillingdon Hospital workers, Magnet workers... are quite reasonably fighting for their jobs back, for an end to the attacks on pay and conditions that came out on strike against, for a bit of dignity. But after months and years of struggle, of organising for themselves, meeting workers and supporters from around the world, going back to how things were could only leave them with a bad taste in their mouths.

Grow your own job?

The Green critique of jobs shows up the destructive nature of jobs, not only to humans but to our environment, the constant search for cash and profit outside the control of any human community, building weapons of destruction, factories of pollution, fields of chemicals... But many Green theorists end up with a localism and moralism that further mystify our powers and needs distorted through the alienated forms of economics. LETs (Local Economic Trading schemes) try to allow people to express their needs and abilities socially, outside of the existing money market, but fail because they assume we can produce with what we individually have to hand - so the main people involved are the various types of therapists. If successful they merely keep people working on the margins until the state or market find better things to do with them.

On the other hand, simply trying to defend unemployment and benefits keeps us in a similar rut of poverty and waiting. Expecting the national state to intervene on our behalf in a global economy leaves us isolated and dependent. Anyway, despite anger at the USA, most delays aren't fighting because it's like fighting to defend crap jobs - too much work, not enough pay. The collective spaces and support developed when the dole wasn't such a shit place to be, now rest on a poverty, moralism, arrogance worse than the worst of the Greens. Without space and facilities unemployment becomes doing nothing, and most people don't want to do nothing. Work at least brings you in contact with other people, gets you out of the house and away from the boredom and misery of the dole.

"DIVING FOR DEAR LIFE - WHEN WE COULD BE DIVING FOR PEARLS" - ELVIS

To develop a real critique of Jobs and the world we are forced to produce and worship through them, we need to develop a new critique of the misery of life outside work, compared to the infinite potential of human society and individuals producing and playing according to our needs desires and abilities. We need a new vision of what it would mean to have the world at the disposal of our social and individual creativity and needs, instead of our creativity, needs and world being at the disposal of those with the money and power to put us to work for their greater power and wealth.

We need to take this opportunity to come together to start to develop this vision, as human beings with dreams, no matter how many jobs we are lumbered with, to create a focus for our dissatisfaction and needs. We are not alone.....

STOP THE JOBS SUMMIT

Open meeting to organise campaign against the Summit on Sat 20th Sept, 2-6 pm at Brownswood Rd Library, N4; for more info contact BM-CRIL London WC1N 3XX.

On September 8th, International Day of Action for the Liverpool Dockers, about 25 activists went to visit the head of Merseyside Docks Co, Gordon Waddle, at his Kensington home. Gordon wasn't in, but two lots of neighbours came out to play and made tea for the demonstrators. They were interested to find out what Gordon does for a living, as he was the only one at residents' association meetings who wouldn't say. The cops eventually turned up but failed to move the demo to the other side of the road, but they did kidnap the massive banner saying 'Injustice is Not Anonymous - it has a name and address' (for full address see Corporate Watch, Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RQ).

There was then a visit to the Regents St office of Drakes, the temp agency who recruits staff for the docks. The office was occupied for about an hour and the manager pretended to be reasonable so some people argued it out - until they saw a notice on his wall. The notice pretended to be from the World Wildlife Fund and in patronising and offensive terms described the dockers as an endangered species, and plans to set up a captive breeding programme. It claimed that they had 'low intelligence' [sic!]. This is how temp agencies, like other bosses, see workers, particularly those with the sense and guts to fight back. Found out, they called the cops and stopped pretending to be reasonable.

Word is that internationally the day was a big success, with full support in Australia and troops being used..... but we've been getting complaints about having too much international stuff in Contraflow.

See calendar for Liverpool march and other upcoming events

Mitchell Principles? Not for the British Government

On the morning of 23rd of September 1996, Diarmuid O'Neill was assassinated by the Metropolitan Police. He was teaganned in his room and then shot unarmed, and was dragged while dying down his front door steps and forced to wait for an ambulance. This didn't happen in Belfast but in Hammersmith, West London. While at the time of writing the armed struggle in north eastern Ireland has been put on hold, the British press and government bleat on about the Mitchell principles of non-violence... what's a shoot to kill policy by the British state got to do with non violence? With the unionist population of the 6 County statelet armed to the teeth land excluded from the Dunblane anti guns legislation peace without justice for O'Neill, Irish POWs and the working class communities of north eastern Ireland is impossible.

for info - contact BM Box D O'Neill London WC1N 3XX

INSIDE:

Calendar and reviews;
reports from Contraflow's
roving correspondents in
Amsterdam, Berlin and Madrid
(minus holiday snaps);
all the news from Stoke to
Stockwell we could print;
and more (see for yourself)

As our detractor says "Not
worth the price on the front!"



Brixton news...

Brixton City Challenge's planned 'Brixton Festival' was unfortunately cancelled due to the tragedy engulfing the nation at the time. Like their flagship plans to turn Brixton's lively centre into a sanitised shopping mall where high street chains could trade happily under the multiple eyes of CCTV. Plioi on '98...

And just up the road, the council's trying hard to prove its green credentials by 'restoring' Rush Common to the people of Brixton. Well, common land for the people is a great idea, but not when you're not really what it need to be polluted A23. A few years ago, they spent 80 grand demolishing the Brixton fashion building (which had provided useful resources, eg screen-printing and studio space) and turning the latter into a sanitised (but not really) piece of grass. The public's use of it seems limited to using it as an (unplanned, now muddy) shortcut to Salford Road: people don't even walk their dogs there!

Well now the plan is to create a Town Square for Brixton. A new cycle-route, some new benches, and eventually some new trees - also, surprise surprise, some new CCTV cameras.

Jetties Road in Stockwell was recently the scene of public protest as Pinewood Motors (who have a showroom next door) started demolishing a Victorian church building and its accompanying trees. Local residents complained that there had been no consultation at all before the (unlisted) building was torn down. All it was to create a bigger four-car parking lot for the garage.... Evening vigils took place at the site, and met with violence from the contractors and the private security guards brought in to 'secure' the site. There seems only need planning permission to change its use before making it a parking lot and very little sympathy from Barking Council. Local residents contacted early on in the protesters' fight to halt work.

Also, on Jetties Road, lies one of the public libraries closed by Lambeth one of the latest series of cuts. Abandoned for months, the building was squatted six months ago and has since provided ingeniously-constructed accommodation for (probably) hundreds of travelling punks, queers & other undesirable 'couch' dates be and gone... watch this space...

Fed up with low wages and bad conditions?

Poor Health and Safety standards? Get in touch

We aim to provide advice and assistance in relation to your workplace and fighting back against the boss.

We are independent of trade unions and political parties and we are committed to providing practical help.

Phone/fax us on 0181 574 5027

On 1st Wednesday of the month between 6-9pm or leave a message at any other time and we will get back to you

Please state that the message is for the Solidarity Federation

North London Solidarity Federation-

For organisation against bosses and bureaucrats

PO Box 1681 London N6 7LE

Botched job!

Good old Lambeth council with its usual 'awe-inspiring level of competence' made a balls-up of it again! But this allowed the 121 centre to 'cook a snook' right in the face of local government.

Wishing to evict 121 (despite having been squatted for 16 years), Lambeth took the case to court on July 24th. Approx 9 members of the centre appeared on the morning armed to the hilt with day-books from recent years, an impressive file of 'Crowbar' (once published at 121) and with statements from ex-convict members citing what their involvement was and for how long a period. All essential as proof of 121's continuous occupation. But you can imagine the surprise, even amusement, felt by everyone, when after 15 minutes the judge stops a member of 121 during mid-sentence of giving evidence from the witness box (as I remember her sentence can't have totalled any more than 4 words!) and asks the council's solicitor to explain precisely what is the case that you're bringing against them?

The barrister, thrown into complete confusion and disarray, paused for quite a few seconds before asking the judge what he meant by such a comment.

Lambeth 'bless 'em' failed to say in their statement of claim that the building had originally been entered 'illegally'. The absence of the word 'illegal' was reason enough for the judge to throw the case out albeit temporarily and send them the council paying with 'leas in their ear' for wasting time. Needless to say Lambeth have now amended their statement of claim with the word 'illegally', with much additional but generally titchious information besides. Despite this development, the case remains it's been approx 6-7 weeks (at the time of going to print) since the last court hearing and as yet there has been no fresh date set for another hearing. Given as I understand, local government and Lambeth especially, frequently judges eviction related paper-work it might be prudent for any other squatters to check any correspondence of this nature with a fine-tooth comb (since judges are not generally so forthcoming in pointing mistakes out). This could mean getting a 2-3 month extension or longer and further time to prepare your defence it necessary. You also get the pleasure of seeing local government being ripped apart by the knuckles by the judiciary - ha ha - it's so nice when these bed-fellows fall out!

So in 121's statement I think it's only appropriate to say 'Well done Lambeth' and 'Whatever would we do without you!' The info-shop etc at 121 Raiton Road, Brixton is open every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 7-11pm.

The old library in West Norwood was shut down... Lambeth in October '94, after 20 years of use as a community centre. A local group occupied it for 6 months in protest but despite their efforts to keep the place open as a space for all kinds of activities (modern resource centre with quiet study space and a drop-in day centre for the elderly) and strong community support, they were evicted in January this year. They were offered an insecure monthly licence for their summer project, but the council have since employed consultants to consider various 'bids' for its future (theme' pub, art gallery etc). They were forced to turn the kids' summer activity programme outdoors, meeting each day on the pavement outside while the building remains empty. In a new twist there are rumours that the Council is now going to turn the building into a library once more, to house all the books moved out of the now West Norwood Library when it was closed down last year... The West Norwood Community Development group are trying to negotiate some way of sharing the space and at the moment are seeking help with fund-raising, admin, and putting together the sort of business plan needed. If you'd like to help - especially with the above claims, please contact them: 0171 501 5647.

The Jan Rebane Centre occupation continues! (It was a well-used trade union and unemployed resource centre till Lambeth cut the funding in '95). The Afro-Caribbean Saturday School is starting a new term, with limited spaces left for 6-16 years olds to learn maths, English, science and black history. Teachers and volunteer helpers also welcome. Tel: 0171 978 8171. Also at the centre, the popular Veganomony cake has reopened for the winter. Food, cake, live poetry & storytelling (and probably some more films) from 7pm every Wednesday night - 12-14 Thornton Street, off Brixton Road (by the Old White Horse) SW9.

Thursday afternoons... if you hang around Brixton High Street long enough and look upwards, you'll eventually see a nuclear train going past. Every week, trains carrying nuclear waste from ex-Dounreay, go through inner-city London on their way north for 'reprocessing'. This is the sort of transport that makes thousands of Germans leave their homes and block miles of miles of routes in protest. 'What do we do here?' Carry on shopping /skipping/ squatting/ surviving! Without thinking about the deadly business that is nuclear power. If you live locally and wanna get active about this, get in touch with us on 0171 978 8214. We're planning a meeting sometime very soon...

FLEXIBILITY LAND!



Not quite Brixton News

Fareshares is a community-run, non-profit wholesalers co-op, open Thursday 2-9pm & Friday 5-7pm at 56 Cranford Street, near Elephant & Castle, SE17. The building also hosts the 56a info-shop & archives; the bike library and a well-equipped bike-recycling workshop. They're looking for more volunteers at the moment - so if you're interested in any of the above projects drop in for a chat about getting involved. There are also plans for a local Food Not Bombs group to operate at Elephant.

Tenants in Hackney have produced an 8-page newspaper about estate privatisation - you can get a copy for free by sending an SAE to: TAF c/o 56 Clarence Rd ES.

Advisory Service for Squatters new opening times!!! Sunday to Thursday 2pm to 6pm (instead of Mon-Fri)

Brownswold Road Library (N4) is now open again with vegan cafes every Sunday night from 8, as long as you remember to put your name down to cook in future

Contraflow Clarification:

In the last 'flow there was a short piece about the split in Class War and the activities of the Anti Election Alliance. This referred to the minority faction of CW nationally as a rump and a minority of the London group

We have been approached by the minority faction of CW who wished to make the following points:

- * This faction of CW consisted of most of the London group along with a number of groups around the country - in total some 40% of the final CW conference in March.
- * This faction of CW argues that it was excluded from a number of caucuses held before this conference. This included women members of the London CW group being excluded from a mixed discussion on Women and CW.
- * This faction of CW also argues that the Anti Election alliance was a success, through the distribution of 200,000 stickers, a 100 strong contingent on the London May Day March and a number of direct actions.

This faction of CW will continue to operate and can be contacted at PO Box 467 London E8 3QX - which is also the address for their latest paper which has come out. Their statement is available from this PO Box or by contacting us on our website [technology willing] or by sending an SAE to us.

[The above agreed statement is not an endorsement of the sexist nature of CW material which has appeared 3 times in the last few months.]

1,000,000 council flats to be sold.

One of the many things that didn't change with the election is the plan to privatise 1,000,000 council homes in what are called Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs) to Housing Associations or Local Housing Companies. 45 billion has been kept unspent from a council housing sales from the last 18 years and now the new government will allow some £800 million to be spent from this over the next 2 years. However, Labour does not oppose these transfers and in fact, Harney has already said that he will be spending it's share on subsidising these privatisations - not on council homes.

For tenants, these LSVTs mean getting the repairs that they have been waiting for 20 or more years for. But the price to pay is very heavy. Big rent rises are planned - up to and over 50% - with more to come after the 5 year rent guarantee period. Service charges will be levied - which won't be covered by housing benefit. Secure Tenancies will be lost - allowing evictions for rent arrears - poverty - far more easily

In other words, millions of working class tenants, waged and unwaged, will be forced to pay for the repairs that many of them have already paid for in their rents for decades. Existing Housing Association tenants are paying higher rents to provide the surpluses to fund these schemes and having their homes re-mortgaged to provide security for the loans. At the same time, Housing Association bureaucrats are paying themselves private sector wages, and cutting cleaning and maintenance staff wages to the same 'rampant', private sector rates.

These transfers are 'bureaucratic' only in name. Small armies of housing association 'volunteers' are used to sell the scheme to tenants. So called 'Independent' Tenant's Friends have refused to work with tenants who oppose the schemes. Councils say that repairs will have to wait up to 20 years unless tenants allow the privatisations to occur. Stranger still, some leading housing organisations who opposed 'Tory' LSVTs are silent about 'Labour' LSVTs.

In Hackney, where 7,000 flats could be privatised by next year, tenants have been organising alongside Council workers against these plans. We can offer support to tenants elsewhere who need information or someone to compare experiences with. But we need information about how these LSVTs are being carried out elsewhere in the country. We also need information on Housing Associations rent rises, evictions, expulsion of tenants' representatives etc. Our attempts to get such information through 'official' channels are being hampered at every turn.

Tenants Against Privatisation can be contacted at 56 Clarence Rd London E5.

In solidarity,

Some Hackney Tenants

You may have noticed we have been shamelessly lifting cartoons by Heinrich Htnze if you want his book 'The fish John West reject' try contacting Scratch Media PO Box 597, Dickson ACT 2602, Australia)

The London Forum

The second London Forum meeting was attended by about 35 people including a healthy sized contingent from Kent. It was a positive and forward looking discussion which was remarkably free from bitching and backbiting. The most commonly raised point was the need for revolutionaries to get involved in activities which actually improve people's lives. People suggested working in local groups, and the Gravesend group who produce the excellent 'Gravedigger' magazine and the exemplary Haringey Solidarity Group talked about their activities. The problems of divisions within communities, and how to overcome isolation were mentioned, and obviously these are vitally important areas for us to look at. The need for different groups to meet up regularly and talk to each other to co-ordinate activities was also brought up.

People talked about the alienating nature of political activities as they are and how politics needs to be linked to real life and make you feel better not worse. My excellently shopped new coat was also admired at length in the pub and much beer was drunk in mourning of the demise of Di and Dodi. The next meeting will be held in about a month.

[London Forum has been formed by the members in London of the majority faction of 'Class War nationally - see the clarification about the CW split above.]

for info: HSG - Box 2474 Ldn N8, the Gravedigger - Box 1 Gravesend, Kent DA11 7NE, London Forum - BM Box 5538 Ldn WC1N 3XX

contraFLOW calendar

SEPTEMBER

thu 25: LONDON

PAIN: Head on a stick, Dementia, Judge Tier & the Duvells play a benefit gig for ARCH/ refugees... 8.30pm-1am at the Pembury Tavern, Amhurst Road E8, £32 entry.

25-28: SHEFFIELD

Groundswell Forum - bringing together homeless and DIY solutions. (NB: This is not the anti-JSA Groundswell!) Tel: 0171 833 2071.

26-28: LEEDS

Women Speak Out - weekend of events to mark the 40th anniversary of the Windscale fire. Info: Box Z, 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Leeds LS7 3BH.

fri 26: LONDON

Grand gala cabaret night in aid of the Liverpool dockers - they'll never sing alone! Starts 8pm at Wood Green Labour Club, 3 Stuart Crescent N22 (Wood Green tube). £52.50 entry. Tel: 0181 442 0090.

sat 27: LONDON

Fuming Mad rally - in support of the Road Traffic Reduction Bill. 2pm at Trafalgar Square. Tel: 0171 490 1555.

LIVERPOOL

National solidarity march with the sacked dockers (2nd anniversary). Assemble 12.30pm at Myrtle Parade. For details of 7am coaches from London (£12.50/5) call 0181 442 0090.

NATIONAL

Possible Day of action vs BP's activities in Columbia? Confirm: 0171 357 0344.

NEAR OXFORD

Shut down Campfield detention centre! Monthly picket starts at 12 noon outside the main gate. Tel: 01865 558 145.

27-28: near HELENSBURGH

Secret Peace Artists' Ball: a celebration of Faslane Peace Camp, with art, music, theatre, kids' stuff, poetry & more. Tel: 01436 820 901.

EVICT TRIDENT NOT THE PEACE CAMP!

After 15 years highlighting the dangers of nuclear weapons in Scotland, Faslane Peace Camp is under threat of eviction by the new Argyll & Bute council. Thanks to so many summer visitors the camp now boasts tree-houses, lock-ons and other fortifications. The council claims to be reviewing its situation (and cannot afford a long Fairmile-style eviction) so perhaps the camp will flourish for another 15 years. Support of all kinds badly needed; phone to find out what you can do to help: 01436 820 901.

27-29: BRISTOL

Direct action fighting & mass trespass vs the extension of Dumford Quarry into Ashton Court park. Tel: 0117 942 0129.

28-29: LEEDS

Eco-weekenders' alliance - gathering for those trying to juggle jobs and activism. At Cornerstone. Tel: Sarah 0113 282 9365.

BRIGHTON

Lobby the Labour Party Conf. - end BP's links with Columbian death-squads! 0171 357 0344.

OXFORDSHIRE

National demo vs Hillgrove farm - call breeders for vivisection - Dry Lane, Witney/Minster Lovell.

LONDON

Cannabis Turn Yourself In Day. Meet 2.30pm at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

NATIONAL

Ramblers 'Access Day' - phone the Ramblers Assoc. for details of local events: 0171 582 6878.

mon 29: LONDON

Liverpool dockers' mystery tour: Reclaim the Streets dancing into action with the dockers... Meet 10am at Victoria Station - bring drums, instruments and at least £12.50 for fares. Info: 0171 281 4621.

BRITAIN'S 1st ANTI-VIVISECTION CAMP!

Animal rights activists have set up a camp at Huntingdon Life Sciences. It's on Woolley Road, on the east side of the A1 just north of the A1/A14 junction in Cambridgeshire. Tel: 01582 505 984/0860 245 406/01632 293 468.

LYMINGTON WAITING EVICTION.....

Camps set up to oppose Rank's leisure development plans in Kent are now waiting for the bailiffs. Tel: 01303 265 737 or 0410 536 592.

tue 30: LONDON

Rosin McAisley's long-awaited committal hearing. Picket in support from 2pm onwards, outside Bow Street magistrates' court. Tel: Fuiscaill 0181 955 8250/0956 919 871.

ISRAEL

11th anniversary of Mordechai Vanunu's incarceration. For more details: 0171 607 2302.

OCTOBER

(end corporate dominance month)

(Also the 80th anniversary of the Russian Revolution when the factory committees really fucked up corporate dominance!)

wed 1: FARNBOROUGH

Shut down COPEX arms fair. 0171 281 0297.

WEST LONDON

Hillingdon hospital strikers (2 years on) Day of Action. Starts at 7am with a mass picket outside the hospital. Assemble 11am onwards at Colham Green, Colham Road, for a march to a rally at Uxbridge Civic centre - bring your banners. Tel: 0956 135 311.

LONDON

Women's direct action group meets 8pm at the Jan Rebane Centre, Brixton SW9. All women welcome. Tel: 0171 978 8214.

2-5: LONDON

Anti Fascist Action rally & conference. Info: send an SAE to AFA, BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX.

2-16: GLOBAL

Fortnight of action vs genetically-engineered foods; life patents & factory farming... Contact: GEN 0181 374 9516/WEN 0114 227 3327.

fri 3: ESSEX

Vigil at Chelsea Abattoir, Brentwood. Tel: HOOF 01206 564 904.

3-5: SHEFFIELD

Urban Permaculture design course - practical sustainability in the inner-city. Tel: 0114 279 7164

4-5: UP NORTH

Northern EPI networking gathering... Tel: 0161 224 4846.

sat 4: BATH

Reclaim the Streets party - meet 12 noon at the Circus. Tel: 01249 713 742.

DERBY

Reclaim the Streets party - meet 12 noon at Market Place.

LONDON

Jesus-la exhibition closing party 6pm-12. At 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24.

sun 5: LONDON

Another Contradiction discussion workshop - local communities organised - at 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24. Refreshments providing - starts 3pm.

mon 6: SPACE

NASA due to launch Cassini probe with 73 lbs of plutonium on board. Tel: 01274 730 795 Where are the Association of Autonomous Astronauts when we need 'em?

wed 8: GLOBAL

Action vs Peabody Coal. The largest single source of greenhouse gases in N America and also responsible for trashing indigenous rights in Arizona.

8-14: GLOBAL

Boycott of Procter Gamble & week of action. 14th: company's AGM in Ohio! Uncaught! petition-delivering to Newcastle HQ: 0114 253 0020.

thu 9: LONDON

Benefit night for ASS/ARCH - line-up: Iowaoka, Head Jam, Dead Dog Mountain, Electric Groove Temple & (tbc) a surprise band from Uganda! 9pm-late at the Point, Stoke Newington Road. £3.50/2.50.

10-12: ALDERMASTON

Regular women's peace camp. Tel: 0117 939 3746

11-12: LONDON

Strike Oil! Weekend of action against the oil industry. RTS: 0171 281 4621...part....

- 100 days of action vs oil exploration - call Corporate Watch 01865 791 391 for details.

11-12: LONDON

On Saturday, Arms Trade campaign day, 10.30-5.30pm. On Sunday, Factory Action Network day, 11-4.30pm. At the Ballbridge Centre, Kings Cross NW1. Tel: CAAT 0171 281 0297.

ANTI-QUARRY CAMP IN DEVON

The camp's on the site of a proposed ball clay quarry extension, at Teigngrace near Newton Abbott. Mobile: 0467 622 825.

If you're 16 or over, and don't understand why trying to get away with buying a ticket is wrong, don't worry.

There's always one.

Force Dodgers Liberation Front, Box FDI.F, 121 Raiton Road, London

11-18: GLOBAL

Week of action against McDonalds, including 11th: Kids vs Big Mac: 12th: solidarity with workers; & 16th: World Food Day/traditional day of action vs McDonalds. Contact: 0171 713 1289.

sun 12: HERTS

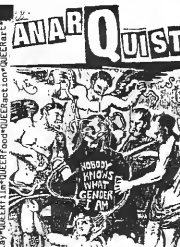
Animal rights demo, starts 12 noon at Bury Green farm (Glaxo-Wellcome dog-breeding unit), Much Hadham, off A120. Stevenage AR: 01430 220 480.

mon 13: USA

Unplug America Day - "turn out the lights, shut off the taps, cut off your engines and celebrate your freedom from consumption...". Worth copying?

tue 14: LONDON

Benefit for the Liverpool Dockers at the Forum, Kentish Town NW5.



sat 18: LONDON

AnarQuist - monthly anarcho-queer night at 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24. Food, films, poetry, queercore bands Mouthfull & Sapphic Sluts, dancing til dawn... starts 7pm. Contact: 0171 978 8214.

LONDON

Annual anarchist bookfair at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Hoborn).

WINCHESTER

Veggie giveaway at the McDonalds litter collection point. Tel: 01662 773 673.

GLOBAL

Day of Action vs Nike. Contact Campaign for Labor Rights by email: alliance@cmr.net Also, Shell's 100th birthday!

18-19: near HELENSBURGH

"Shut it!" NVDA, party & protest against Trident's Scottish home. Bring lent, warm clothes, music, humour (& 'no pictures of Princess Di') Tel: Faslane Peace Camp 01436 820 901.

18-20: CORNWALL

The Land Is Ours campaign convergence at Keveral farm. Tel: 01865 722 016.

23-26: SOMERSET

Free-4-day wet-making course at Tinkers Bubble. £4 a day for meals. Tel: 01865 722 016.

wed 29: LONDON

Torchlit march for Women's Right to Choose. Assemble 6pm at W.U. Malet Street WC1. Rally at Conway Hall 7.30pm. Info: Anita! NSW 0171 561 5503.

LEDBURY

Demo at Quintiles vivisection lab: 11.15am-2pm. Tel: 01384 466 862.

30-2: YORKSHIRE

Merwith Hill women's peace camp invites women to sambar gathering. 01943 468 593.

thu 30: LONDON

Reclaim The Streets/ARCH benefit - RTS house-band, Inner Terrestrials, King Prawn etc at the Pembury Tavern, from 8.30pm-1.30am. £3/2.

fri 31: SOMEWHERE

National halloween treat for open-casters! Direct action against strip-mining. Tel: 0171 603 1831.

31-2: SHEFFIELD

Raise yer banners! a festival of political song. Write for info: PO Box 44, Sheffield S4 7RN. Tel: 0114 249 5185.

Send in your events & actions for the next issue - if we don't get it we can't print it....

Contraflow's list of contacts and interesting publications [well they were interesting in January when the list was last done] can be got by sending us an SAE

We don't have space to list everything happening in November/ December. But if you want to keep up to date, see an SAE to:

Freedom Network, PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9 7ZB. Or try the FN ACTION LINE: 0171 793 7343.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Striking a Chord - a series of benefits No Issue is Single

Thursday 25th September at the Pembury Tavern, Amhurst Rd E8 for Hackney Refugees and Migrant Support Group and Autonomous Refugee Centre Hackney (ARCH) with Judge Trev, Head on a Stick, Dementia, the Duva and P.A.I.N. 8.30pm till 1am £32

Thursday 9th October at the Point, Stoke Newington H8 Street N16 for Advisory service for Squatters (ASS) and ARCH with RTS House Band, Inner Terrestrials and King Prawn 8.30pm till 1am £32

Thursday 30th October at the Pembury Tavern for Reclaim the Streets and ARCH with RTS House Band, Inner Terrestrials and King Prawn 8.30pm till 1am £32

Friday 7th November at the Library, Brownswood Row an evening of cultural delight with artists from different refugee communities 8pm £22

Wednesday 26th November at the Garage, Highbury Corner N5 Victory celebration and benefit for McLibel with RTS House Band, Tolu Love Frogs and Citz Fish 8pm till 12pm £54

oh - look this one has been organised for us! thankyou!

Thursday 27th November at the Pembury Tavern an acoustic evening for ContraFlow and ARCH with 1925 Committee, the Dole Claimers, Sergio Nave (Mexican singer/songwriter) Nisan (Turkish band) and Deniz (turkish singer) 8pm till 1am £32

... so now there's no excuses not to come north of the ir

NEW CAMP NEAR BRIGHTON!

It's been set up near Offham, just north Lewes to stop valuable marshland SSS being destroyed. More people needed -! details & directions, tel: 01273 685 91!

We aim to get a pilot issue together by the end of Octo. Send us a large SAE (ed. a donation or stamps) and we send you a copy. It'll be irregular and not too long - i not promising anything too ambitious and it all depends your input...

Primarily we want the news sheet to be for and about women involved in direct action of all kinds.

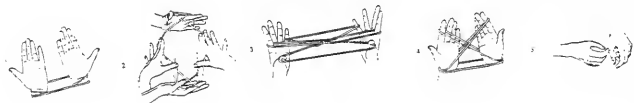
Could you.... contribute news? write about your exper. take photos? draw cartoons or other graphics? help with cheap/free printing & photocopying? help organise a bi be a distribution/contact point? help us think up a goc name for it??



WOMEN'S DIRECT ACTION NEWS c/o PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9

wot i did on my holidays

encounter of the second kind



ENCUENTRO (25th July - 3rd August; Spanish State)

Seeing as I was going to be South of the Pyrenees anyway I decided somewhat sceptically to go to the crap-named Second Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neo-liberalism (or Encuentro for short), with its grandiose aim of creating a "network of struggles". "Pie in the sky", I thought to myself, (there is a Spanish expression for it: "construir castillos en el aire" - literally "to build castles in the air").

So off I went, bundle of Contralows under my arm, prepared for the worst (we're miserable old sods, us Contralows).

The opening ceremony in Alcobendas near Madrid was basically a cheerleading exercise for the Zapatistas, a media circus in line with the virtual struggle being waged by Subcomandante Marcos (as a fellow cynic dubbed him - translatable as Subcomandante Marcos) et al in Chiapas. There's no doubt about the repression and terror caused by the Mexican army and the real struggle of the indigenous people in Chiapas, of course; so don't get me wrong, sure I'm all for the EZLN, I just got a bit tired of being told that Zapata lives (and they buried the poor bastard!).

But back to the Encuentro: we were told that there were over 3000 people from all five continents, but it seemed like every second person was Italian (there was a huge contingent, presumably workers' autonomy types, who kept on bursting into choruses of "Long live the international proletarian revolution" or something similar).

So we all divided up to go to the respective discussion tables all over the territory of the Spanish State, the themes being the neo-liberal economy, struggles for culture and education, for land and ecology, the struggle against patriarchy, nationalism and national identity, exclusion and all forms of marginalisation (it seemed like all the awkward left-over bits like gay and lesbian struggles, animal liberation were chucked together in this last discussion table).

I was supposed to go to the discussion table on the economy, to the subgroup on access to the means of production, but seeing as I thought it would be dominated by dogmatic Marxists with Italian accents (don't get me wrong - I love the Italian accent, it's the other bit I'm not too keen on), I decided to go to the subgroup on "forms of living beyond the Market". This subgroup was being held at the huge squatted social centre El Laboratorio in central Madrid. Now, down at the subgroup level, meaningful participation became a possibility (as opposed to the passive consumption of pre-written political speeches of the opening and closing ceremonies). In fact we divided and subdivided to facilitate discussion and then came together again as a group, something which worked pretty well. After some interesting discussion ... LETS schemes, co-operatives and the like were judged to be within the Market, and not an alternative to it, and the same went for many of the social relations reproduced in the squatting movement and 'alternative scene' (market relations between consumers and sellers are reproduced in squat bookshops, cafes, discos, concerts etc). The conclusion was reached that to escape the enticements of the Market you have to be self-sufficient (grow your own food, make your own clothes etc) or live in communities where by mutual aid and (non-monetary) exchange these needs were covered. The discussion went on to take in themes of industrial development, division of labour, alienation, technology And we heard the example of an indigenous people (the pygmy Bakas in Cameroon) who had lived beyond the market until they were coerced into selling their labour by a neighbouring ethnic group.

As a mark of the diversity of the Encuentro, another subgroup on "economic solidarity and alternative economy" held up LETS schemes and 'fair trade' as the way forward (and reliable sources complained of heavy doses of reformism at other discussion tables). But these glaring contradictions didn't stop the organisers of the Encuentro loudly proclaiming the unity of all present at the closing spectacle (sorry, ceremony), even after a fracas over whether Peter Singer was a fascist had threatened to disrupt the whole shebang.

However a lot of networking did seem to be happening, with coordinated campaigns against the oil industry planned, and the World Trade Organisation 50th anniversary to be targeted in Geneva in February...

Euro Pot

In June the European leaders met for a summit conference in Amsterdam. They called it the EuroPot, but some people with nothing better to do than cause trouble read this as "EU rot pot" which is Dutch for "EU piss off".

While them indoors were signing the Amsterdam Treaty, tightening police cooperation and attacks on migrants, and reinforcing European Court jurisdiction over law'n order and "security" matters (treatment of refugees etc.), thousands converged on the city for demos, meetings and fun. On Saturday 14th the EuroMarch arrived on the streets, having marched from all corners of the continent against unemployment, exclusion, poverty etc. - the demands of the different contingents varied considerably. Of course there was a large contingent of anarchists/syndicalists /autonomes/troublemakers who got into a few fights with the cops, trying to march the 'wrong' way toward the bank where the summit was happening, turning over an empty cop van, shattering some bank windows and trashing flagpoles with the EU flag (but not those with Amsterdam flags). The cops made a few vicious random attacks, but there were too many people to take on.

A couple of thousand Italians had come on 'hijacked' trains, refusing to pay or to show ID at the borders. Most of them were held in the station until after the demo, and 150 of them never even saw Amsterdam, being arrested for supposedly trashing a carriage and carted off, then put back on the train to Italy. Those who were left out showed great solidarity and 'discipline' demonstrating for the release of their comrades, and making the only decent speech of the rally.

That evening the pissed-up-punks outside the Vrankrijk squat bar attacked passing cars (the first was a stretched limo, but there was no excuse for the others) and then marched off to demand the release of the Italians (who were now back on the train) and get beaten up and nicked. The night before the city had put up the EuroMarchers at a sports stadium, but those who returned on the Saturday night were surprised to be removed by force by the cops.

Sunday there was a street party, with sound systems, cartrays and free grass (in protest at the threat of imposing stupid euro dog laws) were winding through the streets. At two points it passed through police lines trying to divert it from the agreed route, but when it got to the agreed site the cops threatened coiling in the riot cops, and it all moved back to the warehouse where it had started. As it was a hot day people needed drinks, but most places were closed as it was Sunday - except a pizza place which was opened so surreptitiously the cops walked straight past the proletarian shoppers going in and out. There was then the advertised sex-riot, but it was just a media stunt in response to the mayor's call to clean up the city's image.



As everybody was getting on the buses to go home in the sweltering heat, a guy from RTS was handing out an inspired piece on networking (or was it his PhD on neurology?) which suggested a way: not one international network but many networks, coming together and diverging... Pie in the sky, or something to get our teeth into?

We have supped on pie in the sky and it tasted good

On a positive note, as someone who helped organise for the Encuentro and has heard other reports back, the network of struggles that developed out of the last Encuentro, inspired by the struggles of the Zapatistas, succeeded in organising the second, and will continue to develop. Just one of the many sections of the Encuentro came up with the following plans of action:

- 1) Action against the Europe of Maastricht and Amsterdam during the first week of December.
 - 2) Action against the World Trade Organisation, e.g. a counter summit on 18-20 February 1998 in Geneva and local actions to coincide with the WTO Geneva meeting in May.
 - 3) A day of action against exploitation and precarisation of labour, especially against employment agencies, and for a reduction of work, paid and unpaid. Date to be set by a network being organised.
- So stay tuned, and contact thuanan x/o BM-CRL London WGM 33X for info. Further reading and contacts: <http://www.pan.gea.org/encuentro> - and for English language documents from the Encuentro: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3845/gatherdx.html>

From late afternoon people leaving the Vrankrijk were jumped and nicked round the corner, and when 200 people set off to march on the police station against previous arrests they were surrounded and nicked, for 'membership of a criminal organisation'. Once they had finally been handcuffed, put on buses and carted off to copshops around the country, the riot cops moved in around anyone hanging out around the Vrankrijk, and till after 8am seemed to be about to try to storm the building.

The next afternoon ten thousand Kurds held an unpublicised demo against Turkish state human rights abuses and EU plans to allow Turkey to join. Later there was a demo linking the Excluders (the EU leaders meeting in the bank) with the Excluded (refugees being held at the detention centre just outside town). Hundreds of people got on their bikes and had a critical mass, going as near the Bank as possible without mass arrests and then off to the detention centre. Another few hundred went by tube and joined in with tunnelling, throwing knotted sheets over the walls, writing messages on tennis balls and whacking them over, and loads of noise. The organisers were a bit pissed off because having thought up all these fun ideas, they thought others would have brought other ideas, or have been inspired to go a bit further. The refugees had their best ever meals, and videos, to keep them away from the windows, but one phoned the next day to say they all knew and welcomed the support.

Back in town a couple of hundred people tried to thank the leaders, bureaucrats etc. for their efforts by going round the hotels and cheering. Despite it proceeding lightheartedly for some time, the riot cops again suddenly closed in and carted everyone off in buses. A few people got away on a passing boat and one guy managed to swim across the canal, but others shouting slogans from across the canal, or just angry at yet another police blockade, got surrounded and nicked too.

The next day amazingly an autonomous demo against capitalism managed to take place, and even to get to the floral display of the EU flag in the main square and 'steal' the flowers.

Other events over this time included a protest action at the summit press conference around various issues excluded from debate, and eco demo that succeeded in getting to the Bank, but not for long, meetings and conferences, um, loads of stuff I forgot.

Demos and actions against the mass arrests were held all over Holland, and all over Europe, including a short occupation of the Dutch embassy in London, there are plans by the organisers to charge those in responsible with membership of a criminal organisation, for conspiring to arrest innocent people and denying them their legal rights. An amazingly quick and detailed account of the arrests, abuse and other events is available from Amsterdam (write to us for details) and a good leaflet version of events is available from Brighton Autonomous (who had a great time and want to do it again) c/o Prior House, 6 Tibury Place, Brighton, E Sussex.

Solidarity with Albanian Revolt

In April Greece saw a series of attacks on the army in response to their invasion of Albania as part of a European military policing force. (see Black Flag No. 211 for article on the Albanian revolt)

Train tracks leading to the border were destroyed, stopping troop movements for a couple of days, a recruitment centre was attacked, the phones cut and the soldiers held inside for 5 minutes while the place was covered in graffiti, military vehicles burned out in various actions. ... Other government buildings were also attacked, along with an Italian company office because of Italian military involvement, and various solidarity events and gatherings organised.

Of course, Greece is next door to Albania, and Greek enclaves are attacking something at least once a week, but its good to see resistance to these military manoeuvres.