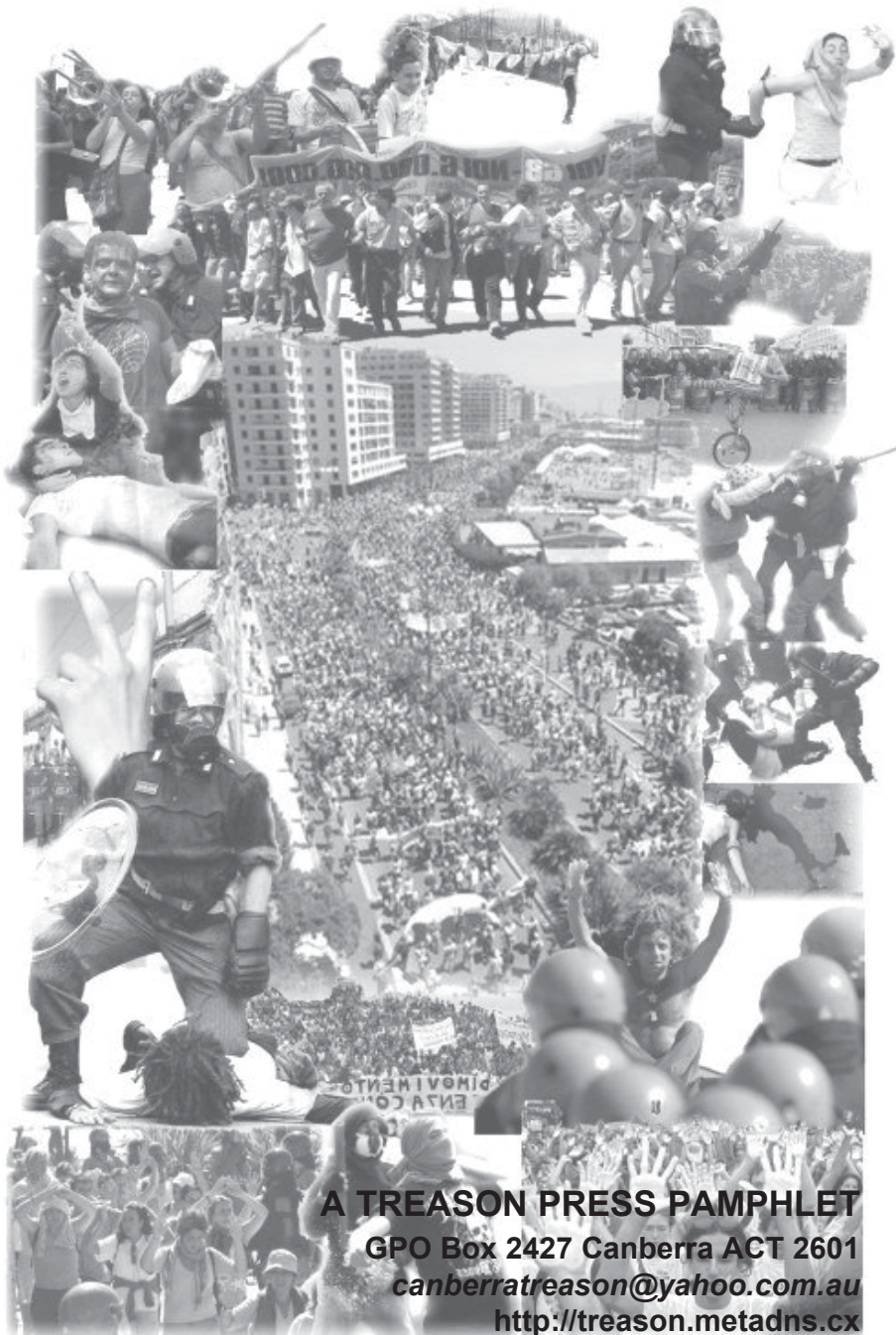


# Aufheben



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**'Anti-capitalism' as ideology...  
... and as movement?**

## TREASON PRESS PAMPHLETS

### **Behind the Twenty-First Century Intifada**

Also from the 2001 issue of *Aufheben* a look at the proletarian elements of the Palestinian revolt in opposition to the usual presentation of it as a purely nationalist, state-building affair.

### **Class Struggle in Iraq**

Three articles about war, mutiny and near-revolution in Iraq.

### **Global War for the World Order**

Four articles from the German communist group *Wildcat* analysing the 9/11 atrocities and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### **Globalisation: Origins-History-Analysis-Resistance**

An article from the 1999 issue of British eco-anarchist/communist journal *Do Or Die*.

### **Mutinies: A Historical Reader**

A collection of articles on mutinies against the Vietnam, Bosnia and Kosovo wars.

### **Outside and Against the Unions**

A communist critique of trade unions focusing on the 1984-5 miners strike in Britain from British group *Wildcat*.

### **'Picket and Pot-banger Together': Class Re-composition in Argentina**

A long article on the proletarian revolts in Argentina from the 2002 issue of *Aufheben* along with two shorter articles on the situation there.

### **Society of the Spectacle**

The classic 1967 critique of spectacular capitalism by Guy Debord of *The Situationist International*.

### **The Neoliberal Wars**

Articles on the wars in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Chechnya and Afghanistan as well as a theoretical discussion of how neo-liberalism leads to civil war.

### **Whither the World**

Co-author of the classic *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the communist Movement* Gilles Dauve and Karl Nestic discuss the current malaise of both capital and proletariat in this piece from early 2002.

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This pamphlet was prepared for the protests against the WTO meeting in Sydney November 2002 and slightly modified in December 2003.

'Anti-Capitalism As Ideology...And As Movement?' was originally published in *Aufheben* #10, September 2001. Most *Aufheben* articles are available at their website, [www.geocities.com/aufheben2](http://www.geocities.com/aufheben2)

[74] Socialist Worker #1759 (28th July 2001).

[75] [Anti]Capitalism: From Resistance to Revolution, p. 16.

[76] The point is well expressed by Neil Fernandez, drawing on arguments made by the group Insurrezione: Autonomia's 'theoretical understanding of the fact that the working class necessarily holds power which is tendentially disruptive of the realisation of capitalist imperatives, so long as it remains untied to a full understanding of the means of integration, can quite feasibly allow a movement from the original "workerism" (operaismo) of the 1960s towards a positive appraisal of various kinds of accommodation, or at least to an abdication from the need to criticise them wholesale. The idea of global communist revolution can then be shifted towards a concept of the "permanent" contestational occupation of a militant or sub-cultural "area of autonomy", corresponding in effect to a form of self-management.' (Capitalism and Class Struggle in the USSR: A Marxist Theory, 1997, Aldershot: Ashgate. p. 41).

[77] Not only links with the Stalinists but also, to some extent, with that other great Italian institution, the Catholic Church: one of the leading white overalls is a priest!

[78] Ya Basta! deny the widely-stated claim that Luca Casarini (spokesperson for a number of social centres and figurehead for Tute Bianche) ran for parliament (as a Rifondazione candidate) in last year's national elections. Farina (from the LeonKavallo social centre), another leading member of Ya Basta!, ran as a local councillor. On this, Ya Basta! deny only that Farina was a Rifondazione candidate, stating instead that he and 'many other comrades entered as independent candidates' ('Who are the white overalls?', op. cit.).

[79] 'Who are the white overalls?', op. cit.

[80] Editorial in Aufheben #8 (Autumn, 1999).



## 'ANTI-CAPITALISM' AS IDEOLOGY...AND AS MOVEMENT?

### PREFACE: FROM ANTI-'GLOBALIZATION' TO OPPOSING THE WAR

The events of 11/9/01 occurred as we were preparing this edition of Aufheben for printing. Naturally the development of a class opposition to the 'war' has become a major concern of those who do the magazine. With events changing from day to day, we have decided to limit our comments here to a few updates to the Israel/Palestine article\* and this preface to our article on the 'anti-capitalist movement'.

Before the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Centre, a great deal of attention had been focused on the mobilizations against 'globalization'. At the mobilization in Genoa, confrontations between demonstrators and police reached a new peak of ferocity. A lot of eyes turned toward the next big event - the Washington meetings of the World Bank and IMF - to see where it was all going. September the 11th changed everything. A 'war on terrorism' has been declared. What sort of war this will be remains to be seen. (Colin Powell's definition of its aims as a prolonged campaign against those who threaten, 'America, Americans, its allies and American interests throughout the world' actually sounds like a description of aims of standard US foreign policy.)

Reading Indymedia as we write, what actually seems to have happened in Washington appears to be a splitting along some of the lines of tension that we discuss in the article below. Even before the World Bank and IMF meetings were cancelled, the unions and NGOs withdrew support for a demonstration, the radical liberal fraction decided on a series of workshops on the war while only the (largely anarchist) 'anti-capitalist convergence' opted for turning the event into an actual demonstration against the war.

#### *Capitalist civilization versus...*

The reinforcement of an nationalist identity, especially in the States, has been a predictable feature of the preparation for war. However the world bourgeoisie has naturally been attempting to justify what it is doing in more noble terms. The Italian PM Berlusconi described the war as one between a superior western civilization which has generated 'widespread prosperity' and 'brought us democratic institutions, civil, religious and political rights of our citizens, openness to diversity and tolerance of everything.' Other leaders, aware of its impact on Muslim allies, criticized the statement; but this and other comments on a 'strange unanimity' between the anti-'globalization' protesters and the terrorists expresses a dominant ideological tendency: the equation of capitalism with civilization. With 'the war on terrorism', capitalist society vindicates itself as civilization against a barbaric enemy.

#### *Meaning for 'anti-capitalism'?*

Like the wider class struggle, the opposition that has expressed itself at the anti-'globalization' mobilizations has to deal with the changed political climate. An immediate impact of terrorism is to reinforce identification with the state and the existing order. The 'war mentality' involves the strengthening of nationalist identity and the creation of racist divisions within the proletariat. Curtailment of 'civil liberties', such as that involved in the introduction of identity cards which might normally be resisted or refused, is legitimized by the 'terrorist threat'. Whatever the level of actual military action involved, the 'war on terrorism' seems to indicate a permanent shift to a more authoritarian use of state power on the home front (naturally only so as to defend democracy and freedom). In conjunction with

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\* "Behind The Twenty-First Century Intifada" available in pamphlet form from Treason Press, and at the *Aufheben* website.

these moves, there has also been a co-ordination of state economic measures to soften the impact of the world recession. The idea of 'globalization' as an anonymous 'economic' process in which financial and corporate power threaten democratic 'political' institutions is breaking down before the massive wielding of political-economic power by the hegemonic capitalist state, the USA. The common theme of 'globalization' and the common practice of Summit mobilizations can no longer unify the way that they did. Those who have identified with these mobilizations need to think more about what capitalism really is. But if some anti-'globalization' misconceptions are left behind, the old dangers of anti-imperialist and anti-American ideology open up. Anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism are idiot forms of 'anti-capitalism' - that is, they are not anti-capitalist at all. Weak states or even non-state forces, like those organized by the multi-millionaire Bin Laden, may be anti-imperialist and anti-American but they are not against capitalism.

As we touch on below, the limitation of even the most radical tendencies in the mobilizations, those who aspire to be 'anti-capitalist', has been their separation from the wider social movement that could make such an aspiration a reality: that is, a class movement to abolish class society. The turn from 'globalization' to the war as focus of opposition will not immediately overcome this. The separation between an 'anti-war movement' dominated by ideals of peace and justice and the class movements that really end wars (the strikes, mutinies and revolutions that ended WW1 and the insubordination, frappings and breakdown of the American military machine that ended the Vietnam War), mirrors the gap between the anti-'globalization' mobilizations and a real anti-capitalist movement.

But this adventure launched by the bourgeoisie has dangers for them as well as us. In the first place, there is a danger for the American state of over-commitment and unrealistic expectations for a military machine which may be more effective as a threat than in practice. In the second place, there is a question over the extent to which people accept the propaganda in support of the war. The nature of the so-called 'war on terrorism' forces not only 'anti-capitalists' but also the population as a whole to think about politics and the world. The reality that the 'war on terrorism' is essentially an attack on the world working class threatens to emerge. Within and through the apparent coalition against terrorism the competition between the capitalist powers in the face of economic crisis is intensifying. While at first the war can distract the class from attacks on its living conditions - launched in an attempt to reassert conditions for capital accumulation - the basis for a radicalization within the class is possibly being prepared.

## A NEW INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT EMERGES?

The recent mass actions in Genoa are the latest in a series of impressive mobilizations against 'globalization'. [1] The most radical elements involved, especially here in Britain, have adopted the definition 'anti-capitalism'. While the use of this term was at first somewhat refreshing, there is no real sign that most participants' perception of what being 'anti-capitalist' means is more radical or coherent than those - indeed the majority - who refer instead to the anti-'globalization' or anti-'corporate' movement.

All the major transnational economic and political institutions - the G8, World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union - have been targeted by mass protests [2] which have served to undermine their legitimacy. In defining an alternative agenda of anti-'globalization' or 'anti-capitalism', the mass mobilizations have put the institutions on the defensive. The very violence of some of the actions - as well as the violence of the state - has led the mainstream media to focus on what the 'anti-capitalists' have been saying and doing, rather than on the communiqués issued by the summits themselves, a source of considerable irritation for the politicians.

is a concept the labour movement has got to examine and take on board.' (pp. 223-5).

[55] 'Social democracy: No future?' (Aufheben #7, Autumn 1998).

[56] There is a useful account of the involvement of workers in the Seattle events in 'Promises and pitfalls of the "Battle of Seattle"' in Internationalist Perspective #37 (Autumn 2000): 'American longshoremen [i.e., dockworkers] all along the West Coast shut down every port in solidarity with the protests on N30... several thousand union members in the union parade saw what was really going on and actively broke through the "security" goon line to join up in active solidarity with the radicals.' (p. 12).

[57] E.g. Chris Harman, 'Anti-capitalism: Theory and practice' in International Socialism #88 (Autumn 2000), p. 40.

[58] See 'The myth of working class passivity' in Radical Chains #2 (Winter 1990).

[59] One example - in this case of Militant, another Trotskyist sec, - is the 1990 poll tax riot. While the leadership condemned our side's violence and threatened to 'name names' to the cops, some of the rank and file - even some of the stewards - acted as proles rather than hacks by fighting the cops alongside everyone else.

[60] For one account of the threat of the SWP to the 'movement', see 'Vampire alert! The revolution will not be Bolshevised' in Do or Die! #9 (December 2000).

[61] An example of how the SWP can turn our actions into boring politics comes from the first post-Genoa picket of the Italian embassy in London (August 2001). Everyone else in the crowd was standing and moving freely in the area, but when the SWP (Globalize Resistance) arrived instead of joining the crowd they separated themselves from it by going straight behind the crowd barriers erected by the police!

[62] Wombles = 'White Overall Movement Building Libertarian Effective Struggles'; Wombats = 'White Overall Mobile Buffer Against Truncheon Strikes'.

[63] See 'Ya Basta(rds)!', a report from the Yellow Route at Prague, in Do or Die #9 (December 2000).

[64] See 'Basta la Vista' by Arthur Neslen in Now magazine, at <http://www.nowtoronto.com>.

[65] Politically in Italy, Ya Basta!'s supposed 'middle way' means suspicion from both the right (for their association with autonomia, linked by the right with 'terrorism') and the left (for their institutional links - discussed below).

[66] For the accusations, see 'Unmask simulations in white overalls' (in the Italian anarchist publication Umanita Nova) at [http://italy.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=2516&group=webcast](http://italy.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=2516&group=webcast) (also at <http://www.ainfos.ca/en/ainfos07022.html>). For Ya Basta!'s response, see 'Who are the white overalls? And why are they slandered by people who call themselves "anarchists"?' at [http://uk.indymedia.org/display.php3?article\\_id=6746](http://uk.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=6746)

[67] 'In Genoa we expected that more or less the same thing as usual would happen. They deceived us. Try and remember the meetings of the Genoa Social Forum with Scajola and Ruggiero: none of the guidelines agreed upon were respected by them. The police forces used firearms, even though they had assured us that they would not be. The right to demonstrate which Ruggiero agreed was an inalienable right which was run over under the wheels of the armoured police cars.' ('No more white overalls anymore', Interview with Luca Casarini, in II Manifesto).

[68] See 'Who are the white overalls?', op. cit.

[69] 'We are not the traditional blue-overall working class, but a new post-fordist productive subject. We are the faceless or invisible of the society and the white overalls give us visibility in the spectacular mediatic space.' Finnish white overall introductory statement, PGA European meeting, Milan 2000.

[70] See 'Who are the white overalls??', op. cit.

[71] See, for example, 'Basta la Vista' by Arthur Neslen, op. cit.

[72] 'Who are the white overalls?', op. cit.

[73] Alex Callinicos, 'The future', In Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement, op. cit., p. 396.

et Mouvement, 1988). The section which had the joint demonstration with the black bloc, prepared as it was to confront the cops and to attack the excluded zone, was apparently the most militant tendency in the COBAS.

[42] The term casseur means literally wrecker, but is better translated as hooligan, and was adopted proudly by violent protesters subverting its pejorative use by the press during the movement of 1994 in France. Some French black bloc autonomists in this movement also use the term to describe their actions, with the same emphasis.

[43] See [www.italy.indymedia.org](http://www.italy.indymedia.org) for the long discussion list on the main page devoted to the issue of the black block.

[44] We apologize to foreign readers for whom Trotskyists are not only boring but also insignificant relative to other leftist groups. But, from the British context with which we are familiar, the established left, apart from the Labour Party, is effectively the Trotskyists.

[45] The SWP were hampered by the fact that their opportunism has always been wedded to a crass workerism. Thus while the CJB was clearly aimed at marginal groups (travellers, hunt sabs, raves, anti-road protesters), the SWP, through their front, the 'Coalition Against the Criminal Justice Act', insisted unconvincingly that its real target was workers' picket lines.

[46] Benn is the former MP and figurehead of the Labour left.

[47] E.g. in the 'Directory of organizations' in *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement* (Bookmarks, 2001). In fact the main organizing group was mostly anarchist.

[48] Credit where it's due, though: the SWP's papers came in very handy as kindling for the fires people lit to keep warm.

[49] Some would argue that the first 'anti-capitalist' mobilizations were neither Seattle nor J18 but the events in May 1998 against the WTO in Geneva and the G7 in Birmingham.

[50] E.g., Chris Harman, 'Anti-capitalism: Theory and practice' in *International Socialism #88* (Autumn 2000), p. 4. Also the 'Chronology' in *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement* (op. cit.) starts with Seattle.

[51] See the reports in *Socialist Worker #1759* (28th July 2001) and the anonymous critique 'The SWP, the Black Block [sic] and Italian anarchism'.

[52] The SWP haven't yet dropped 'drop the debt', but have been using this liberal demand - e.g., on their Genoa placards and banners - as part of their attempt to link the liberal and 'anti-capitalist' tendencies.

[53] '[connecting the different elements of the 'anti-capitalist movement'] means providing credible and united socialist alternatives to neo-liberalism at the ballot box to prove that there are alternative conceptions of society on offer.' Chris Nineham, 'An idea whose time has come' in *International Socialism #91* (Summer 2001), p. 30. There seems to be a tension among its members around what the Socialist Alliance should be; while some want it to be the new workers' party, others want it to remain a popular front (in fact it isn't that popular at all since there is hardly anyone else in it beyond the members of the various Leninist sects).

[54] An example of this comes in a quote from A Merseyside dockworker interviewed for *Critique* (#30-31, 1998): 'You say unable to go back to the old compromise, but do we want to go back? I don't think I do! I don't particularly want a politics centred on "the right to work at all costs". I don't want to see my kids struggling for crap jobs. I think we're actually going through a revolutionary period, one where we should be saying "fuck you and your jobs and your slave labour". If wage labour's slave labour, then freedom from wage labour is total freedom... [H]ow many socialists within the political groups that have supported us have or would build a political strategy out of the refusal of wage work? I haven't come across any, but I know that's what Reclaim the Streets activists consistently argue and find that a breath of fresh air... Yer know, when we unite with people like Reclaim the Streets, we have to take on board what they are saying too, which is: "Get a life. Who wants to spend their days working on the production line like that famous poster of Charlie Chaplin depicting modern times?" I think this

There have also been a number of more concrete effects, including the physical prevention of WTO delegates from attending their conference in Seattle (they will now be holding their next meeting in remote Qatar) and the cutting short of the Prague conference of the IMF and World Bank. The World Bank meeting due to take place in Barcelona in 2001 was cancelled; the WTO and IMF have shortened their Washington meeting from two weeks to two days; Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime-minister, has moved a United Nations World Food Summit out of Rome; the next G8 meeting will be in a remote location in the Rockies; and there have even been concerns about whether a NATO defence ministers meeting, due to take place in Naples, should go ahead. And all this apparently because of the protests.

The excitement of some in response to these developments is understandable, especially given the generally weakened level of the class struggle of the last 20 years or so. Although the usual activists and politicians have been participating, the mobilizations and associated meetings have served to involve and politicize numbers of new people. Moreover, the continuity of these mobilizations - the fact that there have been mass mobilizations in different countries around apparently similar aims and issues - perhaps suggests that what is happening is the emergence of a new internationalism. Is the absence left by the collapse of Stalinism and the retreat of social democracy now being filled by a force which will perhaps find its expression in communism rather than in these historic dead-ends? The self-defined 'anti-capitalist' element that we have witnessed at least suggests this as a possibility.

Yet one of the features of both social democracy and Stalinism which allowed them to be an enduring form through which working class resistance was mobilized (and recuperated) was the way they attached themselves to everyday struggles over 'bread-and-butter' issues. The party and the trade union were organizational forms that didn't simply express themselves on the big occasion, but, through mediating the ongoing pumping-out of surplus-value from the workers, pervaded their mundane existence. Some of the anti-'globalization' commentators identify the lifeblood of the new 'movement' with the various mass movements in the southern hemisphere - most notably the Movimento Sem Terra (the grassroots land redistribution movement) in Brazil, the Zapatistas in Mexico and the Karnataka state farmers association (KRRS) in India. Others have claimed for the 'movement' various struggles around the world against such neo-liberal policies as cuts in social security, harsher labour laws and wage cuts. But while these accounts suggest that the Summit mobilizations are just the most high-profile expression of a worldwide day-to-day movement, in advanced capitalist countries it certainly appears that the 'movement' exists only in and around the mass mobilizations themselves.

Some would also argue that the street protests that characterize the 'movement' against 'globalization' are not on the class-terrain. Certainly, in the UK there have been only a few links with struggles around and against wage labour. Of course, the impulse of many taking part in the mobilizations springs from their everyday disgust at the dull compulsion of a world dominated by capital: a world of work, ecological destruction, poverty etc. But the 'movement' still does not exist as an everyday effort to resist the conditions of life determined by wage labour. In this sense, therefore, it is questionable whether what has been happening can properly be called a movement at all, and certainly not a movement of the class.

### **Contradictions in the 'movement'**

A further reason for denying that what has been happening constitutes a single movement is the fact of multiple and contradictory agendas in and around the mobilizations. Indeed, it might be said that the Summit mobilizations are simply occasions for a number of very different movements and tendencies each to do their own thing.

As mentioned, while many of the militants involved who have long been against capital talk about 'anti-capitalism', for most the 'movement' is just against 'globalization'. The emphasis on 'globalization' versus 'capitalism' typically reflects profound differences of analysis, approach and, at bottom, class position. For example, on the European continent there are organizations like ATTAC [3] which see dialogue with the state as one of the aims of the 'movement'. But there are also a number of anarchist and similar tendencies involved in the mass mobilizations who reject this mainstream; on at least one occasion (notably in Barcelona) they even held a counter-counter-summit to the counter-summit of the 'official movement'!

Yet even among those involved who define what is happening - or what should happen - as 'anti-capitalist' there are acute differences. The lack of a serious attempt to analyse what capital is allows these differences to be glossed.

The state's selective dialogue with some of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in and around the mobilizations appears as an attempt to capitalize on these kind of divisions. For example, Blair held face-to-face meetings with some of the 'drop the debt' campaigners. After Genoa, some of the NGOs reciprocated by coming off the fence to criticize the 'violence' of participants at the protests.

But, of course, the very reason that some of these NGOs - and the term covers a wide variety of organization - have been willing to get involved in such discussions is because they share the same vision of 'development' as the directors of the IMF, World Bank and so on, and differ only over the details. As GegenStandpunkt put it:

they reproach the IMF for having given too much and too little credit for the Third World, for having granted credit under too tough conditions, and for having promoted the wrong projects. They uncritically believe that credit, if only granted in the right amounts and invested in the right projects, could and actually would be a real means of subsistence for the poor of this world - and not what it really is, namely money-capital advanced in order to flow back even bigger to the lender. The right amount that would supposedly transform the curse of indebtedness into the blessing of anticipated growth is of course not calculated by them.[4]

Moreover, it is not simply that many NGOs are campaigning for a more decent capitalism; some of them are actively facilitating actually-existing capitalist relations. NGOs are often financed not only by the state but by the very transnational bodies some of them are protesting against. For example, NGOs are involved in 54% of World Bank projects, mostly in developing countries. [5] Since Seattle, some bourgeois commentators have noted an increased effort on the part of the World Bank to develop dialogue with, and to co-opt, NGOs, efforts which have served to mute NGO criticisms of the World Bank. Such commentators therefore recommend to the WTO the same strategy as a way of splitting the broad alliance that made Seattle possible. [6]

### **The state grasps the 'movement'**

While some of us puzzle over whether or not it is properly a movement, its targets - the G8 politicians and national hosts of the various transnational bodies - have already decided. The generous use of tear-gas at the Seattle anti-WTO mobilization (November 1999) was said by some on the side of the state to be an over-reaction. But, at the Quebec mobilization against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (April 2001), still more gas was employed, as well as reinforced fences to prevent a repeat of the crowd's success at Seattle in disrupting the conference. The idea that these responses could be explained simply in terms of the particularly violent culture of North American cops was dispelled by the experience of the mobilizations against the World Bank and IMF in Prague in September 2000.

[18] This was recognized in distorted form in 'Mayday! Mayday!', the NoLogo-influenced left-liberal documentary shown on Channel 4, which offered the following rhetorical question on one of the Mayday 2001 participants who didn't fit the purely humorous and harmless image of the event being projected by these journalists: 'Would a true anti-capitalist turn up for Mayday in a Nike jacket?'

[19] See also our articles on the development and potential of the anti-roads and Criminal Justice Bill (CJB) movements: 'Auto-Struggles: The developing war against the road monster' (Aufheben #3, Summer 1994); 'Kill or chill? Analysis of the opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill' (Aufheben #4, Summer 1995); 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: The case of the No M11 Link Road Campaign', op. cit.

[20] "'Neo-liberal" ideology is an expression of the freedom of global finance capital. In response to the class struggles of the 60s and 70s and the difficulties in maintaining accumulation, states took actions (e.g., by abandoning Bretton Woods) which in effect created the conditions for the development of the relative autonomy of global finance capital. Through taking this more autonomous form, capital could outflank areas of working class strength. A situation was created in which governments of nation states could claim that they had no freedom of manoeuvre but rather had to compete in terms of labour flexibility, social costs etc. to maintain competitiveness and attract investment.' ('Unemployed recalcitrance and welfare restructuring in the UK today', op. cit., p. 15).

[21] No Logo, p. 441.

[22] This refers to what has also been called 'subvertising': the practice of reworking advertising billboards.

[23] As in the case of a number of other commentators, Klein's account of RTS is littered with errors.

[24] No Logo, p. xxi.

[25] No Logo, p. 441.

[26] But see Klein's interesting article on Quebec, 'The bonding properties of tear gas', op. cit.

[27] No Logo, p. 318.

[28] Perhaps at least until it becomes ritualized.

[29] The latter's spontaneous 'anti-capitalist' action is, for the middle class ideologues like Klein, no more than 'soccer hooliganism'.

[30] This green journalist developed his career on the back of the direct action scene before partially disowning it when it ceased to accept his advice on non-violence and respect for property. The title of his book, *The Captive State: The Corporate Take-Over of Britain*, perhaps says it all about his nationalist, petty-bourgeois, statist politics.

[31] Walden Bello, director of the organization 'Focus on the Global South', is known for documenting the record of the IMF, World Bank and WTO in deepening poverty and inequality; he argues that they cannot be reformed and calls instead for 'deglobalization'. Kevin Danaher is editor and writer of a number of books on aspects of 'globalization' and the resistance to it in the USA.

[32] Even at the level of direct mimicking of the tone and language of the publicity material ('No issue is single!'). However, Seattle was much broader in its appeal.

[33] *We Are Winning! The Battle of Seattle. A Personal Account* (op.cit.)

[34] The condemnation of the black bloc soon became muted however in the recognition that the behaviour of the police was the real issue.

[35] Seattle N20. *Black Bloc Communiqué*.

[36] Seattle N20. *Black Bloc Communiqué*.

[37] Post Seattle, Zerzan exploited the media's interest in him as the leading ideologue of primitivism.

[38] Inpeg primarily consisted of American activists and some Czech anarchists.

[39] On the day the RTS-'creative' types were unhappy with this column because of the assignment of Trots and other leftists to it so they formed a fourth pink-and-silver column of their own.

[40] Check [www.vermont.indymedia.org](http://www.vermont.indymedia.org) for this and many other reports from Quebec City.

[41] Italian base unions. For an account of their origins see *The COBAS* by David Brown (Echanges

between 'First World' corporate wealth and 'Third World' poverty), Christophe Aguiton (leftist trade unionist formerly associated with the Euromarch network) and José Bové (McDonalds-trashing farmer), all of whom have been active in denouncing 'violent' participants at the mobilizations.

[4] 'Seattle, Melbourne, Prague: Global action against the phantom known as "Globalization"', *GegenStandpunkt*, 2001. <http://www.gegenstandpunkt.com/english/anti-global.html>. This interesting critique is limited by treating the 'movement' as a unity in which the statements of the anti-'globalization' liberals stand for the whole.

[5] 'The aid game', *Guardian*, 24th July 2001, p. 17.

[6] 'Mr Wolfensohn [head of the World Bank] has built alliances with everyone, from religious groups to environmentalists. His efforts have diluted the strength of the "mobilization networks" and increased the power of the technical NGOs [which specialize in providing information and analysis] (for it is mostly these that the Bank has co-opted). From environmental policy to debt relief, NGOs are at the centre of World Bank policy. Often they determine it... [The WTO does not] disburse money for projects, making it harder to co-opt NGOs. But it could still try to weaken the broad coalition that attacked it in Seattle by reaching out to the mainstream and technical NGOs.' ('The non governmental order', *The Economist*, 9th December 1999).

[7] In fact, the German government has actually used its own football hooligan laws to prevent protesters travelling across international borders.

[8] On the topic of the problematic 'gains' of the post-war social democratic compromise, see our articles: 'Social democracy: No future?' (*Aufheben* #7, Autumn 1998); 'Unemployed recalcitrance and welfare restructuring in the UK today' (*Stop the Clock: Critiques of the New Social Workhouse* (Summer 2000); 'Re-imposition of work in Britain and the "social Europe"' (*Aufheben* #8, Autumn 1999).

[9] This was our argument for the radical if not revolutionary potential of the anti-roads movement: '...the key to the political significance of the No M11 campaign lies less in the immediate aims of stopping this one road and in the immediate costs incurred to capital and the state (although these are great achievements and great encouragement to others), and more in our creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance.' ('The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: The case of the No M11 Link Road Campaign', In *DiY Culture: Party & Protest in Nineties Britain*, ed. George McKay; Verso, 1998, p. 107).

[10] See our Editorial in *Aufheben* #9, Autumn 2000.

[11] For example in the *Guardian* (24th July 2001) and in *YearZero* #6.

[12] *Guardian*, 23rd July 2001.

[13] For example, through their co-operation with the Greek cops, the Italian authorities knew which, among all the Greek coaches and other vehicles entering the country, contained the liberals who had been involved in some of the co-ordinating activities beforehand. They detained, searched and expelled this group while most of the street-fighting anarchists got through.

[14] This acknowledgement of divisions within the state - of internal conflict within and between the political organs of capital - is based on our understanding of capital as a unity based on difference. We do not accept, and nor are we referring here, to the liberal argument in support of the liberal-democratic tendencies in the state and against fascist elements - as in the suggestion that the expunging of the right-wing in the police moves us towards a more rational, fairer state.

[15] See *We Are Winning! The Battle of Seattle - A Personal Account* (Riot Tourists, 2000). There is a parallel with the dominant tendencies in the 1980s anti-nuclear movement; see *Strange Victories* by Midnight Notes (Elephant Editions, 1985).

[16] As we have witnessed, there is nothing more violent than the non-violent type resisting those who don't share their morality!

[17] See 'The bonding properties of tear gas' by Naomi Klein (<http://www.nologo.org>) and 'A turning point for activists' by Stuart Laidlaw.

The Czech state used all manner of forms of violence to those detained, including torture and severe beatings, in order to intimidate participants. Then, at the EU Summit in Gothenburg (June 2001), the Swedish police actually shot people in the crowd using live ammunition. The logic of this escalation was duly followed when the Italian police shot and killed at least one participant at the Genoa G8 summit just a few months later.

After Gothenburg, Blair and other leaders expressed their frustration by suggesting that the 'traveling circus' of protesters should not be allowed to cause such disruption. Hence not only has the state response become increasingly violent, there is also talk of introducing new legal means to prevent 'known troublemakers' traveling abroad, in the same way that legislation has been introduced and used recently to target supposed known football hooligans. [7] There has been increased co-operation and sharing of intelligence among police forces, and even talk among some heads of government of creating a Europe-wide riot police force.

Significantly, then, the state and the supranational organizations all perceive - and are acting upon - an apparent continuity in the mobilizations. In other words, the continuity - indeed the escalation - in the state response to the mobilizations shows that they are treating them as an entity: that is, as a movement which is in some sense a threat.

But how might the mobilizations pose a threat? Most obviously, although less interesting in itself, is the threat posed by the mobilizations to the ability of the world leaders and global economic bodies to hold their meetings how, when and where they choose. But, although there has been disruption, the bourgeoisie have mostly been able to carry on with their business: exclusion zones and mass deployments of police have ensured this. The more interesting threat is that posed by the mobilizations to the general climate of inevitability that Blair and the other Western leaders have sought to cultivate in recent years. The endless stream of 'reforms' which have served to whittle away many of the 'gains' achieved through the post-war social democratic compromise [8] have been premised upon the absence of an effective force of opposition. The visibility and ongoing existence of anti-'globalization' - even 'anti-capitalist' - mass mobilizations could serve as such a force of opposition. This in turn could operate to encourage a wider climate of resistance.[9] In such a climate, resistance in other areas begins to seem possible and may spread. A 'movement' criticized for its confused and often middle class composition and ideology could therefore prefigure and contribute to the development of a wave of struggles posing a genuine threat to capital's reproduction of itself. [10]

As well as treating the mobilizations as a single entity which exists over time - as a movement - the global organizations and their state hosts have often treated each crowd event as a single entity. While participants themselves comment upon the sometimes acute political differences within the physical crowd, the state appears less discriminating. Numerous are the stories of 'peaceful protesters' being attacked by police as if they were the ones causing 'violence'. The brutal police attack on the school accommodating people from Genoa Social Forum and Indymedia, and the subsequent torture of those arrested, has been the most high-profile example of this. However, the reasons behind this particular attack are unclear. The attack was said by some to be police revenge for the actions undertaken by the black bloc. [11] This seems pretty implausible. But the police did in effect treat the different elements at the protest as more or less interchangeable. As such, their action at least appears to be consistent with Berlusconi's statement that 'There was no distinction between the two groups', and his claim of 'connivance' between liberals and 'violent' elements.[12] Attacking such a soft target - the police were aware that the overwhelming majority of people staying at the school were not black bloc - may have therefore been a way of sending a warning to the rest of the protest, from a police force which had been ordered to defend the Summit by any means necessary.

However, the police attack might have reflected more strategic considerations. The liberals might be seen (rightly) by the forces of the state as providing the infrastructure for these kinds of events: they call the demonstrations, organize and advertise them, and provide practical support such as accommodation. Certainly, judging by the selective nature of the searches carried out on particular groups of people entering Italy to take part in the event, the authorities judge some of the liberal organizing groups to be the leaders. [13] The intention behind the attack on the school building may therefore have been to intimidate the liberals from coming to future events, thus undermining the organization on which the less liberal elements rely.

However, in general, when attempting to analyse this kind of incident there is a danger of ascribing an overwhelming coherence and rationality to the actions of the state. We may well be underestimating not only the simple bluntness of repression as a tool, but also possible internal divisions: for example between senior police and those on the ground; between police and government; between elements within the government; and so on. [14] Neither can we simply presume an unproblematic chain of command from the G8 leaders to the Italian police, whose job on such a presumption becomes not only guaranteeing the safety of this Summit but also of future Summits taking place in other countries.

Yet, whatever the intentions and whatever level the decision was made to attack those staying in the school at Genoa, a possible effect is that at least some of those attacked - mostly liberals - will indeed feel that providing infrastructure for Summit protests makes them too vulnerable. The size and actions of future European Summit mobilizations may give some indication of whether or not people have been intimidated by the recent repression.

### **Some unintended consequences of state actions**

Some of the state responses to the events have served to work to the advantage of (tendencies within) the movement. In particular, one unintended effect of the apparent lack of discrimination on the part of the authorities hosting the various Summits has been sometimes to create a greater unity in what have otherwise been extremely diverse and incoherent gatherings.

For example, the enormous mobilization in Seattle was dominated by a liberal-NVDA tendency which attempted actively to exclude more militant actions. [15] The misery of the attempt by this dominant tendency to define a critique of the WTO palatable to what they presumed to be the mainstream was perfectly illustrated by the idiots standing in front of Niketown and other shops trying to prevent black bloc people from smashing the windows. [16] But at Quebec the actions of the police led the non-violent sections of the crowd to see this same 'violent' black bloc as 'one of us'. The latter's retaliation against the police's use of tear gas against the crowd as a whole, their keeping the police at bay from the majority of the crowd and their attempt to breach the fence excluding the whole crowd from the conference served to create an enhanced sense of crowd unity and identity. [17] In this case, 'property damage' (in the form of the state's fences) and fighting the police was widely recognized as necessary. At Genoa, again, the non-violent element constituted the majority. But the police tactic of batoning all and sundry, intended to disperse the crowd, backfired when many more people got stuck in than had originally intended to fight - including some of the liberals and non-violent types.

The 'Summit-hopping' nature of many of the anti-'globalization' events has at times obscured the level of local participation. For example, Seattle, Quebec and Genoa were occasions for locals to act against the cops and property. Genoa, which has a long history of resistance to authority, witnessed various forms of active solidarity between locals and those who came just for the protest. This was despite the damage to 'their' city that so upset the leftists. For example, local people on motorbikes sped up and down warning others about where the cops were; some took strangers into their houses to

taking back the means of production from the hands of both transnational and national capital, in order to create free, sustainable and community-controlled livelihoods, based on solidarity and people's needs and not on exploitation and greed." So not a centralized state-run capitalism, then. Is this "small is beautiful" style self-management of wage-labour? Or communism? We find the answer later on in the draft: "Direct links between producers and consumers in both rural and urban areas, local currencies, interest-free credit schemes and similar instruments are the building blocks for the creation of local, sustainable, and self-reliant economies based on co-operation and solidarity rather than competition and profit." Ambivalence towards the state is revealed earlier in the manifesto: "Economic globalization has given birth to new forms of accumulation and power. The accumulation takes place on a global scale, at increasing speed, controlled by transnational corporations and investors. While capital has gone global, redistribution policies remain the responsibility of national governments, which are unable, and most of the times unwilling, to act against the interests of transnational capital."

The PGA web editors report that there are suggestions for amendments to the PGA manifesto, including "a more critical view of the state in the globalization process".

\*Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was a French socialist often criticised by Marx, who established a People's Bank offering interest-free credit; the bank was soon forced into liquidation. In Marx's "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", he describes how in times of defeat the proletariat comes under the influence of "ever more equivocal figures" and "throws itself into doctrinaire experiments, exchange banks and workers' associations, hence into a movement in which it renounces the revolutionizing of the old world by means of the latter's own great, combined resources, and seeks, rather, to achieve its salvation behind society's back, in private fashion, within its limited conditions of existence, and hence necessarily suffers shipwreck."

### **NOTES**

[1] Our intention here is not to deal with theories of 'globalization' but rather with the contradictions of the mobilizations themselves. While this fashionable term is used by everyone as if they know what it means, if one turns to the academic and journalistic scribbles about it, then one finds no agreement on what exactly it is. The use of 'globalization' as if it is unproblematic and common sense is a sign of the grip of ideology on the mobilizations. The question of whether one should embrace or reject globalization, with its focus on capital as circulation and finance, precisely avoids the real question of how we transcend the capitalist mode of production.

[2] For some, particularly those involved in the UK events coming out of the anti-roads and direct action movement, the emphasis is on 'direct action' rather than the ritualistic banner-waving and speeches normally associated with 'protest'. However, while direct action in the past (e.g. as associated with such groups as the IWW) had the distinct meaning of direct appropriation or blockage of capitalist reproduction, the distinction between protest and direct action today is not always so clear-cut. Moreover, while squatting to prevent road-building, the taking of a street for our parties and the bricking (and bricking up) of City offices - actions associated with the recent (pre-)history of UK 'anti-capitalism' - might be argued to be direct action (in that in each case we take from capital without asking), much of the activity taking place at most of the anti-'globalization' Summit events has taken the form of ritualistic marches, banner-waving and demands.

[3] ATTAC, the Association for a Taxation of Financial Transactions and for Assistance to Citizens, is a French pressure group claiming a number of affiliated organizations and some 35,000 individual members. As the name suggests, it concentrates on lobbying the French government for a tax on the international movement of money (Tobin tax) - something which that government is now considering. ATTAC's leading figures include Susan George (already well-known for her books on the relation



The convenors' statement for third international PGA conference resolves "to fight against oppression, domination and destruction, to unmask and abolish the institutions and companies that regulate the global capitalist regime, to build a broad unity based on the respect to difference and diversity, and to continue defining, practising and spreading local alternatives to take back control over our destiny. This hope, that lives in the irreverent determination of our bodies, minds and feelings, can and must realize our dreams of self-governance, freedom, justice, peace, equity, dignity and diversity". These bourgeois ideals are strikingly similar to those lyricized by Subcomandante Marcos. A critique of the PGA on the level of ideas is insufficient, but is the practice of the social movements (in the industrializing countries) and what some have labelled the "new social movements" (in the industrialized countries) radically different?

The social basis of the PGA, roughly speaking, is two-fold and apparently contradictory: on the one hand large social movements from "the South" such as the Brazilian landless movement Movimento Sem Terra or Indian peasant organization KRRS; on the other hand, from "the North", an assortment of sympathizers of these movements, non-aligned leftists, anarchists, environmentalists etc. who admit with some embarrassment that, at PGA conferences, whereas participants from "the South" feel they represent tens or hundreds of thousands, they themselves (from "the North") are quite sure they can only speak for themselves, or at a push, their "affinity group". Perhaps the closest thing to a mass movement in the PGA network in "the North" is the Italian pro-Zapatista network Ya Basta!; though another exception to this rule is the Canadian Union of Postal Workers who have been responsible for the international secretariat of PGA.

Within PGA there is an ideological convergence despite material differences. The peasant and indigenous organizations of the Southern Hemisphere are resisting proletarianization; these real struggles are expressed as a defence of and demand for land as a better form of life than scavenging survival amid the poverty of the shanty towns. This resistance to capitalist development is mirrored ideologically in "the North" within PGA by liberal anarcho criticisms of "corporate capitalism" and a yearning for "small-scale, local alternatives", "sustainable development" etc. It is redundant to criticize the indigenous peoples and peasants of "the South" for not having a proletarian perspective; in any case their resistance to capitalist development might complement proletarian struggles elsewhere. An example of this could be the land occupations of semi-proletarianized Brazilians who refuse to be incorporated into the industrial reserve army. However, that which is a practical necessity for peasants in 'the South' in the face of capitalist development - the defence of small-scale production - is adopted as a virtue, as a panacea by many activists in the materially different context of "the North" precisely because of a lack of, or rejection of, class analysis. This is particularly the case within the UK "direct action scene", which, afflicted by a combination of Proudhonism and third worldism, feels the need to pose "positive alternatives to capitalism", such as eco-villages, local exchange trading schemes and worker's co-ops.\*

At its third international conference in Cochabamba, Bolivia in September 2001, PGA was due to discuss among other things a draft manifesto (available on the web at <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiav/agg/en/PGAInfos/manifest.htm>), which represents a theoretical development beyond the "hallmarks"; however, its critique of capitalism is partial, with the emphasis on multinational corporations and international institutions, trade liberalization and "globalization"; not on the system of wage-labour itself.

The manifesto rejects free trade, but also the "right-wing alternative of stronger national capitalism, as well as the fascist alternative of an authoritarian state to take over central control from corporations". But what of the leftist or social democratic alternative of state-run capitalism? "Our struggles aim at

protect them from police baton charges; some threw water from their balconies at the cops and gave water to drink to the protesters; and when one street was destroyed, locals participated in the looting of shops.

Despite these kinds of examples, there has nevertheless often been a division between 'locals' and mobilization participants at a number of the Summit locations, illustrating the point, again, that the events typically express a separation between everyday antagonism and resistance as 'activism'. Perhaps the Prague mobilization exemplifies this separation most poignantly: among the Czechs, participation was limited to the small activist community.

Yet it is police action, again, that has sometimes contributed to the breaking down of this kind of separation. Mayday 2001 in London, which was promoted as an anti-capitalist event, was pre-hyped by the police to such a degree that otherwise 'non-political' working class youth saw it as an opportunity to have a go at property and the hated cops [18] - much more noticeably than at Mayday 2000. At Seattle, the extension of the police offensive beyond the designated protest area and into residential districts brought more residents out fighting the police alongside the protesters.

### **The role of the ideologues**

The possible prospects of this would-be movement - its continuity, international character and, at least for some, avowedly 'anti-capitalist' agenda - has meant that a number of different groups and tendencies have attempted to assume some sort of hegemony. Such attempts have all involved, first, the claim that there is indeed a movement, and second, a particular definition of the identity of that movement which allows those offering this definition to position themselves centrally. This work of movement identity entrepreneurship is a work of ideology, in that it reflects a partial viewpoint connected to their practical experience and social perspective.

If the mobilizations are indeed to become a movement, self-criticism is an important part of that process of becoming. A critique of the ideologues is pressing for the practical reason that their positive definitions of the unity of the 'movement' contain an inevitable negative: the exclusion from their definitions of those they perceive as a threat to this definition. We now examine the approaches to the 'movement' of four tendencies involved in and around the mobilizations who have become salient from a UK perspective: the progressive liberals, anarchists/black bloc, traditional left (in this country the Trotskyists) and Ya Basta! In many cases, there is an attempt by such tendencies to marginalize certain 'others' - often more militant elements. This marginalization, moreover, isn't simply a matter of definitions but may involve concrete exclusion and defeat. For example, both the vagueness and the conflict involved in the mobilizations so far has enabled some otherwise 'non-political' elements to participate, as mentioned previously. Would this wider involvement be possible if the ideologues' definitions of the 'movement' were more fully realized?

We acknowledge that an examination of the ideologues' accounts can't in itself tell us much about the nature and dynamic of the 'movement' (such as it is); such an analysis also risks being limited to the level of ideas. However, we undertake this examination not only because it is necessary to develop some theoretical tools to fight the ideologues and defend the more promising tendencies that they might exclude (as well as to critique some tendencies they might include), but also because criticizing other accounts of the movement is a necessary step in developing our own understanding. [19]

## THE 'MOVEMENT' ACCORDING TO THE PROGRESSIVE LIBERALS

For progressive liberals involved in and around the mobilizations, the problem is not capital as such, but what they see as the current ('neo-liberal' [20]) organization of capital, glossed by the term 'globalization'. The pre-eminent liberal-progressive interpreter of the movement so far is Naomi Klein, whose book, *No Logo*, is an international best-seller. The book is promoted as a part of the 'movement' yet which also speaks to - and is a part of - 'mainstream' society. Klein's apparent purchase on what is going on lies in the fact that so many people involved in and around the 'movement' events understand it as she does: in terms of multinational corporations (rather than capital). However, for Klein it is not even 'globalization' as such that is the problem, but a global system 'gone awry'. [21]

*No Logo* is a work of largely impressionistic journalism in which Klein identifies and analyses a global movement of opposition. Klein describes the different campaigns, struggles and tendencies which she sees as comprising this movement. These include 'culture jamming', [22] *McLibel*, *Reclaim the Streets*[23] and student campaigns against 'sweated labour'. What makes these different campaigns and struggles part of a single movement according to Klein is the fact that they are 'anti-corporatist'. For Klein, what the movement is essentially mobilizing around is the threat posed by the power of multinational corporations to state accountability and hence citizenship. [24] Klein argues that the recognition of the global corporate brand logo is itself the basis of this supposed global movement; the global corporations thus create the possibility of global (rather than merely local or national) opposition. Moreover, since these global corporations no longer provide 'their traditional role as direct, secure employers', [25] people no longer have a reason to be loyal to them and hence the global opposition becomes legitimized.

For Klein, the form that this 'anti-corporatist' resistance takes is primarily cultural. The 'movement' is essentially just that activity which attempts to 'communicate' (through propaganda etc.) with the forces of 'globalization'. This approach which privileges the 'message' over concrete activity is reflected in Klein's analysis of the political background of the movement. For example, Klein's account of *Reclaim the Street* (RTS) relies heavily on that of John Jordan, whose presentation of RTS as art-cum-politics (and himself as an 'official' spokesperson) have not been widely accepted within RTS itself.

### Interlocutors with the state?

The threat posed by progressive-liberal ideologues like Klein lies in their legitimizing of the role of the democratic state through linking the 'movement' to mainstream politics and the state: 'we' (the super-exploited garment workers of Jakarta, 'anti-corporatist' activists, and middle class progressive liberals like Klein) 'demand' the full rights of citizenship which only a properly democratic state can bestow, in order to protect us from the excesses of the global corporations. If this is how 'we' are united, then this must mean the marginalizing of the most militant tendencies. [26]

The role of progressive liberal ideologues taking positions like that of Klein is recuperative in that they present themselves as the voice - the most articulate - of the 'movement', which they can then represent in dialogue with democratic institutions and those corporations that come to the negotiating table. While those tendencies that accept the leadership of liberal ideologues will moderate their actions in the light of any such 'negotiations', others will become a 'hard-line rump' against which further state repression gains greater legitimacy.

This work of exclusion is evident in the sharp distinctions Klein makes between 'protest' and 'riot'. On RTS: 'the subtle theory of "applying radical poetry to radical politics" is getting drowned out by the pounding beat and the mob mentality... Despite the organizers' best efforts, RTS was spiralling

In terms of breaking with the liberal-leftist hegemony, the emphasis on ideas and ideologues in the present article in part merely reflects the fact that the anti-'globalization' phenomenon exists day-to-day as a movement only in a political sense. As a cross-class and somewhat amorphous phenomenon, there is a struggle over ideology. Hence even if many of the participants' actions are contributions to the class struggle, the question of ideologies needs to be addressed.

In terms of connecting practically to the wider working class, of course the distinction should not be over-stated: many proletarian elements have been involved in the anti-'globalization' mobilizations. But they cannot connect to the wider working class abstractly - i.e., through the presence at the protests of the trade unions as working class representations. Such connections can only be made through struggle itself. The failure to do so up till now, and hence the limits of the mobilizations themselves, are in large part reflective of the low level of social struggles. This absence, in turn, is a product of the historical defeats in the class struggle that we have witnessed for the past 20 to 30 years. Hence the mobilizations against 'globalization' can become a social movement rather than merely a political phenomenon only to the extent that they become part of a more general resurgence of class struggle.

September 2001

## APPENDIX: PEOPLES' GLOBAL ACTION - A NEW INTERNATIONAL?

The international network Peoples' Global Action, PGA, was formed in February 1998 as a "common communication and coordination tool for social movements". PGA was born out of the Encuentros - the international gatherings "against neo-liberalism and for humanity" instigated by the Zapatistas.

According to its convenors "PGA has been one of the principal instigators of the new global, radical, anti-capitalist movement which today is challenging the legitimacy of global governance institutions" through global days of action coinciding with summits of the international institutions. PGA itself has not organized the big actions in London, Seattle, Prague, Quebec, Gothenburg, Genoa etc.; however, they have all been networked through PGA. (In fact, most of the above occasions were intended as "Global Days of Action", with simultaneous protests all over the world. The first global day of action against free trade took place during the G8 summit in Birmingham and the WTO ministerial conference in Geneva, in May '98).

The "hallmarks" of PGA are:

1. A very clear rejection of the WTO and other trade liberalization agreements (like APEC, the EU, NAFTA, etc.) as active promoters of a socially and environmentally destructive globalization;
2. A very clear rejection of all forms and systems of domination and discrimination including, but not limited to, patriarchy, racism and religious fundamentalism of all creeds. We embrace the full dignity of all human beings;
3. A confrontational attitude, since we do not think that lobbying can have a major impact in such biased and undemocratic organizations, in which transnational capital is the only real policy-maker;
4. A call to non-violent civil disobedience and the construction of local alternatives by local people, as answers to the actions of governments and corporations;
5. An organizational philosophy based on decentralization and autonomy.

While it was decided in the second international conference in Bangalore that the PGA was an "anti-capitalist network", this has not been explicitly translated into its hallmarks.

those at Seattle, Prague and Genoa, which continue to excite and interest people, in not being Summit-focused. Indeed, maybe the reason that the UK events have been increasingly less well-attended is the lack of a particular focus or target. The perception that the 'movement' is already declining reflects perhaps the same partial UK perspective that inevitably limits the analysis we have presented here.

Nevertheless, the Summit-centred mass mobilizations cannot in themselves constitute a movement, as impressive as they are. The attempt to link these mass mobilizations with particular expressions of resistance to economic rationalization we have seen in various countries - including strikes, land rights movements, student occupations - is clearly necessary. In this sense the ideologues are right. But to observe, correctly, that the various struggles are linked by a common relationship to global capital is not necessarily the same as observing if and how these various struggles are linking up in practice, as a collective subject.

The recognition that various activities and tendencies together comprise a movement is a necessary part of any movement's development. But to posit a unity, which does not exist - to gloss over contradictions - cannot in itself serve to create a movement. Yet, for the ideologues, in order to achieve some form of hegemony it is necessary to claim that what has been happening is indeed a movement - and thus to freeze present limitations.

Thus the liberals, leftists and Ya Basta! have made strong claims that there is a single movement. Except perhaps for the black bloc, each of the tendencies we have discussed here have sought to define a particular movement subject which has come about in response to historically specific conditions. Defining those historically specific conditions has therefore been part of attempting to grasp the nature of the 'movement'. For the most part, their definitions of these conditions are ideological: 'globalization', 'neo-liberalism', the emergence of 'civil society' and the 'multitude' as the new subject. The black bloc, by contrast, defines itself simply through a tactic - street-fighting and damage to property - and thus would perhaps claim to be non-ideological. But, as we have seen, the tactic is itself ideological insofar as it is fetishized as a political identity. Each of the four tendencies we have looked at therefore has an ideological - distorted, one-sided - grasp of the supposed 'movement'. Each takes one aspect of the diverse struggles and practices - the (anti)brand, organized workers on strike, the invisible would-be citizen, smashing property and fighting the cops - as the secret of the whole.

But what is the whole - the essence - of the anti-'globalization' phenomenon?

One perspective would look just at the liberal middle class composition of the 'movement' leadership, its support from labour movement representatives, and their shared reformist programme. Based on this, one would be led to dismiss what has been happening as having little positive significance for the class struggle.

A different type of approach to this question would be to ignore the leadership and ideology entirely and focus just on the radical actions of many of the participants and the climate of resistance to the forces of the state they have engendered at the mobilizations. From this perspective, the anti-'globalization' phenomenon is indeed part of the class struggle.

We have argued previously that if there is to be an 'anti-capitalist movement' then it must constitute itself as the proletariat, [80] the determinate negation of capital. This would mean not only breaking with the liberal-leftist hegemony, but also - and indeed crucially - connecting practically with other sections of the world proletariat.

into soccer hooliganism'. [27] Similar comments are made about the June 18th 'Carnival against Capital' (J18). Klein repeats the oft-heard liberal whine about 'the message being drowned out' in all the violence and damage. What they mean is their message (which respects property as part of democracy). In fact, as even some reformists often recognize, if there is one inevitable effect of rioting it is to get people talking about what the rioting is about: rioting defines agendas. [28]

If Klein engages with the most militant only at the level of their actions (and this only in order to marginalize them) it is because this is less threatening to her overall interpretation than to engage with them at the level of theory. The 'violent' elements she tries to dismiss typically define themselves not as 'anti-corporate' but as 'anti-capitalist', anarchist, or in many cases do not have a political identity at all, except perhaps anti-'system'. [29] To critically confront them would mean dealing with the problem not only of capital itself (not just 'global' capital 'gone awry') but also, crucially, of the state. What is most obviously missing from Klein's analysis of the problem of global corporations and the supposed movement against them is an adequate grasp of the relation between the state and the forces of 'globalization'. Ultimately, this would require a grasp of how the division between 'politics' and 'economics' is a mystified, if real, fragmented appearance of the capital relation. Simply put, it is the very democratic states to which Klein appeals which have participated in the creation of the structures of the global economy and hence the current relative autonomy of global finance capital. The politicians representing these democratic states have done this not because they are corrupt, undemocratic etc., but because they are dependent on and attempt to facilitate capital accumulation in each national territory. To restore greater power to the state and away from global finance capital, as the liberal-progressives wish, is to attempt to force the state to find some other way to guarantee the conditions for the optimum extraction of surplus-value. Free trade and protectionism have historically each been capital's solution to the problems of the other.

We have focused on Naomi Klein, but the other liberals take similar positions in relation to the state and the form of resistance. People like George Monbiot [30] (discredited years ago in the radical ecological movement), Walden Bello and Kevin Danaher [31] all call for smaller scale capitalism (smaller businesses that we can perhaps identify with more and be exploited by with less resistance?) and more tax (e.g. a Tobin tax on the movement of international finance capital). In calling for an 'acceptable' capitalism with the state as the interventionist organ of democratic control, not only do these liberals justify the alienation that is capital, they also grasp the state incorrectly as a neutral tool. Or, perhaps more accurately, they instinctively understand it well - as a structure necessary to guarantee the version of capitalism they support.

## THE RELATION OF THE ANARCHISTS AND BLACK BLOC TO THE MOBILIZATIONS

If the progressive liberals have been given quite considerable, favourable coverage, the bourgeois media has also strongly associated 'anarchism' with the mobilizations. Violence at the events, or the threat of it, generally gives a giant dose of publicity to the largely mythical anarchist ringleaders that are deemed to be responsible. The unwillingness of most anarchists to speak to the media only increases the interest (as a theory of recuperation would tell you). But whatever the spectacular dimension, it is true that anarchists of one sort or another, have had a significant role in the genesis and development of the mobilizations.

In Britain, anarchism has been a strong influence on the RTS and direct action scene out of which the street party at the 1998 Birmingham G8 and the 1999 J18 riot in London's financial district emerged. The older class struggle anarchist scene had at first largely been very suspicious of the RTS/direct action scene for its 'middle class/hippie/green' composition, but by J18 had swallowed their objections.

Elements from this scene were largely instrumental in the 2000 and 2001 May Day events in London. J18 was then a direct inspiration for the mobilization for Seattle. [32] Though the organizers of Seattle were more liberal/leftist a 'soft' anarchism was present. To an extent its influence was strongest at the level of method and technique. For example the pivotal organizing group, the Direct Action Network (DAN), introduced what was seen as 'forms of anarchist decision making', and had many self-described anarchists in it. A participating group, the Ruckus Society, a mobile direct action training camp which emerged out of Earth First!, has a similar large anarchist involvement. Against this kind of involvement, more hardline ideological anarchists have criticized anarchists in DAN for being mere foot soldiers in a liberal and leftist campaign. One pamphlet [33] testifies that many anarchists were angry at the guidelines imposed by DAN banning violence against persons and property. Such tensions are an understandable expression of American anarchism's development within an individualist and unhistorical political culture. Whereas in the UK, tendencies within anarchism towards lifestyleism have been tempered by the experience of the miners' strike, Wapping etc., US anarchism has no such recent history.

However, one section of anarchists found through their practice a way of making an impact on the protest at Seattle which has then become a continuous feature in subsequent mobilizations: the black bloc. It is anarchism's association with this form of militancy that has mainly defined its relation to the mobilizations against 'globalization'.

The riots which tore through Genoa this July engendered a backlash against the black bloc spearheaded by Italian leftist organizations. For its own ideological reasons, and using the death of Carlo Giuliani, the liberal-left parts of the 'movement' demonized the violent protesters at Genoa in a big propaganda offensive within Italy. [34] This uneasily paralleled the anger and frustration felt even by radical sections of the crowd, both inside and outside the black bloc, with its actions. Some of the arguments of the leftists and liberals (for example, the idea of police infiltration of the black bloc), have put those who previously embraced the tactic on to the defensive. It is necessary, then, to examine the way this tactic has developed.

The problem of the black bloc at these events is the contradiction between its existence as a tactic and as an ideological identity; and the way that the form of the anti-'globalization' 'movement' forces these two aspects to coincide. To counter the leftist propaganda, which portrays the black bloc as a homogenous group that can be easily identified and marginalized (young, male, anarchist, fanatical, nihilistic), others have emphasized its heterogeneity, fluidity and the fact that it is first and foremost 'a tactic'. As such, it is claimed, it has no ideological identity and changes for practical reasons as time and place dictate. However, although there is an element of truth in this (and although certain people within the black bloc see it or wish it this way), there is a definite tendency to conflate radicality with a 'hardcore' fetishism of violence. A defining if not exclusive feature of the black bloc that distinguishes it from simply street-fighting at demonstrations is the existence of a set group committed to a form of action, separate from the rest of the crowd. The black bloc seeks to identify itself as a group of black clad militants who work together, look out for each other, take on the cops and attack property, and as such sees itself as the radical, autonomous wing of the protest. In practice, the black bloc tendency does alter significantly according to local conditions, but doesn't escape the bounds of a militant role.

### **Seattle: Anarchist ideology and the black bloc**

A main origin of the black bloc tactic is the German *autonomen* movement of the 70s and 80s, known for its highly organized and widespread squatting scene. The *autonomen* were split between an anti-imperialist tendency identifying with the Red Army Faction; and a 'social revolutionary' tendency

Ya Basta! have been criticized by the SWP for being post-modern, for being elitist, [73] and for being ineffective. [74] Workers Power criticize them for acting like cops. [75] Ya Basta! respond by accusing these leftists of being just old-style Leninists stuck in Marxist orthodoxy. All these criticisms are right. The surface differences between Ya Basta! and the Trots belie deeper similarities. Insofar as they are concerned that the struggle should be about such aims as fairer distribution (of alienated labour), rights of citizenship, democratic control of resources etc., then all operate within bourgeois thought. The Trots and the 'post-Leninists' of Ya Basta! are in this sense actually mirror images of each other.

### **Radicalism as reformism**

Ya Basta! emerged from the social centres into which the autonomia movement retreated after the defeats of the late 1970s. In fact, one root of their propensity to negotiate with the cops may be the background of their leading cadre in a 80s Padua autonomia scene which had become so small that the remaining activists and the cops were virtually all on first name terms. Ya Basta!'s particular social and historical background has facilitated the take-up of particular features of autonomia as rationales for a recuperative reformism, a defeatism dressed as the new vision of 'social change'. [76] The most glaring examples of this are the institutional links which they trumpet as a sign of their success. The wider white overalls (Tute Bianche) movement in Italy, of which Ya Basta! are a part, has been flirting with the authorities since the early 1990s. Tute Bianche have strong financial links and arrangements with the authorities. These include their close relationship with and support from sections of the ex-Communist Party Rifondazione Comunista [77] and the state sponsorship of some of the social centres they are involved in. These formal links, as well as their dialogue with the authorities, their standing for local elections [78] and, worse still, their setting up of non-profit-making co-operatives (which have undermined the wages of other workers), the white overalls present as part of the construction of the 'civil society' capable of bringing about the reforms they desire. [79] What greater evidence can there be of the weakness of a movement?!

The threat of Ya Basta! is of recuperating the energy and activities of the more radical people in and around the anti-'globalization' mobilizations into a reformist project. With their manoeuvrings and opportunism, the white overalls may be regarded as just another dishonest racket by many in Italy. But in other countries they appear as the radical alternative that people have been seeking. Through their occupation of a 'symbolic location', a radical vision - embodied in licensed social centres - can apparently develop in partnership with the social relations of capital. Thus 'achievable' reform displaces total revolution as a movement aim.

At some of the 'anti-capitalist' events, the limits of Ya Basta!'s approach have been identified by some of Ya Basta!'s own number; and the leadership, with their post-modern leftist-reformist agenda, have not always been able to keep the rank and file in line. At Genoa, Ya Basta! tried again to enact an alternative to street-fighting with the cops. But on this occasion the notion of 'transcending violence and non-violence' appeared as what it is - empty rhetoric - and some 'white overalls' joined in the riot. From 'white overalls', with a history of eschewing missile-throwing, this was indeed 'doing what the other doesn't expect', though not in the way the Ya Basta! leadership would have liked.

### **FROM IDEOLOGY TO THEORY?**

In the UK, where the recent mobilizations have often been interpreted more radically, as 'anti-capitalism' rather than anti-'globalization', there is a feeling among some that the high point of the 'movement' has already passed. The RTS street parties, which began in 1995, culminated in the exhilarating J18 'Carnival Against Capital'; but subsequent 'anti-capitalist' events - Euston N30 in 1999, Mayday 2000 and 2001 - have been smaller and less unambiguously successful. All these events differ from

between violence and non-violence. In an Italian political climate in which violence is almost routine, Ya Basta! have to at least present themselves as confrontational to gain radical credibility. [65] Yet it is a symbolic form of confrontation; and indeed all their public statements stress the importance of 'symbols' and 'communication'.

Ya Basta! hotly deny the accusations that their confrontations are pre-arranged with the cops, citing real injuries to their people (e.g. in Milan, January 2000) as evidence. [66] Yet after Genoa, the white overalls leader, Luca Casarini, bleated that the police deceived the white overalls by disregarding mutually agreed guidelines! [67] Ya Basta! sneer at the notion of the spectacle [68] because they do indeed think that the message counts for more than the practice that carries it. Their activity is oriented essentially towards 'civil society' via the mass media.

But who do they think is witnessing their actions through the media? Who are these poor souls who need Ya Basta!'s symbolic confrontations in order to grasp the nature of the cops? The rejection of a 'blue collar' identity on the part of Ya Basta! and the other white overalls is linked with a 'post-Fordist' despair that the working class itself can be the subject of history. [69] Hence, particularly in northern Italy, the audience to which Ya Basta! is attempting to appeal would appear to be the same middle class student constituency which defines the background of their leadership.

In the south of Italy where conditions are much harsher, more supporters of Ya Basta! are from working class backgrounds. But the involvement of more proletarian elements in Ya Basta! is part of the very recuperation we are describing. The focus on the media and aim of exposing the cops, which would seem superfluous to most working class people, derives from the leadership of the organization as a whole, which is middle class and university-educated.

If the emphasis on the image smacks of post-modernism, then it is consistent with Ya Basta!'s politics. They draw upon the Grundrisse, they say - but in the same way as the late Negri: both abandon the notion of the proletariat as the universal class capable of grasping and transcending capital as a totality. Hence they are certainly not 'communists'. [70] And not revolutionaries either: rather than abolishing the state and capital they are struggling - through such imaginary means as a 'general citizenship strike' - for the full realization of the bourgeois subject in the form of a citizens' income and other universal rights, [71] and with no sense that these are merely 'transitional demands'. The subject of this struggle is the 'multitude' - in particular, the 'invisibles', such as sans papiers, symbolized by the wearing of white overalls.

On the one hand Ya Basta! and the other white overalls take the post-autonomia/post-modernist line that difference and plurality - i.e. fragmentation - is the movement's strength, that all sorts of different tactics are necessary. They even refer to their support for and co-operation with the black bloc at Quebec and Gothenburg. [72] On the other hand, they have also attacked those whose tactics differ from their own. Some of them fought against black bloc types at Genoa, then blamed them for the police violence. Yet while Ya Basta! accuse the black bloc of being infiltrated by the cops, they themselves co-operate with the cops all the time. While a critique of the black bloc approach is necessary, Ya Basta!'s analysis of tactics here is as mistaken as it is disingenuous. The fact is that Ya Basta!'s 'symbolic' approach simply didn't work at Genoa because the cops decided to go in really hard: they were concerned that the crowds at Genoa did not disrupt the conference, as at previous gatherings. Where Ya Basta!'s methods did work it was in spite of the aims of the organizers: their shields, helmets, gas-masks and padding were used by participants not as mere defences but also as real weapons in response to the attacks of the cops.

roughly inspired by Italian *autonomia*. The black bloc tactic was linked more with the anti-imperialist side, so can be connected to its vanguardism and lack of orientation to the (German) working class.

There have been black bloc formations inspired by the German blocs in America over the years, but these never really made much impact, given the enormous restrictions on demonstrations in America, and the power of the police. However, in Seattle, the black bloc had visible success by attacking corporate property like Starbucks and Nike. In a communiqué some black bloc members printed to explain the tactic, they write of their sophisticated practice as a group who escaped serious injury by remaining constantly in motion and avoiding engagement with the police, but present their actions against property as symbolic - what matters is the 'shattering of assumptions', the 'number of broken spells' [35]. They also affirm that their actions accord with the wider anti-corporatism of the movement, whilst hinting that they are against all property relations. Given the limited aims of the protest, the pacifists they deride were probably more effective in closing the centre down. It's not enough to make a show of violence against the pacifists, hoping that it'll clear the bad smell of hippie idealism, like an 'exorcism'. [36] To oppose hardcore militancy for its own sake against NVDA (Non Violent Direct Action) betrays just as much ideological obfuscation.

The Seattle black bloc seemed very much defined by its isolation from the rest of the movement. They were few. They had to stick together against the incomprehension of the rest of the crowd, and even to defend themselves from the 'peace cops'. They had to defend their actions in the terms of the liberals. There the black bloc as tactic was inseparable from its exclusive identity. At the same time, the black bloc can point to the huge international impact of Seattle as due partly to their actions.

The Seattle black bloc was later branded as 'a bunch of anarchists from Eugene who follow the primitivist John Zerzan'. [37] This exaggerates the influence of primitivism on both the black bloc and US anarchism in general. However, the attraction of primitivism, with its anti-technology fetishism and lack of class analysis, is an expression of the broader lifestyle ghettoism of American anarchism. A limitation of the black bloc in America is the extent to which it is trapped in that culture. But of course, in the narrow confines of the anti-'globalization' 'movement', this sort of lifestyle vanguardism may seem like the radicalism as against the liberals. It would be involvement in a class movement that might lead the anarchists to question their separation.

The riots in Washington later that year, though they faced a much higher degree of police repression, marked an advance in that there was a level of collaboration between 'violent' and 'non-violent' protesters. The decision not to be antagonistic amounted to an effective co-ordination and collaboration of their different tactics, neither hindering the other. The ideological positions of both groups thus began to loosen into practical considerations.

### Britain

While some British activists are enamoured by the black bloc and its tactics, and have hopped merrily along to many a summit to be part of it, the 'anti-capitalist' protests in Britain - J18, Mayday 2000 and 2001 - did not have black blocs. People may mask up and dress in black to avoid surveillance, but there is not the same segregation of the activist scene into liberals and militants. When fighting does occur those who take part are often not politicians at all. That such a situation could have developed is due to the weakness of an institutional left that could steward and self-police events. The 'each to their own' tolerance of the hippie crowd helps in its way. Nevertheless after the surprise of J18, the limited numbers of participants has allowed the police to swamp the subsequent events.

## Prague and Quebec City

The black bloc tactic was used in Prague in September 2000, in a completely different way to Seattle. Aware of the different tendencies that would be present on the day, and the tensions that could arise between them, the organizing group, Inpeg, [38] decided on a separated but concerted effort to close down the conference. Three different routes would be used to approach the excluded zone, each one corresponding to a different political tendency. Everyone could stick to their chosen grouping - 'creatives' in the pink bloc, [39] Ya Basta! stunt-politicos in the yellow bloc, the black bloc as the blue bloc - and yet could help each other to divide police resources in a unified attack on the actual conference, (unlike Seattle or Genoa). Some black bloc people actually made it to the grounds of the conference centre with the pink-and-silver march, helped by the blue bloc's flat out assault of the police line on a different approach. The blue bloc did not budge the line too much, but injured a lot of cops. This was the black bloc's most focused action thus far, but some black bloc types wondered whether it was in a sense too much so - 'doesn't targeting the conference centre suggest support for the reformist programme of the liberals?' - as if indirectly targeting the conferences by smashing the host city isn't part of the same thing.

Quebec in April 2001 saw the biggest amount of public support for a black bloc action, as mentioned earlier. It was there that the bloc as tactic, in pulling the widely unpopular fence down, really connected with the feeling of the march, and many in the city as a whole. This initiative of the black bloc proved a pivotal moment (bystanders joined in after the initial attack on the fence). The bloc as an organized, determined force was seen practically to have value even to Gandhian peaceniks, as one testimony on Indymedia demonstrates. [40] Elderly ladies in Quebec City were seen holding up placards saying 'God bless the kids in black!'

## Genoa - The black bloc under attack

The June 2001 protests in Gothenburg against the EU summit erupted in widespread militant black bloc rioting and saw the first shooting of a demonstrator at these events. The main victim of the shooting, critically ill for some weeks, was Swedish and it seems that Sweden's anarchist scene contributed a lot of people to the bloc. At one point, the black bloc pushed the cops into retreat (TV images showed what almost looks like a rout), and Gothenburg saw some of the most intense fighting with the police. Unlike with Prague, the black bloc was unpopular with the peaceful types whose sunny party in the park was disrupted by police charging the rioters.

In Genoa the black bloc was split up and spread over a large area, and their dress became increasingly motley and light coloured according to Italian conditions - i.e. heat and little camera surveillance. Participants have argued over the composition of the militant blocs. Some say there were many locals getting involved and that Genoa proved to be the most socially connected of the summit protests. Others argue that although the population was friendly and helpful in general, most locals present at the riots were bemused onlookers who may have helped the black bloc on occasion, but generally saw the event as extraordinary spectacle, which in a way it is.

There were many black bloc people in Genoa from different countries, so there could be many loosely organized blocs, but again the problems of black bloc militancy re-appeared, which resulted in fighting between different militant groups on the Friday. A section of the black bloc at the joint COBAS [41] and black bloc action attacked the cops too early in the march. The cops came in and split the crowd. The COBAS were angry at the premature ejaculation of the black bloc. Later they fought with the black bloc to stop it following them to their base, effectively threatening to throw the bloc into the arms of the pursuing police. The black bloc insisted and was eventually allowed through. It does seem that a certain culture of European anarchism with its obsessive fetishism of street fighting is to be seen

correspondence does occur it is in spite of not because of the party. [59] This is why those in struggle are so often ahead of the party hacks, despite the latter's 'Marxist' education.

The moment of truth in the SWP's approach is their attempt to relate to working class struggles: that is, their attempt to grasp the recent mobilizations as an issue of class. This makes their analysis superior to that of the progressive liberals. The problem is, first, how the SWP identify the class with its representation (i.e. the labour movement), and, second, the way that they relate to such working class struggles: as *hacks* rather than as human beings. Given what many of us have experienced of this party 'hack-tivism' over the past 20 years, not just from the SWP but from the other Trots (most notoriously perhaps the example of Militant in the poll tax struggle), it is perhaps understandable that some feel threatened by the interest taken by the Trots in the 'movement' following Seattle. However, we would suggest that the threat of the SWP taking over through one of their fronts is perhaps more apparent than real. [60] The SWP have been in crisis for some time: the death of Tony Cliff, the re-organization of the branch structure and the problem of how to relate to the Socialist Alliance have each undermined the smooth functioning of the party machine.

Moreover, the very amorphousness and lack of structure of the 'anti-capitalist movement' in this country makes it difficult for the SWP to take over in the usual way. Further, the opening up of the party, and its reduced ability to close up again, offers the possibility of many of its members being less hack-like. Their decreased certainty in their specialist role may make them as individuals less of a block on the class struggle.

Perhaps the real threat, if any, of the SWP and their ilk is that, by successfully defining a terrain in which they represent 'radical politics', they actually put people off 'radical politics' in the broader sense. Of course, most people in the UK who have been to the 'anti-capitalist' mobilizations already know of the SWP and their manoeuvres, and are not likely to get involved with them. However, the mass presence of the SWP can still serve to put off those people who hoped that the 'movement' was an alternative to the same old boring 'politics'. [61]

## THE RELATION OF YA BASTA! TO THE MOBILIZATIONS

For some people in the UK, the approach of Ya Basta! - the white overalls tactic - has made them appear a refreshing new approach which is militantly 'anti-capitalist' yet which goes beyond both the lack of organization of the black bloc and the crude workerism of the Trots. An indication of the influence of Ya Basta! is the adoption of the white overalls tactic by other groups with semi-humorous names (e.g. Wombles in the UK and Wombats in Australia [62]). The political background of Ya Basta! (in the remnants of the *autonomia* movement) and their own inspiration (the Zapatistas) also appears to give them some credibility. The ability of Ya Basta! to achieve their aims - hi-jacking trains, running social centres, resisting the violence of the cops - adds further to their appeal: here, it would seem to many, is a tendency powerful enough to make 'anti-capitalist' desires a concrete reality.

## Symbols for citizens

However, some have experienced the practice of Ya Basta! on demonstrations as hardly any less alienating than the old style Leninist parties whose 'outdated' approach they have supposedly transcended: they are essentially another hierarchical organization which, to achieve its aims, will effectively stifle other tendencies in the crowd. [63]

And what are those aims anyway? The reasons for dressing up in white padding and fronting a demo include that of supposedly exposing the brutality of the cops [64] and defining a new 'middle way'

Another exciting feature of some of the 'anti-capitalist' mobilizations and their RTS precursors, at least in this country, has been the way they have on occasions linked up with workers in struggle. Examples include the 1997 RTS party-protest with sacked dockworkers in Trafalgar Square (the 'March for Social Justice'), the occupation of Merseyside docks, and the rail and office occupations in support of striking tube workers in 1996. In these examples, rather than the passive solidarity and tail-ending of union initiatives usually offered by those outside a group of workers on strike, there was an attempt to intervene through the methods of the direct action movement. In some cases, both workers and activists were inspired by what happened; they came to a different view of each other and of the possibilities of struggle linking 'bread-and-butter' issues (such as wages and conditions) with 'utopian' desires (revolution, ecological resistance). [54] As we suggested at the time, the very weakness of the labour movement - its inability to deliver in its own terms - was part of the reason why the support in the form of RTS occupations became so important to some workers' struggles: [55] as the effectiveness of the mediators of the labour movement has declined, so 'direct action' has become more necessary and relevant.

However, the SWP and other Trotskyists have found other reasons to be excited about the 'movement'. In particular, the convergence on and shut-down of the WTO conference in Seattle involved not just the environmentalist movement and the anti-debt and sweatshop campaigners but a substantial demonstration organized by the AFL-CIO, the US equivalent of the TUC. For the SWP, the 'anti-capitalist movement' is and must be grounded in various trade union struggles around the world. As such it is also a lifeline to the continued meaningfulness of the unions: for the Trots, links between the unions and others in the 'anti-capitalist' movement are essential. What the SWP do not fully acknowledge, however, is the resistance of workers to their unions even within the mobilizations. Thus, for example, although the trade unions organized a traditional march at Seattle, many of the workers on it rejected it and instead joined in the direct action of the more militant elements. [56]

Why are the unions and elections so important? Because the promise and ultimate disillusionment that trade union action and electoral ballots supposedly engender when people use these methods against capitalism is the principal means through which the working class is supposed to be enlightened as to the necessity of the Trotskyist version of revolution. The SWP criticize the liberals' demand for a Tobin tax as a demand, which won't work within capitalism. [57] But their own strategy of making social democratic demands (e.g., the 'drop the debt' campaign, re-nationalizations and their other electoral platforms) is different in only one respect: the SWP claim (internally) that they don't believe that such demands are fully tenable within (currently existing) capitalism.

The bad faith of the Trotskyists is of course disgusting: one might wonder how they can respect themselves in setting out to encourage others to be 'disillusioned' - but of course the main people with illusions are the Trots themselves. However, this bad faith is a function not of a moral failing but a theoretical one. Leninism links a conception of capital as essentially the anarchy of the market (and thus a definition of socialism as state management of capital) with a conception of the working class subject as passive and capable of no more than a 'trade union consciousness' without the intervention of enlightened (party) types. [58] The drive for recruitment and building the party organization as something in practice distinct from a wider social movement, and their identification of their particular sect as 'The Party', reflects the view that the Leninist party form is the highest form of consciousness and hence the necessary catalyst for successful struggle. But it is struggle itself which dispels mystification - and the educators themselves must be educated. The fetishism of the party means that the party has its own dynamic - its own needs - and there's no reason to suppose that they correspond with those of the particular struggle or the proletariat in general. Indeed, given that the party endorses the myth of working class passivity, there is every reason to expect a lack of correspondence. Where

at work in these events. Others point out that most anarchists in the bloc were happy to think tactically with the COBAS and that the problems were due to the actions of a few 'stupid' people, and a basic lack of organization.

On Corso Torino (site of the huge march on Saturday, broadly of the institutional left), young anarcho-punks and others in the black bloc that tagged the march were largely content to destroy banks and petrol-stations, and, when this was done, attack insignificant targets like bus shelters and traffic signs. Some started a fire right next to the petrol station that was nestled at the bottom of a block of flats, others saw the stupidity of this, and put the fire out. The whole emphasis with some was to notch up amounts of targets trashed, as opposed to thinking of more concerted efforts against the cops, which others thought more appropriate. However, an effective barricade was built under a railway bridge and set alight, which delayed the police advance. Most of the time though, the police inched up gradually, attacking with tear gas, which repeatedly panicked the crowd into retreat. Eventually the crowd was chased out of Corso Torino with an armoured vehicle. The whole thing was rather ritualized and boring. At the same time, another section of the demonstration was trapped in front of the convergence centre by police action sparked by a black bloc attack. After a bit of fighting with the remaining black bloc types, the police advanced in a vicious attack consisting of vast quantities of tear gas and armoured car charges against the crowd, the effect of which was compounded by the actions of Rifondazione members linking arms to prevent people from escaping. It was a frightening rout and some people were surprised that no one died.

Many were angry and dismayed that no concerted response could be made to answer the death of Giuliani the day before. Without a strong, rooted movement, the rioters were impotent before the state's killing of one of their numbers - most people left Genoa that same evening.

It has to be said that nothing much else could be done. Most of the bloc was not equipped with good gas masks or weapons, and so to retreat and spread out from the police advance causing havoc as it went was its best option. In that sense, Genoa was also the black bloc's greatest success given the enormous amount of property damage done, (over 30 banks destroyed), and the wide spread of the riots over the city. If the authorities manage to defend the conference successfully, as in Genoa, the threat from the casseurs [42] still remains. The spread to other targets in itself can be seen as a positive move away from the movement's identification of capital with a few greedy individuals conspiring behind the fence. But again, it's a generalization severely limited by the form of the movement as it stands 'you do useless symbolic street theatre outside the gates of the conference, we do lots and lots of, you know, 'concretely symbolic' smashing of many manifestations of capital' - i.e. praxis is conflated with shattering glass.

But we cannot simply attribute the shortcomings of the events in Genoa to the ideology of the militants. On the one hand, people come in from the outside to each event with their ideological baggage. On the other, it is the limitation of the movement that prevents the moment of truth in this militancy from realizing itself as part of a real movement against capital. Encouragingly, in post Genoa discussions, we can see that many who identify with the black bloc have come to an understanding of its limitations after its success and failure at Genoa. [43]

To express its militancy and avoid a losing confrontation with the state the black bloc tends to become a sort of roving, footloose band of casseurs (and a large part of its success has been just that). In doing this, though, its actions become isolated from the immediate aims of the mobilization, whilst not connecting with a broader social movement which might make its militancy useful (or irrelevant!). As such its options are to explain militant action in a way that accords with the basic precepts of liberal-

leftist anti-'globalization' ideology (lobbying with molotov cocktails), or to trumpet them as practical, autonomous actions against state and capital (a positive dis-alignment with the mainstream of the movement as far as it goes). However, while it helps the individual's sense of identity, this doesn't hold much water practically. In the long run, without a wider social movement to make it meaningful, such practice can only be mere 'symbolism', 'exorcism'.

A further complication in the dynamic of the anti-'globalization' mobilizations is that objectively it is the militancy of the casseurs that have created the real problem for the authorities. The capitalist institutions under attack can quite successfully barricade themselves in, but it is not acceptable to the state that the black bloc reduce the whole city to rubble outside, stealing the agenda in the media as well with its violence.

### **THE 'MOVEMENT' ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONAL LEFT [44]**

One of the features of the scene out of which the 'anti-capitalist movement' germinated in Britain was the relative absence of the organized left - in particular, the absence of the largest Trotskyist sect in Britain, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP)\*. If Trotskyist groups can be situated on a spectrum of purism to opportunism, the SWP can clearly be located at the opportunist end. Any hint of a movement or campaign developing in response to a state attack, a rise in racism, a war or whatever, is met by an effort to set up or promote a front by the SWP. However, efforts to relate at a local level to anti-roads and similar campaigns fell flat, and their setting up of a front against the Criminal Justice Bill (CJB) in 1994 also met with little success. [45]

After the CJB, it seems that their high command judged this lumpen scene not to be particularly fertile for them and should be left alone. Perhaps the SWP also felt that there was now a danger that, far from gaining recruits they might actually lose some members to this scene's more enjoyable, less sacrificial, ideas about political activity. When the SWP did later try to connect with the anti-'globalization' activities, it was through a 'drop the debt' campaign, which attempted to appeal to the more liberal and church-linked groups in and around events such as the Birmingham G7 demo in 1998.

### **The SWP as the radical liberal alternative**

However, sometime after J18, when a 'protest' physically attacked the world's third largest financial centre, and at which the SWP were almost completely absent, it appears a shift occurred. It was following the events at Seattle that Trotskyist groups started getting very excited about what they called the 'anti-capitalist movement'. For example, the SWP and Workers Power (another, smaller, Trot sect) attended the Milan conference of People's Global Action (PGA - see appendix) in April, but were denied speaking rights through the intervention of RTS types who continue to be the basis of PGA in the UK.

The SWP have also been engaging with the leading progressive-liberal entrepreneurs, Monbiot, Susan George, Walden Bello and Naomi Klein. They debate on the same platform with them, invite them to speak at their annual 'Marxism' conference and they publish articles by these people in SWP journals. They have also launched a new front organization, 'Globalise Resistance', perhaps their major recuperative attempt since the CJB. As with any other SWP front, its figureheads number non-SWP people: there is Tony Benn [46] as usual, but also the green media celebrity Monbiot. Globalise Resistance bills itself as one of the major organizing groups of Mayday 2001. [47] (That is, they were the ones making the cops' job easier by encouraging people into the police cordon! [48])

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\*The SWP is the parent group of the International Socialist Organisation in Australia

The SWP have complemented these debates and this organizational activity with considerable ideological work in (re-)writing the history of the 'anti-capitalist movement'. While giving a passing nod to J18 - for most of us the first of the 'anti-capitalist' mass mobilizations [49] - the SWP, like most of the Western left, date the beginning of the movement from the events at Seattle.[50] In a way, this is justified. Seattle targeted an international Summit, while J18 in London targeted City institutions rather than a particular Summit. Moreover, Seattle was not only extremely large (especially for the USA which has seen so little mass action in recent years) but also effective in its aims. But, against this, Seattle had other features which make it controversial as a 'start date' for the 'movement': in particular, as mentioned above, it was dominated by a progressive-liberal tendency, which eschewed violence and which attempted to marginalize the most radical and militant elements.

Debating with the progressive-liberals and neglecting certain features of the history of the 'movement' serves to position the SWP as the radical alternative. The SWP's intellectuals can acknowledge the strength of the critique of 'globalization' offered by Monbiot, George etc. but then go on to demonstrate that these liberals lack both a properly historical understanding of the logic of capitalism and the organizational form supposedly capable of ending the 'iniquities of capitalism'. This places them on the same side as these liberals and yet at the same time apparently more critical and practical.

Of course, people will and do find the liberal approach deeply inadequate; the SWP hope that people's search for a radical alternative within a context they can define will make the SWP attractive. In a context which includes other, more radical, alternatives, however, the SWP's position is jeopardized. While they have given a lot of space and attention to detail to the liberals, they are wilfully vague about and neglectful of the anarchists, black bloc, 'white overalls' and others. After Genoa, they couldn't report on events without confronting these tendencies; but they still managed to do so in a cursory and inadequate manner. [51]

It might be surprising that someone like Monbiot, who denounced RTS after Mayday 2000 for taking the 'wrong path', now links up with old-style Trots. But, in a way, it is not surprising at all. The SWP and Monbiot support each other through their shared activities, giving each other audiences and publicity. Moreover, both are sincere in their support for respectable non-violence. Finally, in fact their programmes are not so different from each other. Those observing the SWP in action today will be aware that they appear to have shifted to the right. Indeed, their practice in Globalise Resistance indicates that they are now trying to position themselves as respectable liberals. Starting perhaps with their 'drop the debt' campaign, there was an increased attempt to recruit those with liberal criticisms of capital. [52] This loosening of the party doctrine overlapped with the agenda of Monbiot and similar non-Marxist liberals. In both cases, there is, implicitly or otherwise, the demand that the state intervene more to limit international finance capital. In theory, as Leninists, the SWP would of course argue that the (bourgeois) state cannot simply be taken over but must be smashed to make way for a 'workers' state'. But, as opportunists, the SWP are virtually like their liberal partners, treating the state as a reformable, neutral organ rather than a historically necessary function of capital accumulation.

### **More boring 'politics'**

On this question of the state, many have seen in the UK 'anti-capitalist' mobilizations and their precursors an alternative to the ballot box: thousands attempting to take some form of direct action because the institutions of democracy are understood as part of the problem. But for the SWP, the mobilizations are an opportunity for giving this alienated means a new-found importance and relevance. Thus they are promoting the Socialist Alliance as a means to achieve the supposed aims of the 'anti-capitalist movement', attempting to drag people back into the dead end of electoral politics. [53]