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For Freedom and Equality: Direct Action and Solidarity!

These are the days when we celebrate the great victory of Chicago workers of 1886, and commemorate our five anarchist workers comrades who paid with their lives our right to an eight-hour workday. But in these days, in May 2007, we must also notice how this hard won right, as well as many other rights, is slipping away further and further, as the capitalist machinery is now trying to “liberate” itself from obligations that we imposed on it through our struggles and direct action.

In Europe, end of the Cold War also brought us the end of that social-democratic pro-capitalist propagandist tool known as the “Welfare State”. Since then capitalism has again come to show its true face to the workers throughout Western Europe. There is an ongoing campaign, a true capitalist crusade, that has a character of coordinated attacks against workers rights. The precarisation of the work place, commodification of education, health service, privatization of social services, etc. But we should not mourn for the disappearance of this decades long daydream. It was all, in the best case, just a small capitalist charity to the oppressed. Charity? No thanks, we do not need the good old Christian charity! For everything we need, for everything that, in fact, **belongs** to us, we will fight and get it ourselves. We have done it before, and we will do it again.

On the global scene we see that the competition between capitalist and imperialist powers is taking up pace. As the Russian state is becoming more and more powerful under Putin’s dictatorship, the US is rushing to confine and quarantine its growth and influence. The search for new oil sources and routes, independent of Russia, is currently one of US’s main priorities. It doesn’t stand idle in the military field either — the new ballistic shield the US is building around the northern hemisphere is again awakening the spirits of the Cold War and a new arms race between US and Russia. This is a dangerous game in which the Chinese role should not be neglected too. Although American officials are trying to convince the world that the shield is targeted against “rogue” states, such as Iran, N. Korea and such, it is pretty much clear, when one looks at the deployment pattern of radar and rocket bases, whose missiles are the true “customers” of this shield — the only “rogue” states that are in fact capable of attacking the US and

its allies are Russia and China. As China became the third country in history to launch a human being into space, as Russian space program is once again coming ahead in a new, “friendly”, space-race, and both countries are announcing Moon landing programs, the US is in a hurry to divert their technological efforts to the military domain once again (a strategy that has played so well before, during the 80’s), and at the same time make an effort to secure its global military dominance.

But the political aspect of this new arms race is, perhaps, even more interesting. There is an ongoing struggle by the US to try to undermine the rising economical power and eastward expansion of EU. NATO is a perfect tool for this kind of job. We could clearly see this tactics of the USA of dividing the EU into “Old Europe” and “New Europe” when it was openly exposed during the initial phases of the Iraq campaign. Now we can see that the US is using NATO to install ballistic shield bases in Poland, Czech Republic and possibly some other former Soviet block states that are now part of EU and NATO. “Old Europe” is, of course, not delighted to find itself in a possible conflict with its potential ally, Russia. On the other hand, “New Europe’s” political elites, the ones that emerged through anticommunist revolutions, and probably quite often CIA-sponsored, are happy to engage Russia and bathe in American “partnership”.

Along comes another frightening phenomenon of the post-Soviet Eastern Europe — radicalisation of, state-sponsored, right wing propaganda and historical revisionism. The destruction of countless WWII anti-fascist struggle monuments (the fact that those monuments are products of Stalinist propaganda is, in this case, irrelevant) in the Baltic states, the closing down of the Russian part of the exhibition in Auschwitz, to name just a few, are just external examples, visible to the outside observer, of a rapid fascisation campaign in Eastern Europe. From inside we can see more malignant symptoms, some of which are long present in “Old Europe” — building up of xenophobia, racism, vulgar anticommunism, etc.

“Fortress Europe”, the EU, is, naturally, adding fuel to the fire, or better, starting the fire in the first place, with its policy of cultural racism, euro-centrism and propagation of a fabricated set of values, the so called “European values”. In their free-market fantastical world, it is thus implied that European culture, or specifically — EU culture, is the one of civilization, refined culture, tolerance and peace, in contrast to the outsiders — outside the EU, that is — the blood thirsty barbarians.

As occupation of Iraq is entering its fourth year, with more than 600,000 Iraqis killed and more than 1.6 million who left their homes since its beginning, the end of this orchestrated chaos brought on Iraqi people by the US business interests is nowhere in sight.

While we haven’t seen any Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the US

military hasn't shied away from using its own chemical weapons, as they did, for example, in The First Battle of Fallujah in April 2004, when white phosphorus was used against insurgents in the city.

As public services are being privatized, children on their way to school can take a look at an exhibition of a variety of dead bodies that pile up on the streets because there is no one left to clear them. Health care is rapidly becoming a thing of a long forgotten past as hospitals and other key services are desperately short of staff, with more than half the doctors having already left the country.

Iraq has become a convenient playground for Islamic and American imperialism, with the US, Iran and Syria using it as a stage for a trilateral proxy war in much the same fashion as Vietnam, and other parts of South-East Asia, was used by France, Soviet Union and the USA during most of the second half of the 20th century.

Although it is hard to predict how things are going to develop, it is certain that one of the goals of the invasion is accomplished — Iraqi oil will remain to be traded in US dollars. Saddam's regime became a definite target when Iraq converted their oil transactions from dollars to euros, and in this fact we can also see the background of EU's "humanitarian" and "civilized" cries for a peaceful solution during 2003.

There is a similar scenario unfolding in case of Iran. The main concern of the US and EU is not the Iranian nuclear program — which can, realistically speaking, target directly only Israel — but its plans to also switch its oil trade to, more stable, euros.

As Israel is becoming more and more nervous because of an emerging Islamic nuclear power in its own backyard, with prepared plans for a series of preemptive strikes against key Iranian nuclear facilities, waiting only for green light from the USA, people of the Middle-East and its working class are facing an uncertain and grim future.

Economical roots of all these crisis are clear. Capitalism, with its "divide and conquer" tactics, needs to make us, workers of the world, fight among us over irrelevant and nonexistent issues like race, sex, nationality, etc. It seeks to divide our forces and turn us against each other instead against our real enemies — State and Capitalism. But what governments and employers want is not necessarily what they get. While capitalism creates the basis for division, it also creates the conditions for workers' direct actions and solidarity.

As we struggle on in the industrial field, a new front is opening in Europe, a front in the battle for knowledge and education. Since the start of higher education reforms in Europe under the banner of the *Bologna accords*, which seek to commercialize higher education and universities in Europe and bring them in line with the demands of the "free market", we are witnesses of more and more radical student strikes throughout Europe, from Germany

and France, to Greece and Serbia.

All over the world workers are becoming aware of the need for radical confrontation and direct action against State and Capitalism. From Balkans to Central and South-East Asia to Latin America, workers are becoming assured that anarcho-syndicalism is the only sure and realistic way to fight these two plagues that have bothered humanity for too long now.

Unfortunately, in Latin America, in spite of all the great workers' victories there, we must beware of a resurrection of an old ideological and economical vampire — state-socialism, this time in the form of fanatical catholic, nationalist Bolshevism. One of its main proponents, a famous Venezuelan radio and talk-show comedian known by his stage-name, “president Chaves”, is starting to engineer a Cuba-like, only with added religious fervor, police state in Venezuela. Personality cult build-up is in progress, and it is announced that children will have a new subject in schools — “chavesism”, no doubt devoted to such crucial topics as making lame jokes on Bush's account, being Castro's “bestest” buddy and simmilar.

This goes to show that no welfare for the working class can be obtained, in the long run, within the state-capitalism framework. Also, we can truly gain nothing, no freedom, if we rely on our self-appointed masters to provide for us and to “show us the way”. We, ourselves, through uncompromising solidarity and direct action must make our way to freedom and the true beginning of *human* history and progress.

In order to win this battle we must make our struggle global. This First of May, IWA and its Sections will, once again, put its forces in the fight against precarious work, and in that way contribute to the global fight for freedom. A strong emphasize must be put on the development of anarcho-syndicalism in the Third World, in places far away from the media attention, where working people are experiencing, as we speak, the worst atrocities ever committed in the name of State, Authority and Capitalism. There are many signals that workers in Indonesia, Pakistan and the rest of Asia are showing the will to take the route of revolutionary syndicalism, and the IWA is strongly looking forward to the world in which there will be no safe place for capitalist and authoritarian exploitation of the working class. A world strongly headed towards freedom which can only be in a society without statist and capitalist oppression, in a society of libertarian communism — anarchy.

*For Freedom and Equality: Direct Action and Solidarity!
Long live the IWA and Anarcho-syndicalism!*