

anarchy in kansas

Issue #3

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Kansas City, KS

The War Comes Home

After years of standing by while the United States military has rained down death and destruction on other countries, Americans have now experienced what people in Iraq and Yugoslavia have already had to go through during the last decade. Thousands of innocent people were killed and injured in the brutal hijackings and destruction of the World Trade Center (WTC) that took place last week, and thousands more are grieving for lost loved ones. This is tragic. But not more tragic than the deaths of thousands of innocent people at the hands of the United States military and its allies during their many military adventures in recent years.

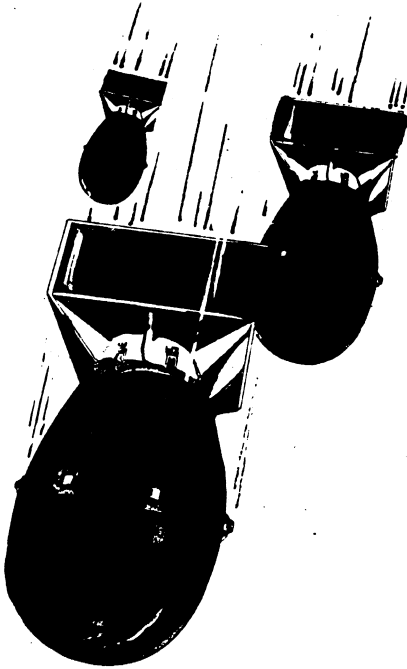
People all over the world hate and fear the US government and military, and the recent attacks appear to be a response to the meddling, armed and otherwise, of the United States in places where it is not welcome. The politicians and the news media call the agents of the suicide assault in New York terrorists, but what else were the US bombing raids on civilians in Panama City, Baghdad, and Belgrade, but terrorism? George Bush calls the hijackers cowards, but what is more cowardly than dropping bombs on defenseless people and

then flying away to safety, as is the ongoing practice of the American military in Iraq? And Colin Powell, who, during the first gulf war, orchestrated the devastation of Iraq, including the incineration and burial alive of *retreating* Iraqi conscripts, has the audacity to claim the moral high ground and play the victim.



Government officials in the United States have called the WTC attacks acts of war. That is exactly what they are. But they are not the first acts in this war, and will surely not be the last. The ongoing war is one initiated by the United States and its allies. It is a war in which the American armed forces have recklessly murdered civilians in Panama, Iraq, and Yugoslavia. It is a war that is still waged daily in the air

over Iraq by American and British warplanes, and it is fought on the ground in Palestine by the Israeli army, which could not continue its occupation without United States support and encouragement. And it is a war which has now resulted in mass murder in the United States.



NUCLEAR WAR BALLOT

YES **Let's have a nuclear war.**
I'm sick of waiting.

NO **I'd rather wait a little longer.**

You only have one vote.

Please mark ballot and send to:

Resident
 THE WHITE HOUSE
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
 Washington, D.C. 20500

As happens in any war, it was primarily civilians who were ruthlessly killed in New York, Washington and, Pennsylvania. This is no justification, whatever the grievances

of the attackers against the US government and military, for these murders. Even the attack on the Pentagon resulted in the killing of clerks and technicians, not the generals who direct the American war machine. But again, when the United States government considers it in its interest, its military shows the same wanton disregard of civilian casualties in its military expeditions. Bush and Powell, like Clinton and Albright before them, will soon be referring to dead civilians in some other country as "collateral damage," expendable people whose destruction cannot be allowed to stand in the way of what the American government considers "justice." The American government's lack of concern for noncombatants has been amply demonstrated during its continuing military and economic war against Iraq, which has resulted in death and suffering only for ordinary Iraqis, with little effect on those who run the country and further abuse the populace.

The US government and many Americans have made it clear that they believe that further war-making and "retaliation" are the way to prevent more bloodshed. But such actions will only result in the killing of more innocent civilians in other countries, increased hatred for the United States government and armed forces abroad, and, perhaps, other attacks on American civilians in this country and elsewhere. And it is likely that an increased concern for "security" will lead to restrictions on the freedom of Americans, by broadening the power of

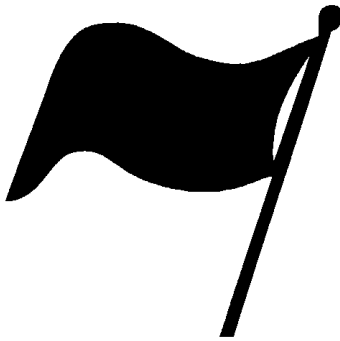
government to monitor our communications and transactions and control our activities and movements. It is disheartening that so many who are themselves grieving for the victims of violence seem to envision more international violence and less domestic freedom as the only ways to respond. People need to realize that we will see an end to the ongoing terror only when the massive military establishment in this country is dismantled and the powers-that-be in the United States are no longer able to bully the rest of the world.



What about the state?

Anti-capitalists, including many who call themselves anarchists, had been planning to continue their campaign against the global economic powers-that-be at the meetings of the world bank and international monetary fund in DC this month. While these meetings were cancelled as a result of last week's catastrophes in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, organizers have said they will continue with their mobilization. The protestors condemn the bankers for impoverishing people and repressing workers, while it is, in fact, the governments of the world who are the actual instruments of these attacks on working people. The bankers would be powerless without the armies and police of the various states, both here and abroad.

The governments which are in debt to these international usurers have squandered and stolen the money they borrowed and are now extorting more money from their subjects to pay off the loan sharks. These governments force people to pay taxes,



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break strikes, and arrest opponents of the prevailing state of affairs. These governments implement the "structural adjustments" demanded by their creditors. But these local hoodlums are rarely mentioned in the literature of the anti-capitalists.

The money lending institutions themselves would not even exist, except that their allies in government in the united states and the other industrialized countries maintain a monopoly of the money supply which enables these bankers to acquire interest on the loans they make. International capitalist economic relations are a creature of government and could not exist without the

force and coercion of the governments of the world. It is government which is at the root of economic and social injustice.

Just as governments maintain economic inequality around the world, it is the state, not the bankers, that terrorizes the populace to keep them in line. It is governments which continue the air war against the people of Iraq, and insist on continuing the sanctions which have impoverished the working people of that country, where many are dying of easily treated and preventable diseases because they no longer have access to medical supplies. It was government agents, who, in an attack similar to the massacre at Waco, recently



murdered two people at Rainbow Farm in Michigan because they violated weapons and drug laws, although those killed ever harmed anyone. And it was government security forces that arrested and abused protestors in Seattle, Prague, Genoa, and DC.

As evil and exploitative as the bureaucrats at the world bank and IMF are, it is the governments of the united states and the rest of the world who brutalize their subjects and enable economic exploiters to impoverish them. The bankers and business people who make a living off the labor of others will continue to do so in one way or another, as long as they have the protection of the state and its armed thugs. The only way to do away with this exploitation is to do away with government altogether.



The Teamsters vs. the Mexican Trucks

Organized labor in the US has come a long way in recent years in its approach to immigrant workers. Last year, the AFL-CIO called for an amnesty for 6,000,000 undocumented immigrant workers living in the States, and called for the repeal of sanctions on those who hire undocumented workers. And, just last month, a number of unions held rallies and events nationwide supporting amnesty, legalization, and freedom to organized for workers born outside the country. These efforts to aid immigrant workers are admirable, but the recent campaign against Mexican truckers, led largely by Teamsters Union members, has demonstrated the continued nationalism of many in the American labor movement.

During their drive to bar drivers from Mexico from earning a living here in the US, American truckers have painted a picture of Mexican trucks as accidents waiting to happen that will endanger US residents. Not only do they criticize the owners of the trucks for not maintaining them properly, but they also slander the drivers, accusing them of incompetence. Some of their statements, such as Teamsters president Hoffa's comment during a visit to the Kansas City area, that the "trucks don't have any brakes," are patently absurd. One wonders how they could possibly survive, even in Mexico, if this were true. The charges smack of racism.



The Teamsters devoted a lot of time and energy to their campaign against “unsafe” Mexican trucks, having organized a 5-day trip along I-35 by a convoy of trucks in April, which featured a rally in Kansas City. The facts of the matter, however, do not support the Teamsters’ case. The union and the Department of Transportation point out that 36% of Mexican trucks inspected in the US had something wrong with them. While this may be true, they have not disclosed whether the problems are more likely to be a broken tail light or the fabled lack of brakes. It is also worth considering that about a quarter of American long haul trucks inspected across the country also fail, while 45% of short-haul trucks in the Kansas City area are unable to pass inspection. Additionally, the inspected Mexican trucks are also, generally, short-haul vehicles, making a comparison between them and the Kansas City trucks a fairer one.

If trucks from Mexico are really not as unsafe as we have been led to believe, what are the Teamsters really afraid of? Most likely, they fear competition. However, with only 375,000 trucks in Mexico and around 7,000,000 in the United States, it is

unlikely that the entry of Mexican trucks will have much impact on the jobs of American truckers.

The Teamsters appear to have won their battle to keep out Mexican truckers. This will embolden others who want to strengthen borders between nations, instead of encouraging contact and commerce among people in different countries. Despite the fact it calls itself the *International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, this union, like so many others, has, in fact, rejected internationalism. In a time when nationalism is being promoted by unions and many others of those who criticize “globalization,” it is time for anarchists to stand up for a world without borders.



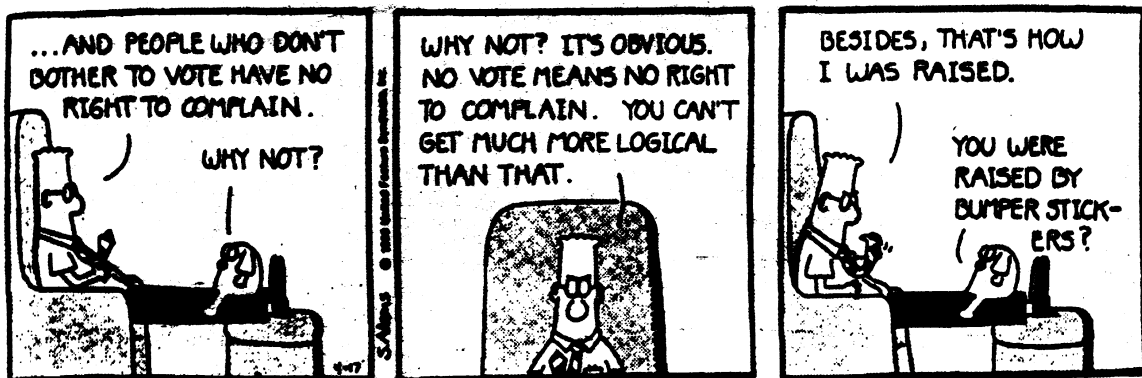
Kansas Anarchist History Update

Two people associated with the anarchist individualists of 19th century New England had connections to this area. Elizabeth LaPierre Daniels, a founding member of the largely anarchist New England Labor Reform League (NELRL), lived for a time in Kansas. She reported on the founding NELRL convention in 1869 for Elizabeth Cady Stanton's journal, *The Revolution*, and was a reader of and contributor to *The Word*, an anarchist and free love journal edited by Ezra and Angela Tilton Heywood. She was an activist in anarchist, labor reform, and spiritualist circles. Lizzie Adams, of Kansas City, MO, contributed an article about the death of anarchist writer and publisher Charles T Fowler, also of KCMO, to *The Word* in 1890.

Anarchists Jake and Annie Mindlin Livshis lived in Kansas for a number of years during the 1880s and 1890s. After leaving Russia in 1886, Annie Mindlin

initially joined her brother in New York, but later that year joined the Lasker Colony in western Kansas where she met Jake Livshis. They were married in a civil ceremony in Dodge City in 1887, and their later religious wedding was covered by the *Ford City Boomer*. Between 1888 and 1890 they lived in Chicago where they did factory work, organized the Cloak Makers' Union, and formed a study group. They returned to the Lasker colony in 1890, but left for Chicago again in 1898 because of a drought and never came back to Kansas. In Chicago they were active in the anarchist movement and became close associates of Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman, and Voltairine de Cleyre. Goldman and de Cleyre were houseguests of the Livshises whenever they visited Chicago.

The Catholic Workers, a christian anarchist movement, have long been active in Kansas. The Catholic Worker Peace Farm was founded in Peabody in the late



1960s, and lasted about a year. The Lyons.

Workers currently maintain houses of hospitality in several cities around the state, including Shalom Catholic Worker House in Kansas City, Emmaus House in Garden City, and Divine Mercy Catholic Worker in (Sources for this article include *Individualist Feminism of the Nineteenth Century* by Wendy McElroy, Ann Lewin Diamant's article on Anna Mindlin Livshis in *Women Building Chicago 1790-1990* by Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast, and *The Catholic Worker*.)

More Terror in the Schools

Two students at Royal Valley High School in Holton, KS, were recently cleared of charges that they plotted to attack their school with bombs and firearms. A "friend" of theirs, whom the authorities were able to terrorize into a plea bargain, was sentenced to 18 months in juvenile detention. Even though this former associate testified against the other two defendants as part of his plea bargain, the prosecutors were unable to convince a jury that the fantastic plot invented by the authorities was real, despite the fact that the accused possessed long, black coats.

Hysteria about the rare incidents of armed attacks by students in public schools and zero tolerance policies regarding drugs and "weapons" are creating a police state atmosphere in the schools and encouraging students to inform on each other to the authorities. Students are thus learning the real lesson public schools were designed to teach: conform and obey or suffer the penalty.



Class Dismissed

People are often viewed more as members of some group than as unique individuals. These groupings are generally based on such characteristics as sex, skin color, age, ethnicity, sexual tastes, or economic status. While it may be convenient at times to describe someone using such categories, one cannot accurately predict an individual's ideas, values, social outlook, or "lifestyle" based on such superficial qualities like these. People's personalities, interests, and desires are not the product simply of their appearance or shared experiences, and assuming they are can lead only to misconceptions and misunderstanding. Despite this, many writers and activists continue to emphasize the various "identities" they attribute to themselves and others and consider these categories important in organizing for social change.



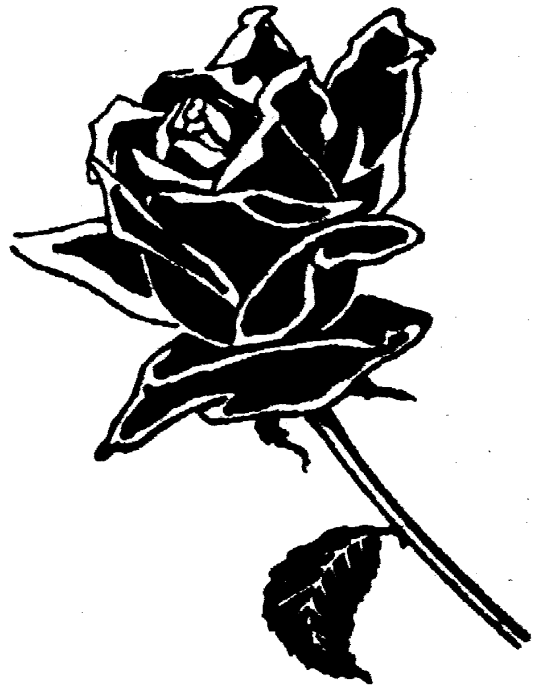
When discussing people's economic status, those who find it useful to label people often think and write in terms of class. In a government-supported capitalist economy there are great differentials in wealth among people and much different values accorded to various kinds of work. Moreover, many of the hardships people face that are commonly seen as a result of discrimination based on color, or sex, or whatever, are actually the result of relative poverty. But, despite the importance of a person's place in the economic system to one's opportunities and choices, speaking in terms of class, except in the very broad sense of the "class" of productive people and the "class" of parasitical owners and politicians, is generally not very helpful in understanding how or why people think and live the way they do.

The terms commonly used to classify different kinds of workers, like working class and middle class, don't even have any agreed upon definition and mean quite different things to different people. Leftists and many anarchists describe factory workers as working class, while these workers themselves, especially those in higher paid and unionized industries, generally refer to themselves as middle class. And a nurse with a college degree, whom many would consider middle class, may well make less money than a skilled blue-collar worker. Sorting out who is and

is not middle or working class does nothing to address the problems different workers face or provide insight into how to accomplish social change.

Only one “class” distinction is really important in a state capitalist society like the united states: some people work and produce something of value, and others profit from the labor of those who produce. The producers all have something in common: a portion of the value of the goods they create or the services they provide goes to enrich the owners of businesses, banks, and/or living quarters in the form of profit, interest, and rent simply because the state supports an economic system that allows some to make money off the labor of others without themselves working. While workers in different jobs may make different wages and have different social statuses, they all stand in the same relation to the owners and their government. Breaking these workers down conceptually into smaller classes can do nothing but increase divisions among people whose interests are best served by unity and solidarity.

Anarchists desire to abolish government and the inequitable economic arrangements it makes possible in order that people can live free lives, retain the full product of their labor, and engage in voluntary relationships of all sorts with others. Accomplishing this task will require a great change in the way people view themselves and the world. Labeling some working people as middle class, especially when used as a pejorative as it so often is in

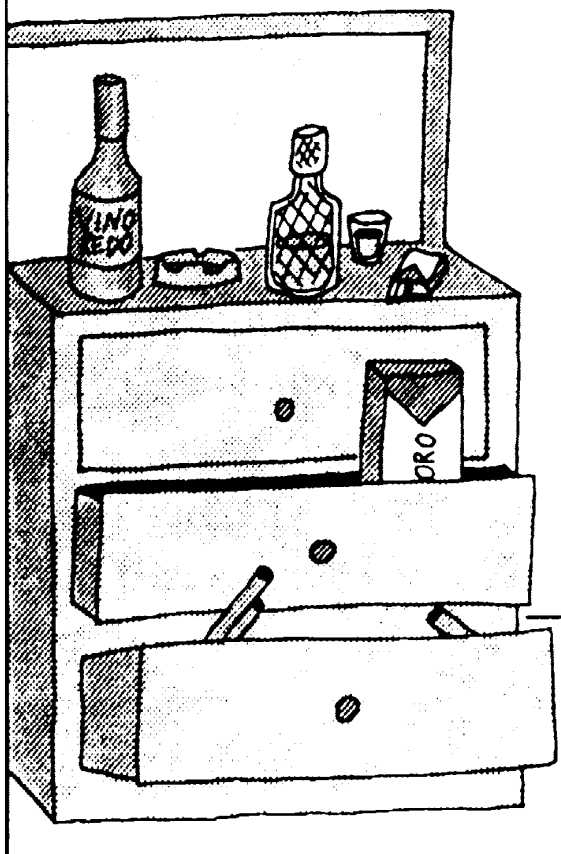


social change movements, does not lead people to view themselves and others as individuals capable of transcending their social situation and choosing the way they wish to live. It simply encourages them to assign another “identity” to themselves and others, leading them to view certain groups of people as somehow different, based not on what they believe and how they act, but on what kind of education they have, where they live, or how much money they earn. People are individuals whose ideas and actions are influenced in distinctive ways by the many people and things they encounter and experience throughout their lives, not mere products of their occupation,

biological makeup, economic situation, or education. Attaching a class label to someone, thereby believing one has said something important or useful about them, is foolhardy. Like any other kind of identity politics, an emphasis on class status ignores the differences between individuals and emphasizes those between arbitrary, and often illusory, groups. The divisions

promoted by such an outlook can only inhibit the cooperation between individuals that is so necessary if we are ever to move closer to an anarchist world.

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