

REVOLUTION

socialist youth movement

April 2004 No. 2



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**...the latest on the campaign to
Stop Killer Coke!**





What we think...

Capitalism

The capitalist economy is one where the means of production, the factories and offices, docklands and warehouses, call centres and stores, mines and smelters, are all controlled by one group, the capitalists. They did not earn this right, but were born into it.

The rest of us, the majority of humanity, are forced to fight for work to live.

Work is waged slavery. We are "free" to choose to sell our labour power to the bosses, and "free" to spend our wages on commodities. But we do not control the economic conditions under which we sell our labour, and neither do we control the economic conditions under which we spend our hard earned dollars.

Meanwhile the capitalists are free, free to make massive profits off our backs, free to control who works, where, for how much and for how long. Free to decide how goods are made, how many are made, where they are distributed and who gets access to them.

On the other hand the capitalists are not free to get rid of the working class. They need us to work their system. And their weakness is our strength. We are free to withdraw our labour, to take away that thing which produces the bosses profits. Even better, when organised and prepared to fight, we can take over the factories and offices and run them ourselves.

The capitalist class needs us but we do not need them.

Resistance and revolution

In every struggle alternative forms of democracy form embryos of workers democracy. These bodies not only represent those that elected them, but they organise our resistance begin to take on the state through defence of protests and strikes.

In mass revolutionary struggles Workers Councils are formed, made up of elected and recallable delegates. They lead the resistance, and begin to run society. They take back control of the economy.

But more than this is needed. Even just before the Russian Revolution, the capitalist state continued to undermine and repress the rule of the Soviets. The state itself needed to be taken over and destroyed.

Workers control cannot be maintained as long as the capitalists control the state. This means taking on the state machinery not just at the factory gates, but at their point of control.

The destruction of the capitalist state is the aim of a socialist revolution.

We believe in being upfront about what we stand for. As Marx stated in The Communist Manifesto, the communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be obtained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.

One solution: Revolution

We oppose the capitalist system and all that it represents: war, racism, oppression, imperialism, exploitation, poverty and control of the world's resources in the hands of a tiny minority.

We fight for its replacement with socialism, a system of direct workers control over production. A planned economy organised to meet the needs of humanity, rather than a competitive economy meeting the needs of a tiny ruling class.

While we fight for and support every gain for the working class and oppressed, we do not think that capitalism can be moulded in our own interests. It cannot be reformed. Capitalism must be overthrown, through international workers revolution.

Some say this is a pipe dream, but we don't think so. In recent years there have been revolutionary movements in Argentina, Bolivia, and massive strike waves in Italy. Far from a pipe dream, revolution is the only practical solution to capitalism.

Over two hundred years of capitalism shows one thing: Our class will continue to fight and resist the constraints imposed upon us. The only question is, how far will our resistance go?

There is only one solution to capitalism: revolution.

Be part of the solution!

JOIN REVOLUTION

contact@onesolutionrevolution.org

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www.onesolutionrevolution.org

Crisis in Redfern

For a long time things have been amiss in Redfern, for the indigenous community.

The citizens of this suburb have been under threat, harassment and the control of the police force for years. Things came to a head with the death of TJ Hickey at the hands of the local police.

Since then, the community have faced taunts, gross racism from the media, and manipulation by politicians who want to gentrify the inner Sydney suburb which has soaring land values. If the war in Iraq was over control of oil, the problems in Redfern are over control of property.

The attacks on Redfern are two pronged: An attack on the right of the indigenous community to organise, and an attack on the communities' right to exist.

The Block in Redfern was established in 1977 by the Whitlam government due to huge koori and trade union pressure. It was built up as an indigenous community.

Since then, The Block has become a hub... Ray Jackson (spokesman for the Hickey family) stated recently "You get out of prison, you go to the Block. You come out of hospital, and you go to the Block".

Interesting order they are listed in, isn't it?

Since 1997 when the police set up a shopfront station and funding to community rehabilitation and education programs was withdrawn, the police have constantly harassed and intimidated the Redfern community.

What does this racism achieve? Discrediting the indigenous community to the point of people actually supporting the private development of the area... a task that will earn developers a massive sum given the inner city property boom in Sydney, and misplace this important central point of New South Wales abo-

originals, and of course, their homes.

That's not to say that Redfern must be left untouched, quite the opposite in fact.

The Block is currently a community without funding, without development, and without escape from the police that threaten their very lives.

The Block must be rebuilt, but the rebuilding must stay public; not a house is to be resold! Every person currently living in The Block has the right to stay there, rebuilding or no rebuilding. The way to achieve this is by placing the project not in the hands of the government or a private developer, but in the hands of the people who live in The Block.

Police must be withdrawn from The Block, and must be held accountable for what they have done and continue to do to this community. They have humiliated and intimidated these people and in doing so have set the process of reconciliation back decades.

They have ruined lives by imprisoning the innocent, beating the defenceless and demoralising people. In areas of The Block the police have been known to regularly make youths line up in a row and be searched for stolen goods, based on unfounded suspicion.

Why are they being searched? Because they are black.

Visiting his Mother on his bike, TJ was chased to his death by the same police, who claim they were chasing a bag-snatcher at the time... a bag snatcher who was over ten years older, looks about a foot taller, and who had not been seen around any sort of bicycle.

We must help this community in their plight, and make it known that it's totally unacceptable for this treatment to continue. We must provide real support and real resources for these people; there is a better way forward than displacement

Victory to Iraqi Resistance

By Lisa in Footscray

The media is spreading mis-information and racist lies, again. What a surprise!

This time it's about Iraq. In an attempt to demonise the growing opposition forces these freedom fighters are described as Shiite extremists and Sunni rebels. But the truth is very different.

Iraqi's are uniting across the country in a courageous mass opposition to the imperialist occupying forces. And in a recent statement by ANSWER the anti-war group in the US it's clear these forces are growing.

"Over the past three days, the previously simmering rejection of foreign occupation has evolved into a near full-scale revolt that has spread to many cities in the south of Iraq. All while the U.S. has implemented collective punishment against the people of Fallujah and other cities in the central part of the country."

The US response has been nothing less than brutal.

The U.S. and its allies are now conducting military operations in Ramadi, Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, Sadr, Adamiya, Kufa, Kut,



DEFEND THE UNIONS IN IRAQ

Anti-union laws kept

💣* **June 5** US administrator Paul Bremer issued the Public Incitement to Violence and Disorder giving the occupiers the right to detain anyone suspected of inciting civil disorder, rioting or damage to property. The term incitement could be interpreted to include strikes or pickets that the CPA deems to be destabilising, especially in the oil industry.

💣* **June 6** Bremer-issued Organisation in the Workplace stating that Legislation with regards to organization within the workplace remains unchanged. This means that the US occupation forces have kept Hussein's 1987 law banning unions in the public sector. Around 80% of Iraqi workers work in state-owned industry, the result of extensive nationalisations in the 1970s. The CPA wrote to all state enterprises informing them that this law still applies.

💣* **July 10** A Bremer-issued Freedom of Assembly notice forbids multiple demonstrations on the same day in different locations in any municipalities unless acting under the authority of a CPA Commander. Any public assembly without permission, even on a private roadway, is illegal and punishable by up to one year's prison.

Karabla, Amarah, Kirkuk, Mosul, Nasiriyah, Shula, and other cities and towns.

In the last 72 hours, as the colonial force attempts to hold the country in a tight grip, the number of casualties has mounted, as Iraqi cities are

besieged and bombed by missiles and tanks. Street fighting is raging throughout the country.

But the response shows - the US are worried about losing the battle for Iraq. About time too!

Their role in the Iraq was never one of freedom it was for greater control over oil reserves. That's why oil pipelines are being re-built, and new oil contracts being sold, while Iraqi's are still struggling for clean water and decent health care.

As ANSWER points out, their plans go beyond control over oil too. Their aim was to build large-scale U.S. military bases in Iraq, establish in Baghdad the largest U.S. embassy (more than 3,000 personnel) in the world, and use Iraq as the launching pad for regime change throughout the region.

The US Empire wants global domination. But it looks like their plan is backfiring in Iraq.

Victory to the resistance. End the occupation of Iraq.

You can do your bit to help the Iraqi movement for freedom from occupation. Join protests across the globe over coming weeks.


May Day


Troops Out, Howard Out!


There will be marches in Melbourne on May 1 and May 2.


Keep an eye out for details...

Military attacks on unions

 **July 29** US soldiers detained 21 UUI leaders when the union set up a tent encampment in front of the US military's compound to demand jobs. November 23 US forces arrested UUI general secretary Qasim Hadi and UUI leader Adil Salih. Hadi has been arrested before for leading unemployed workers demonstrations.

 **December 6** US soldiers, in a convoy of 10 humvees and armoured personnel carriers, smashed their way into the IFTU headquarters and arrested eight IFTU leaders.

 **January 10** British troops killed six and wounded eight unemployed protesters in Imara, and on January 12 dispersed another unemployed protest in Imara.

 **January 12** Ukrainian forces used tear gas and fired warning shots to disperse unemployed demonstrators in Kut. They attacked at least one demonstrator. On January 13, Ukrainian forces again fired upon and injured unemployed demonstrators.

UNION RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK IN AUSTRALIA

Defend Craig Johnston

Craig Johnston, former state secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union faces serious charges over an industrial dispute.

Of the 18 people charged over the Johnson Tiles picketline — Craig is the only one still facing a possible jail term.

This is a clear political attack on a union leader who helped win major gains, not just for manufacturing workers

but for all workers fighting to improve wages and conditions.

Craig has a history of supporting a range of progressive struggles—now he needs the support of the wider movement.

Solidarity Rally
Drop the charges!
9am, Monday May 10
County Court, cnr of William and La Trobe Sts, Melbourne.

“The VC smokes Winnie Reds!”

A report from the March 31st RMIT Occupation

A packet of Winfield Reds was found in the VC’s office, and we unanimously decided that this was the only acceptable time to smoke said brand. Hell, we had good reason to celebrate! What had been a police-flanked ‘student day of action’ rally had turned into a swift and peaceful occupation of the RMIT Vice Chancellors office!

In the week that preceded the RMIT occupation, students had taken over parts of institutions all across the country: Flinders University in Adelaide, Monash University in Melbourne, Victoria College of the Arts in Melbourne, University of Technology in Sydney, and another smaller occupation at RMIT in the Library. The RMIT occupation was another link in the recent chain of events that has forced the issue of increasing student fees into the media.

Students, staff and supporters flooded the foyer of RMIT building 101, managing to get a lift filled with students up to the seventh floor (the Vice Chancellors office) before the police came in, trying to expel the crowd from the building. After a united front from the students we saw the police retreating from the foyer. The lifts were soon sent down for more students to come up and occupy, and that they did.

After quickly and politely evicting the admin



“We’re the police. We’re here to help you free education...”

HOW TO WIN!

Occupations are the main tactic of the student movement at the moment. And it’s a sensible one. The National Union of Students know that if the Nelson reforms aren’t defeated this year, then it could be the end of public access to education.

Occupations do two things. They are a militant action which forces the Institution to act either to meet demands or remove the occupiers. But equally important—they are a statement about access and who should really be in control of Universities—the students and staff.

Occupations should be more than just stunts—they are the first step in taking back control of education.

That’s why the call for referendums, being made by parts of the student movement, is so wrong.

In 1997 there was a referendum on fees at RMIT—it was overwhelmingly opposed to fees—what a surprise. But did the University listen? You have got to be joking...

Referendums are a distraction from the really important campaign of occupations. We all know that the fees are bad, that they block access and that students don’t want them—we don’t need a referendum to tell us that!

staff on the seventh floor, we settled in and set about barricading the entrances before the inevitable return of the cops.

With the essential tasks undertaken, and the bulk of the students protecting the occupation from the now present cops, those who chose to jump into the planning meeting to establish a proposed list of demands, and figure out what needed to be done: contacting trade unions, finding/supplying food and water, toilet facilities, and of course setting up the all important smokers room.

The occupation had its problems, one being an item on the list of demands "Establishment of a student referendum at RMIT", but a lot of positives came out of it too.

Students who were shut out of the often ridiculous decision making process, which took a dive into outright bickering, instead turned to each other and talked about why they were there, what they wanted to achieve, and what they stood for.

There was a huge feeling that tertiary staff and students need to co-operate with each other if we want to achieve substantial wins.

Students were surprised, but heartened at the messages of solidarity coming from university staff. The protesting students showed respect for university property and staff, and made it clear what they were there for. Media reports labelling the recent occupations as bored students looking for entertainment clearly have not been paying attention!

The students and staff of our tertiary

institutions are facing the greatest attacks on public education Australia has ever seen, thanks to the passing of the Nelson reforms. Staff face anti-union policy that can only worsen their working conditions,



and as a result negatively impact the services and education delivered to the students. Students of many institutions are facing a full 25% increase in HECS fees, and elimination of many non-mainstream courses.

Tertiary education should be available for all, not just the privileged few who can afford it! Students and staff must unite against these reforms and make themselves heard! With a federal election on the way, now is the time to organise against the plans that seem fit to deliver the final blow to Australian tertiary education, before it is too late.

More protests planned...

This will be a year of action against the Nelson reforms and the Howard government attacks on public education.

Make sure you know about the actions being planned at your Uni or TAFE. Contact your student union for details.

Get involved in helping to organize protests and occupations.

Protests have been organized at these upcoming fee setting meetings:

VCA May 1

Flinders Uni June 10

Staff and students together can win!

Free Mario Bango!

On 20 November, the Bratislavan County Court sentenced Mario Bango to 12 years in prison without parole for attempted murder. Allegedly, he committed this crime on 10 March, 2001, when he injured Branislav Slamka with a knife on the bus. Mario, who is a young Roma, and anti-fascist activist was defending his brother Eduard from Slamka's racially motivated attack.



Q: What are you charged with?

Three years ago my brother was attacked by the notorious skinhead Branislav Slamka. When I tried to help my brother, a struggle began. The neo-nazi fell on the ground and got a serious head injury. I immediately called the police and an ambulance. Then I was arrested on the spot. Several weeks later Slamka died from a medical error: The doctors had overlooked a blood clot in his brain. I was kept in prison until the trial began.

Q: How did your trial proceed?

The judgement is clearly politically motivated. The judge made no secret of his prejudice against me. It was characteristic of the whole trial that the relatives of Slamka were represented by Robert Fico, chairman of the racist and right-populist party SMER. The sentence - 12 years imprisonment - is absurd. I defended my brother against an attack.

Q How are your conditions in prison?

It is not exactly easy. In the beginning, prison guards who sympathize with the neonazis threatened to make my life a living hell. That changed as a result of pressure from the international solidarity campaign. Since then I have been left alone. The worst part is that I can only see visitors for less than one hour per month and only receive one package every three months.

Q: What do you hear about the international solidarity campaign?

From letters, my lawyer, and the few visits I receive, I am partially informed. The support of hundreds of organizations from around the world motivates me greatly. The fact that Slovakian President Rudolf Schuster had to answer the protest letters addressed to him shows the strength of the international pressure. In Slovakia, unfortunately, the situation is different. In the media there was a smear campaign against my brother and me: We were thieves, who the "upstanding citizen" - i.e. the neonazi - was trying to stop from pickpocketing. That is the typical way Roma are portrayed in the media. Characteristic of the racist climate is the fact that the Slovakian parliament, on the motion of an MP from the conservative-nationalist HZDS, held a minute of silence for the dead neonazi.

Q: Are Roma often the victims of attacks?

My brother was attacked once before by neonazis, and had to spend two weeks in the hospital. Roma are basically free game. Just two examples: The 51-year-old Koral Sendrej was beaten to death at a police station. The young man Milan Daniel was killed by three skinheads with baseball bats. When asked why they had murdered him, the skinheads replied "Because he was a Roma!"

ARIA and RIAA Bleeding Downloaders Dry

In the United States, the RIAA is relentless in suing file sharers and back home ARIA is trying to sue Kazaa as well as university students. They keep claiming that it is all in the name of protecting artists so they don't get ripped off, but here is the news they don't want you to know about.

People are actually buying albums in record numbers, despite the downloading boom. The RIAA continues to make statements about the number of singles being purchased dropping, however, this has nothing to do with file-sharers, but merely the fact that the music industry itself, is phasing out the production of CD singles.

The industry is bending the truth and giving false statistics simply to give

them an excuse to sue individuals for ridiculous amounts of money so that they make even bigger profits on top of their record album sales.

The RIAA is also claiming that it is also trying to protect consumers, try telling that to the single mother of two children in the United States, one 11 and one newborn child. The 11-year-old downloaded some music off the Internet and as a result she now faces a lawsuit with a potential fine of up to thousands of dollars.

On a final note it is also clear that downloading is by no means a crime and that music industry is merely trying make it look like a crime to boost their already massive profits.

Things you can do to help...

Outraged by the racist treatment of anti-fascist fighter Mario? Then don't just sit there—there's something you can do.

Mario is learning English and getting letters and postcards from supporters really boosts his morale—write to him at

Mário Bango, Ústav na výkon väzby, priecinok 1077, Chorvatská 5, 812 29 Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Writing letters of protest will remind the Slovak authorities that people around the world are concerned about this case, you can write to

Urad Vlady, Namestie Slobody 1, 813 70 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5729 5111, 011 421-7-5249 7595

Kancelária prezidenta SR, Štefánikova 14, 814 38 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5441 6624

Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR, Župné námestie 13, 813 11 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5935 3497, fax: 011 421-7-5443 0467, e-mail: tlacove@justice.gov.sk

And stay tuned for news of the campaign—from May 1 to May 12 there will be twelve days of protest in Europe to highlight Mario's case. We'll be doing actions here too.

STOP KILLER COKE

Building solidarity with Colombia

Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist. In the last eight years 2000 trade unionists have been killed, by right wing paramilitaries.

Colombia has experienced 50 years of conflict as groups like the FARC and the ELN, which control considerable parts of the country, fight the government for control. But this is not a simple civil war. Colombia is rich in mineral resources, including oil and contains the second largest part of the Amazon rainforests after Brazil.

There are substantial multi-national, and particularly US interests in the country. And it is the US government and its School of the Americas which has been behind the training and funding the paramilitaries. That's without mentioning the \$US 7 billion Plan Colombia, \$1.3 billion of which is funded directly by the US.

In the fifty years of civil war over 28,000 people have died. Current figures suggest 3 violent deaths an hour. One quarter of the worlds internally displaced people – refugees within their own country – are in Colombia. That's 3 million people.

The scale of repression of dissent is appalling. 6000 people have been rounded up in the last year. 200,000 arrest warrants are currently active.

In a move that should worry us all, the Colombian government brands anyone who disagrees with it a terrorist.

The government has a Democratic Security Programme. They have set up a network of a million civilians to spy and report on their neighbours.

Despite these terrible conditions workers are still organizing and many so-

cial and rural workers movements exist to struggle for better conditions and for basic human rights.

SINALTRAINAL, the food and beverage workers union, have been an important part of these struggles. This is partially because their members work in the local bottling factories of the Coca Cola Company. A company known world wide for its abuses of trade unionists, local communities and the environment.

The union had over 7000 members but constant harassment by the Coca Cola Company has seen its membership drop to 1400. Nine of its union members have been killed in the last eight years – three during collective bargaining rounds. At least one, Isidro Gil, was gunned down by paramilitaries on the factory floor.



After the shooting of Isidro, the paramilitaries handed out union resignation letters to the remaining workers. Not surprisingly most of them fled for their lives. The company then employed a new, non-union workforce at a third of the previous wage rates.

The paramilitaries are unambiguous about their purpose – they say they are trying to keep Colombia safe for big business – and that means union busting on a huge scale.

Coca Cola workers have been intimidated, jailed on false charges, locked in their factories till they signed union resignations, had their family members threatened and been forced into exile. Though this has decimated the union, it has not stopped their fight.

For the last few years Coca Cola workers in Colombia along with supporters in the US have been running a court case against the company and its Colombian subsidiary, once Panamco, now called FEMSA. Though a US judge has declared that the Colombian bottlers have a case to answer, Coca Cola's head office in the US has been let off the hook.

But this has not defeated the campaign. In July 2003 an International year of action against Coca Cola was launched with the support of the WSF. The call was taken up round the world, including here in Australia. We were part

International Day of Action

July 22



Last year about 150 people gathered in Federation Sq. in Melbourne to launch the first international year of action against Coca Cola.

Through the last year Revolution and the Colombia Demands Justice campaign as well as other groups and activists have been spreading the word about Coca Cola and its activities in Colombia and around the world.

The recent visit of food security activist Nilson Davila has given the campaign new impetus and on July 22 this year there will be another day of action against Coca Cola.

We need more activists to be involved in the campaign. Already a number of unions have promised their support—the campaign needs you too.

Get your own local campaign started by trying to get rid of coke machines at school, uni or work.

We've got model leaflets, great stickers and lots of ideas for how to get things started.

Contact us: contact@onesolutionrevolution.org or phone Lisa 0418 415 155. And check out the resources at www.onesolutionrevolution.org

of the July 22 International day of action.

Despite the increased publicity for their cause, things have not got any easier for the workers in Colombia.

On September 9, 2003, Coca-Cola FEMSA, Coca-Cola's largest Colombian bottler, closed the production lines at 11 of their 16 bottling plants. (The Coca-Cola Company shares several board members with Coca-Cola FEMSA and owns 46.4 % of its voting stock.) Since then, they've pressured more than 500 workers into "voluntarily resigning" from their contracts in exchange for a lump-sum payment. Most of the union leaders have refused to resign and the company escalated the pressure. On February 25, the Colombian Ministry of Social Protection (Labor) authorized Coca-Cola FEMSA's plans to dismiss 91 workers - 70 percent of whom were union leaders. This was a vicious attempt at union busting.

The workers replied with the only action they felt was left to them – a hunger strike which began outside the factory gates on March 15.

Juan Carlos Galvis, vice president of the local union in Barrancabermeja, has said, "If we lose the fight against Coca-Cola, we will first lose our union, next our jobs and then our lives."

Coca Cola has a terrible record as an employer in Colombia. Of the 100,000 workers employed, around 80% are contractors, earning an average of \$120 a month. These are starvation wages.

Then there is the question of water. The company has been caught out in the past using contaminated run-off from a cemetery in its bottling plants. More recently they have been able to buy water from the government at a rate well below what ordinary Colombians have to pay.

The Company has now agreed to negoti-

ate with the workers—who are seeking relocation—but it took 12 days of hunger strike to get even this small concession.

The current struggle of Coca Cola workers in Colombia to retain their jobs and to be able to organize as a trade union is important. Its important not just because of abstract solidarity, but because workers all over the world, including here in Australia face multi-national companies like Coca Cola, set on union-busting. The tactics used by the Australian bosses might not yet be quite as extreme but the intention of an un-unionised low paid, casualised workforce is the same.

Workers in Colombia need our direct solidarity. That's why there will be another day of action this year on July 22. Already Australian unions like the Electrical trades Union in Victoria have expressed interest in being involved.

Not buying Coca Cola is a start, but it can only ever be an individual action. The campaign internationally has been able to organize the removal of coke machines from campuses and workplaces—this is an important next step. In the early 1980's coca cola workers in Guatamala were able to win the right to unionise, because of concerted strike action and real support from other coca cola employees

Radio Revolution
Music, politics and
shenanigans on 90.7 SYN FM
with Jodie and Elaine
6.00-9.00am Sundays
Starting 25 April with an
ANZAC Day anti-war special

LETTER FROM PALESTINE

Kam is a UK Revo member. She's been in Palestine working with the International Solidarity Movement. Here's her thoughts after just one week... Then if you want to read more...

<http://worldrevolution.org.uk/pages/campaigns/palestine.html>

Week 1

I spent the first week in Qalqilya. As you all probably know Qalqilya is a small town home to about 42,000 people- a village completely caged off from the rest of the occupied west bank. The separation wall completely cages in Qalqilya, declared a "closed military zone". The 1 checkpoint has erratic opening times and is closed some days altogether. For farmers to get to their land there is a farmers entrance which is open 3 times a day for 15 minutes each time. (Officially, the whole week I was there the gate was completely shut for 4 days out of 7. Now its been shut altogether- just in time for the olive harvest). In addition to the wall is a 40 m buffer zone, a barbed electrical fence with razor wire and built in sensors that tell the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) when someone tampers with it. No one including us can even approach the fence out of the opening times- if people try they have orders to shoot from the sniper watchtowers positioned all over the wall. Especially at night when it dark. Rather like a prison then. A local said to me to live your life like this with your children was worse than prison. When the wall is finished it will cage in half of the West Bank, people here feel the West Bank is being turned into a group of prison like reservation camps. (At the moment the main roads in the West Bank are completely shut.)

The wall has literally put soldiers, guns, razor wire and snipers between children and their schools, people and their jobs, farmers and their farms. We hear over and over the same things. Children stuck at checkpoints who can't come home at dark, people who worked in factories in Israel or in bigger cities like Nablus now are unemployed. Many people depended on working outside of Qalqilya to bring home earnings, this wall has increased and created new poverty.

Even the Israelis used to come to Qalqilya to purchase cheap food and goods, now shops and markets have had to close due to no business at all. We visited a school opposite the wall. During the construction of the wall, we hear that soldiers

would tear gas the children. Apparently they were 'getting in the way.'

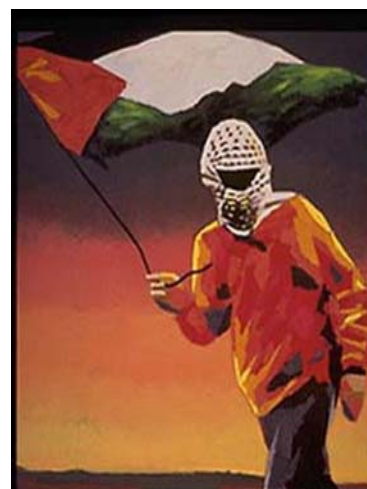
Unfortunately we had no success in trying to get farmers to their land. There's not much you can do if the gate is completely shut. We would shout out, trying to speak to the teenage looking soldiers. A soldier told me to go away because he was trying to sleep and I was disturbing him. One person asked them how could 15 minutes, 3 times a day be enough for 42,000 people? The soldier said "That's right 3 times a day-just like antibiotics". Then he laughed with the other soldiers. It was just a joke to him.

We visited many distressed farmers who had their farms bulldozed, and this was even behind the wall. We offer to help but he doesn't want us to do anything, he says the soldiers will just come back and destroy it again. Everything was a mess, trees uprooted and dead. The farmer says it was his means of survival for 22 years, and 4 families depend on it. It will take years for the fruit trees to grow back. We sit and have tea and he also tells us his 2 sons were arrested and put in prison and every time 6 months comes to an end, they find a reason to keep them in for another 6 months. This is a very common story here.

This small town has been hit hard with stepped up military presence since the wall. The ISM (International Solidarity Movement) are 'on call' and we are supposed to go out everytime there's an incursion. One day we were called out to the UN hospital, the IDF had invaded the hospital looking to arrest a patient (informers are a big problem) about 15 soldiers crammed in corridors, at gunpoint the doctors were ordered to strip their top halves in front of us all. They took off their coats and shirts and had to lie on the ground. We too were shouted at and threatened that if we took pictures they would shoot. We put our cameras away. Soldiers then fired real bullets in all the rooms, trashing the inside, breaking hospital equipment. One locker was full of wires which looked important, they pulled the wires and broke them.

They went into the kitchen and took the oil and poured it all over the floor just to create a mess. They didn't find the wanted man.

Kam.



REVIEWS

AGAINST ME!

As the Eternal Cowboy

A follow up to Against Me! is Reinventing Axl Rose, As the Eternal Cowboy immediately presents us with the Against Me! fury we've come to know and love, with an amazing increase in production quality since their last release. This is a band that's going places, and getting there fast.

Exploring what is commonly regarded in the US as an Anarcho attitude, Against Me! pick apart and commentate politics today, not focusing on major events such as war and international conflict, but on the life of the average joe.

"Turn those clapping hands into angry balled fists" is a standout in this aspect. It narrates a day in the life of your average white collar worker, and the frustration that comes with living this mundane life. Some lines stand out:

"...and if something doesn't break, I'm just going to go, go fucking insane."

"Cliché Guevara" documents the popularisation of rebellion and Che Guevara in youth culture today...showing the idea of revolution as a fad, and presenting the exploitation of struggle for the sake of being fashionable... "with class wars, and arms races racing, we rock we rock we rock to the new sensation".

This is followed up in the next track "Mutiny on the Electronic Bay" with the lyrical depiction of the other side of the fence, the ignorance of the people that allow our governments to get away with what they do. "With an invasion to bring the country it's freedom, well if unconsciousness is still happiness, no no, I don't know what to say."

Backing up these influential lyrics is a slightly

cowboy themed punk rock. The four piece band never ceases to come up with original ways to present their music, with strangely addictive fusions of disco beats and screamo punk vox and guitar, and even the ever present thread of country that weaves its way through the record seems to be just right.

Also noticing this fact is Fat Wreck Chords, who recently signed the band and has added not only to their leftist credibility, but to their hard working punk line up already incorporating the likes of Anti Flag, and Australia's own Frenzal Rhomb. We won't mention the Lawrence Arms.

Against Me! have come a long way from their days of folk punk in squats, but the energy and the attitude is all still there, and reinforced by better production, better equipment, and well, the presence of electricity.

Impressive to see also, is that they haven't strayed from their political line and have stayed true to the working class, something that's extremely admirable in the ever changing world of popular music, and more importantly the ever changing world of their fans.

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Elephant

Don't go and see Elephant looking for answers.

This isn't a film about why some American teenagers kill their classmates and teachers. It doesn't provide pat answers or pseudo-scientific explanations. It is not a very comforting film. It also doesn't give you a clear moral stance. In fact Elephant might have you feeling like you're free falling through moral ambiguity.

The film's title refers to a 1989 film about violence in Northern Ireland. The problem is like having an elephant in the living room—too big to deal with, so generally ignored. Of course the real problem with an elephant in the living room is that sooner, rather than later, it will do a lot of damage.

Gus van Sant's new film uses amateur actors – real teenagers. It follows them around a typical if reasonably affluent, outer suburban highschool.

For most of the film we listen in on their conversations and lives. All the characters are connected in the way people in a highschool are – the boy at the back of your class, the girl you see in the library, the gossipy friends you avoid in the canteen.

These inane insights into lives though are backgrounded by a growing

sense of tension. Van Sant loops time in the film, we keep coming back to an apparently insignificant moment, a chance meeting of friends in the corridor. It is a moment we see from all the characters point of view and it acts as the central hub around which the action occurs.

The looping of time is disorienting, it gives the feeling of repeating a level in one of the games that one character plays. It also ties into the tension we experience as soon as we spot the heavily armed students striding into the school, a scene we see near the beginning of the film, but which doesn't play out till much later.

Lots of critics have dismissed Elephant because of its moral ambivalence. Van Sant's camera doesn't ask us to sympathise specifically with any of the characters, but with all of them.

It makes for disturbing viewing. Disturbing because without that moral place to tether ourselves, we are left uncertain about how to deal with what we're seeing.

And this is exactly what van Sant wants. He had the idea for the film while watching the breaking news from Columbine. He wants to get away from the endless reporting that seeks answers – the shooters watched violent movies or played violent games, they were bullied, they were confused about their sexuality, their parent's didn't care enough or too

much.

The film doesn't make judgements about the shooters – it doesn't try to justify them. These aren't evil people. Aside from a fascination with guns, they seem normal enough.

In fact possibly the most disturbing scene in the film is the two shooters sitting in their car, fully armed. Having discussed the plan in detail, one turns to the other "Just remember to have fun."

The film is controversial because instead of being given all the answers, we have to make up our own minds. And more importantly we have to understand that the people who commit these kinds of crimes are just like you and me. Their ordinariness is what is most disturbing.

Michael Moore, when he made Bowling for Columbine wanted to show that the American gun culture and the violence of American imperialism were behind high school killings.

It was a powerful film because it showed these connections, without having to blame individuals.

Elephant is equally powerful. As viewers we are forced to look outside of the individuals and communities where these shootings happen and to the much wider social context.

And in the end, we're left asking ourselves if we can go on ignoring the problem or can we change the world!

WANKER OF THE MONTH



“Yes Mr. Speaker I am a woman-hating, bigoted wanker...”

Tony Abbott is a true wanker. Personally I don't think Tony deserves the wanker of the month, he's more wanker of the year quality.

During an interview he was asked how he felt about Mark Latham's comments that he 'hates' some politicians. Abbott's response was "Hatred is something that bedevils other countries. Hatred is the sort of thing that happens in the Middle East."

That bigoted comment alone was worth a wanker of the month nomination but Abbott has more prejudiced ideas.

He has commented on numerous occasions that women see abortion as the 'easy way out.' That people don't understand that actions have consequences and don't take their responsibilities seriously.

There are some people who we all just love to hate...that's why Revo are introducing this new feature...if there's a special someone in your life you think needs a nomination, send us an email...though we doubt we will ever be short of nominees...This month's lucky winner is **Tony Abbott!**

I quote - "To a pregnant 14-year-old struggling to grasp what's happening, for example, a senior student with a whole life mapped out or a mother already failing to cope under difficult circumstances, abortion is the easy way out. It's hardly surprising that people should choose the most convenient exit from awkward situations. What seems to be considered far less often is avoiding situations where difficult choices might arise." (The Australian. March 17, 2004)

Anyone who could even think there is an easy choice associated with unplanned pregnancy is a world class wanker.

"Hatred is something that which bedevils other countries." No, it bedevils every country because of people like Tony Abbott.

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