



## 010501

Steffen G. Böhm

University of Warwick, UK

### abstract

Mayday. Mayflies. Dialectical images. (Non-)organisation. Protest. Anti-globalisation. Movement. Anti-xxx. Green. Red. White. Non-colours. Diversity. History. Politics. (Neo-)liberal vs. radical democracy. Future. Hope. (Non-)violence. Global corporations. Notes from the streets. Boredom. Tiredness. Pessimism. Global action. Method of this project: literary montage. I needn't *say* anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse – these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them.<sup>1</sup> Quotes without quotations marks. Every text is a bricolage. The citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas.<sup>2</sup> The author is only a guest in his own text. Benjamin's *Arcades Project* as inspiration. Literary montage as political action. From a critical distance. Theory as practice. No authoritative commentary. Give voice to a multiplicity. Absence of a single centre. Articulation of plural elements.

Someone must have traduced Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning.<sup>3</sup>

Mayday, London, 2001: At least 65 people were arrested, including a 15-year-old boy, and up to 30 were taken to hospital. Among those arrested were people from Denmark, Poland, Belgium and the US.<sup>4</sup>

Scene from the July Revolution. A woman donned men's clothing to fight alongside the others, and then afterward, as woman again, nursed the wounded who were lodged in the Stock Exchange.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 460 (emphasis in original).

2 Barthes, R. (1977) *Image – Music – Text*, transl. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 160 (emphasis in original).

3 Franz Kafka (1935) *The Trial*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 3.

4 *Epolitix.com*, 2 May 2001, 10:30 AM.

5 C.F. Tricotel, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 713.

Around 3000 protesters were engaged in running skirmishes with police in London's Oxford Street as they slowly dispersed late on Tuesday night. ... London escaped with only minor damage as police hailed their operation, which had involved around 6000 officers, as a complete success ... Damage was largely caused by protestors leaving both ends of Oxford Street - mainly centred on Tottenham Court Road where 20 windows were smashed. The rioters also attempted to set fire to the Tesco store in nearby Goodge Street while terrified staff were trapped inside. By the end of the day the body of protestors had been reduced to a hardcore of trouble-makers consisting of anarchists and the criminal elements that operate in the West End. The total cost for the day's mayhem has been estimated to be at around £20 million in lost trade, damage and police wages. Home Secretary Jack Straw praised the work of the Metropolitan Police in dealing with the rioters. "I congratulate all the police officers involved in the policing of yesterday's demonstrations in central London..." Straw said. The London mayor, Ken Livingstone, said: "The police have put in an excellent effort ... The best protest is a massive peaceful demonstration. I hope that in the future people will contact us to talk about where they want to go and what they want to do."<sup>6</sup>

The prime minister, Tony Blair, has praised the Metropolitan Police's handling of May Day protests as dozens of protesters plan to sue the police for false imprisonment. The Mail claims that firms of solicitors are queuing up to cash in on civil liberties claims by protestors - with solicitors turning up at one of the police stations holding people arrested in the riots to offer their legal services.<sup>7</sup>

In the dialectical image, what has been within a particular epoch is always, simultaneously, 'what has been from time immemorial.' As such, however, it is manifest, on each occasion, only to a quite specific epoch - namely, the one in which humanity, rubbing its eyes, recognizes just this particular dream image as such. It is at this moment that the historian takes up, with regard to that image, the task of dream interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

"The organisers will not negotiate with the police, won't even contact them about the route they want," [Livingston] said. "For them the objective is the scenes of mayhem we saw last year. Now last year a lot of innocent people got caught up in that." Mr Livingstone expressed the hope that the numbers of demonstrators would remain low so the police could "concentrate on trying to identify the ringleaders who all got away last year". And he warned protesters that they would alienate people from the causes they were seeking to publicise. Mr Benn, who is retiring from parliament to go, as he put it, into politics, said that he supported past anti-capitalism demonstrations in Seattle because "they were warnings and something very good". "Every single progressive movement in history has been denounced as violent," he told GMTV. However he said

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6 *Epolitix.com*, 2 May 2001, 10:30 AM.

7 *Epolitix.com*, 3 May 2001, 07:17 AM.

8 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 464

that he accepted that any violence would distract people from the anti-capitalist cause he refused to denounce the protest.<sup>9</sup>

It is necessary...to broaden the domain of the exercise of democratic rights beyond the limited traditional field of 'citizenship'. As regards the extension of democratic rights from the classic 'political' domain to that of the economy, this is the terrain of the specifically anti-capitalist struggle. Against those champions of economic liberalism who affirm that the economy is the domain of the 'private', the seat of natural rights, and that the criteria of democracy have no reason to be applied within it, social theory defends the right of the social agent to equality and to participation as a producer and not only as a citizen.<sup>10</sup>

London mayor, Ken Livingstone, formerly known as "Red Ken" and a once a "champion of direct action", has been branded as a "a class traitor who must be taught a lesson" by anarchist May day militants angry at his support of the "zero tolerance" policing planned for anti-capitalist demonstrations.<sup>11</sup>

British "ant-capitalist" activists said to be planning disruptive May day demonstrations in London have been trained in US camps supported by the Body Shop's Anita Roddick.<sup>12</sup>

07:30 Marylebone Station & Liverpool Street Station Critical Mass Bike Ride.

09:30 King's Cross Station: Giant Veggie Burger Giveaway: Meet at McDonalds at Kings Cross, corner of York Way.

10:00 Victoria Embankment Gardens: Peacenik in the Park: This is an autonomous event with no agenda.

11:00 / 12:00 Speaker's Corner, Hyde Park: Building Hotels on Mayfair. Ever wanted to build a hotel on Mayfair? Now's your chance.

12:00 Outside ULU, Malet Street Action Against Fees: Meet outside the University of London Union at noon to protest against Student Fees.

12:00 Trafalgar Square: Feed The Birds. Mayday is the first day the birds are no longer being fed by the GLA.

12.00 Break the bank! Picket Coutts bank, the bank of Royalty and the seriously rich.

12.00-14.00 South London Mayday action against capitalism! To highlight the absurdity of the system we are organising an action in the form of a game.

13:00 44 West Cromwell St, (north of Earls' Court Tube): Protest against 'hoteliers' Accommodata Limited, profiteer contractors to the Home Office in 'housing' refugees.

13.00 A Beltane Celebration: with the Dionysian Underground and others.

13.00 Angel Crossroads: Protest Peacefully to Protect the Planet.

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9 *BBC*, 29 April 2001, 12:08 PM.

10 Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 185.

11 *Epolitix.com*, 20 April 2001, 07:13 AM.

12 *Epolitix.com*, 19 April 2001, 07:34 AM.

14:00 HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, N7: Go directly to jail .... and show your solidarity with prisoners.

14:00 The World Bank offices, New Zealand, corner of Pall Mall & Haymarket: Street Theatre and protest to highlight Debt Issues.

14:00 Philip Hockley Furs, 20 Conduit Street, W1: Action Against the Fur Trade.

16:00 Oxford Street, Sale of the Century: Read the leaflet once it's distributed and watch out for the signal around 4pm; that's all we can say at this point!<sup>13</sup>

It is really imperative that we understand, in precisely its polemical bearing, the apotheosis of organization and of rationalism which the Communist party has to promote unceasingly in the face of feudal and hierarchical powers, and that we be clear about the fact that the movement itself comprehends mystical elements as well, although of an entirely different sort. It is even more important, naturally, not to confuse these mystical elements, which pertain to corporality, with religious elements.<sup>14</sup>

Organization of the state workshops by Thomas. 'It suffices to mention that Emile Thomas divided the workers into brigades and companies, and that their chiefs were elected by universal suffrage of the workers. Every company had its flag, and Emile Thomas made use, for this organization, of other civil engineers and of students from the Ecole Polytechnique, who, through their youth, exerted a moral influence on the workers. ... The national workshops before long became ... the gathering place for all sorts of vagabonds and idlers, whose labor consisted exclusively in marching through the streets with their standard bearers, here and there mending the pavement or turning up earth, but on the whole – singing and shouting, ragtag and unruly – doing whatever came into their head. ... One day, there suddenly appeared on the scene 600 actors, painters, artists, and agents, who together announced that, since the republic was guaranteeing work to all citizens, they too were putting forward their claim. Thomas made them inspectors.' ... 'Neither the mayors not the police commissioners, who had to sign the certificates attesting to the bearers' eligibility to work in Paris, could maintain the slightest control in view of the threats circulating against them. In their anxiety, they even gave certificates to ten-year-old children, who, with these in hand, presented themselves for admission to the national workshops.'<sup>15</sup>

From: Genoseize Therat  
Date: Mon Apr 30, 2001 7:45 am  
Subject: see you on the streets!

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13 Organization of the Mayday protests in London: [www.maydaymonopoly.net](http://www.maydaymonopoly.net)

14 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 699.

15 Sigmund Engländer, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 701.

Well this is the last chance I'll get to post til after Mayday, so best of luck everyone. Keep a cool head, remember what you are fighting for and let it inspire you in your struggles.<sup>16</sup>

'Street warfare today has its own technique; it was perfected, after the armed takeover of Munich, in a curious little confidential work published with great secrecy by the government in Berlin. One no longer advances through the streets; they are left empty. A path is opened within the interiors of houses, by breaking through walls. As soon as one has taken a street, one organizes it; lines of communication are laid through the holes in the walls, while, to prevent the return of the adversary, one immediately mines the conquered ground. ...Perhaps the clearest sign of progress, here, is that one need not concern oneself at all with sparing houses or lives. Compared with civil wars of the future, the episode of the Rue Transnonain will seem quite ... innocent and archaic.'<sup>17</sup>

Nine people have appeared in court in connection with Tuesday's anti-capitalism protests in central London. Six who were accused of violent disorder were remanded in custody by Horseferry Road Magistrates Court until May 10. The other three defendants were remanded on bail. One was accused of drugs possession. Another faced two charges of violent disorder and criminal damage. A woman had her case of violent disorder adjourned until June 14. Yesterday, 13 people appeared before Bow Street Magistrates Court in connection with the protest.<sup>18</sup>

Faure Perez, 21, of Forest Hill, south-east London, was fined £100 with £50 costs for failing to remove a cyclist's mask when challenged as he protested in Trafalgar Square. The police can demand that people remove masks under the Public Order Act. Brian Kennedy, defending, said: "He asked for proof that the provision existed and was not given any... There were photographers around and if there was trouble he didn't want to be pictured in the papers because people might think he had caused the trouble." But magistrate Christopher Pratt said: "You were wearing the mask to conceal your identity and that's the reason why police wanted you to remove the mask." Nicholas Gray, 32, of Southwark, south-east London, was remanded on bail to June 20 after pleading not guilty to failing to remove his cap and sunglasses. Peter Zephar, 28, of Shepherd's Bush, west London, and Godson Chigbu, 33, of Lambeth, south London, were both remanded on bail to June 19 after they denied assaulting police officers. Chigbu shouted: "Power to the people" as he left the court.<sup>19</sup>

Once again the cops proved brutal as they bashed their shields and batons against unprotected people. Then the horses were brought forward to further intimidate and

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16 Email message posted to the mayday monopoly discussion group at [groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly).

17 Dubech and d'Espezel, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 700.

18 *Ananova*, 3 May 2001, 04:35 PM.

19 *The Guardian*, 3 May 2001, 2001.

scare the people. They continued to push until nearly half the intersection was ours. But not for long. The cops countered with a brutal and cruel push of their own, swinging repeatedly with their batons and jabbing people with their shields and forcing their horses to move forward nearly trampling many of the people. Further pushes were attempted to retake the intersection, but all unsuccessful. Before long, people began to realize that cops had blocked off the north end of Holles St. by Cavendish Sq. thus trapping us on Holles St. People turned and marched to the north end and attempted to push there, but again, unsuccessfully. So there we were, penned in around 4:30-4:45pm... until 7:45pm. Skirmishes broke out as people tried to force their way through the lines, but the cops wouldn't have it. Bottles were hurled along with whatever else people had in hand, from sticks to cop hats. Spraypaint cans were emptied on the walls and storefronts. People danced to the samba band. Demonstrators climbed to the tops of the store awnings and danced and displayed various items from bus stop signs to a cop jacket with the words 'fuck the pigs' spraypainted on it. A window was smashed on a storefront on the northwest end of the street amidst cheers and the cops quickly moved in front of it so as to form a u-shape with their line. A CCTV camera on one of the awnings was kicked repeatedly until it dangled by its wires and then, insistent on destroying the camera altogether and encouraged by the crowd, a man dangled from the wires with hopes of ripping it out. This attempt failed. Someone atop the awning pulled out a lighter and tried to burn the wire but this failed as well. Handed a knife, he cut through the wire as sparks flew and successfully detached the camera as the crowd erupted in celebration. The camera was then thrown off the awning with hopes of busting it. Also thrown off were large metal plates from atop the awning. Someone then continuously threw the CCTV camera at the storefront window but it wouldn't shatter. Police, upon seeing this and hearing the crowd react in celebration, moved in and sealed off the whole western sidewalk of Holles St. Soon, the intersection was surrounded and full of around 500 people, and somebody in the crowd was yelling "sit down! Sit down! They won't hurt us if we sit down!" Most people sat down. After about half an hour, one line of police started moving backward, and the other forward, and started herding us along, until we got to the corner of Great Titchfield Street, where they stopped for a while. They seemed acutely aware that everyone knew that it was a feeble excuse to temporarily imprison us without good cause.<sup>20</sup>

Episode of the February Revolution. On the twenty-third, at eleven o'clock in the evening, a fusillade on the Boulevard des Capucines: twenty-three dead. 'The corpses are immediately paraded through the streets in a masterly, romantic *mise en scène*. ... From time to time another worker, positioned behind the cart, raises this lifeless body with a muscular arm and – his torch all the while emitting sparks and flakes of fire – casts his savage gaze over the crowd, shouting, 'Vengeance! Vengeance! They are slaughtering the people!' 'To Arms!' respond some voices; and the corpse falls back into the bottom of the cart, which continues on its way.'<sup>21</sup>

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20 How Earle Martin experienced the Mayday protest in London: [www.maydaymonopoly.net](http://www.maydaymonopoly.net)

21 Cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 699.

Trades unionists for a real May Day: We, activists who have worked within the framework of the “official” trade union and labour movement for many years, declare solidarity with the “globalise resistance” demonstration outside the World Bank offices and other “May Day Monopoly” events. We share the organisers’ aim of “reclaiming May Day as a day of celebration for all those struggling against capitalism and globalisation”. We support the demonstrators against the fantastic frenzy of aggression being whipped up by the police, much of the media and the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. The announcement of a “zero tolerance” policing policy and a campaign of preventive arrests is a brazen abuse of civil liberties. Livingstone’s call in his Evening Standard article (23.4.01) for police to arrest anyone “whose intention it is to engage in criminal activities” (how will they be selected?!) is shameful. It is an incitement to officers who have no sympathy for progressive causes to abuse the powers given them by Labour’s dictatorial Criminal Justice Act – as Livingstone knows perfectly well. The publication of photographs of people “suspected” by police of “intending” to cause violence – by newspapers with a pathetic or non-existent record of exposing capitalism’s monstrous, daily destruction of people and environment – is witch-hunting, not journalism. The establishment’s paranoid reaction to the movement against global capitalism, and the indifference or hostility of most “official” labour organisations, is symptomatic. Instead of embracing the passionate enthusiasm with which a new generation are confronting the evils of an immoral society, they shudder in fear. We welcome that enthusiasm with open arms.<sup>22</sup>

The people’s flag is deepest red,  
It shrouded oft our martyred dead,  
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold,  
Their hearts blood dyed its every fold.  
Then raise the scarlet standard high. (chorus)  
Within its shade we’ll live and die,  
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,  
We’ll keep the red flag flying here.  
    Look round, the Frenchman loves its blaze,  
    The sturdy German chants its praise,  
    In Moscow’s vaults its hymns are sung  
    Chicago swells the surging throng.  
It waved above our infant might,  
When all ahead seemed dark as night;  
It witnessed many a deed and vow,  
We must not change its colour now.  
    It well recalls the triumphs past,  
    It gives the hope of peace at last;  
    The banner bright, the symbol plain,  
    Of human right and human gain.

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<sup>22</sup> Email message posted to the mayday monopoly discussion group at [groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly)

It suits today the weak and base,  
Whose minds are fixed on self and place  
To cringe before the rich man's frown,  
And haul the sacred emblem down.  
    With heads uncovered swear we all  
    To bear it onward till we fall;  
    Come dungeons dark or gallows grim,  
    This song shall be our parting hymn.<sup>23</sup>

From: Ian

Date: Sun Apr 29, 2001 6:31 pm

Subject: [mayday-monopoly] Green party.

> Here's a new hobby: spot the liberal-left fall over themselves to condemn Mayday.

> > Darren Johnson, Leader of the Green Group on the Greater London Assembly, said: "For protest to be genuinely non-violent, the organisers need to stress from the outset that only non-violent behaviour will be acceptable. The May Day organisers have not done this." See what happens when the Green party gets a few seats in the Euro-parliament and the GLA. They wouldn't have been so eager to come out with this drivel when they were completely out in the cold. I hope anyone who toyed with the idea of voting for them because some of their ideas are ok will now see they would be wasting their time. Now they have a foot in the establishment they'll throw everything they have to out of the door in order to appear "respectable". Bye now, Ian.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that Reclaim The Streets has not been involved in the logistical planning for this year's MayDay has been seen by the corporate media as a split in the movement. But there are many groups and affiliations, each with their own analysis and focus, who all oppose the globalisation and the oppression of the capitalist system. MayDay belongs to each and every one of us. Around the world, social movements do not need to reconcile all their diverse ideas, just embrace the universal desire for change. Thus our aim is that everyone, everywhere should feel empowered to take part in building a future where we all take responsibility for an equitable continuation of life on this planet. Large actions, small actions, kitchen sink actions - who cares, as long as we continue to make them happen? ... Our group will not, however, have some journalist's definitions of organisation, or "fluffy" or "spiky" imposed upon it; neither will it fail for attempts to drive a wedge between it and other groups, nor will it fail to support those individuals or other groups subject to vilification and harassment. The violence of capitalism is 24/7, 365 days a year, and one day is as good as another for taking action towards real change.<sup>25</sup>

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23 'The Red Flag' by Jim Connell.

24 Email message posted to the mayday monopoly discussion group at [groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly).

25 Statement by Reclaim the Streets posted at [www.gn.apc.org/rts/](http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/).

‘Nothing of the general movements, nothing of the great clashes, but rather a succession of details which can never form a whole.’<sup>26</sup>

*Victoria, Canada:* This year marked the first MayDay march in Victoria in many years. Approximately 100 Socialists, Anarchists, Trade Unionists, and Wobblies...The theme of March was the call for a six hour work day (with no reduction in pay).

*Montreal, Canada:* This year in Montreal, radical activists answered the international appeal of “May Day”, May 1st. They organised a colourful and voluntarily “calm” demonstration in Westmount, the richest neighbourhood not only in Montreal, but in all of Canada.

*Czechoslovakia:* On one side of the cordon stood a unit of riot police armed with shields and batons and making a number of forceful arrests; on the other side a group of anarchists chanting slogans such as “fascists”, “Gestapo”, “police state”, throwing a few plastic bottles and here and there wielding sticks or plastic pipes...

*Copenhagen, Denmark:* As part of the global day of action against capitalism, 1,000 activists in Copenhagen demonstrated against the neo-liberal exploitation of the majority of the world’s population.

*Finland:* Demonstration and a carnival against capitalism. The day started with a demonstration “For Humanity, Against Capitalism”. Over 500 people marched through Helsinki city centre...

*France:* Following the call for an other global day of action against capitalism on Mayday, some radical left activists organized an anticapitalist demonstration in the center of Dijon, France, on April 28th.

*Germany:* The Left/Liberal newspaper TAZ writes that among the 400 arrested at the “Revolutionary May 1st Demonstration” in Berlin, is a policeman from Leipzig. He was not on duty, but on a holiday when by coincidence he saw the demonstration pass by. Police attacked the demonstration and as usual didn’t hesitate to rough up innocent bystanders. Our tourist from Leipzig got so angry when riot-cops hit him, that he joined the demonstrators who defended themselves throwing stones, bottles and other portable stuff. According to the police the policeman had thrown a bottle at a water-canon when he was arrested. This year’s revolutionary 1st of may demo was 10.000 persons strong (there was also a separate Marxist-Leninist-Maoist demonstration of some 2000 people. Fascists mobilised 1000 demonstrators earlier that day in Hellersdorf outskirt and were intensely protected by cops against antifascist).

*Wellington, New Zealand:* A successful and unique Carnival against Capitalism organised by local anarchist group the Committee for the Establishment of Civilisation was held on May Day in Wellington. Overall, probably over 500+ people attended the combined events of the day...

*Spain:* The march (about 1500 activists) moved up Passage De Gracia - the economic centre of Barcelona -. Hardcore, hooded, scarfed-up graffiti and superglue artists hit every building, including the Stock exchange, Deutsche Bank and Macdonalds, while blue-boiler-suited, white masked, flyposter teams re-invented advertising.

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26 J.-J. Nescio, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 713.

*Boston, USA:* As part of the Mayday 2000 Global Day of Action, over 200 anarchists, environmentalists, workers, students, and assorted radical left activists descended on Boston's Financial District in a spirited and disruptive celebration against capitalism.

*New York, USA:* On Saturday, May 6 about 75 revelers celebrated a bright summer-like day by "reclaiming" the streets of downtown Huntington, Long Island, rousing shoppers out of their usual consumer slumber.<sup>27</sup>

The favorite readings of the working-class tailor are the histories of the Revolution of 1789. He likes it when these texts develop the idea that this revolution was a good thing, and that it improved the condition of the working class. He is inspired by the aura of drama lent to men and events by several famous authors. ...Not perceiving that the principal cause of his social inferiority lies within himself, he likes to think that these men are the models for those who, in forging a new progress, will preserve him from all kinds of calamities.<sup>28</sup>

The 21st Century has witnessed the rise of mass demonstrations against multinational corporations and the free market. In the past 18 months, protesters from a diverse range of interest groups have been drawn to Prague, Seattle and Quebec City... There seems to be little to unite the disparate groups that typically turn out to protest against globalisation, yet at least environmentalists, anti-vivisectionists and anti-roads protesters each have their own defining cause. But what of the anarchists, to whom the constraints of government are pure anathema? What do they believe in? Michael, an anarchist helping co-ordinate the London May Day Collective, says May Day is a chance for protesters to highlight their concerns about the profits-before-people motive. "We believe in including people, allowing them to organise for themselves how they want to live. "The whole process of globalisation excludes people from having their say, it limits their choices." When the IMF steps in to shore up the economies of Asian nations, he says, the conditions attached force local input out the window. But the activists have no intention of putting up an alternative to capitalism for fear of robbing others of their voice, Michael says. "As anarchists, we believe people have to be involved in discussing what alternatives might work for them, without prescribing the options. For this reason, we distance ourselves from doctrines such as Marxism, which impose a strict set of rules."<sup>29</sup>

Why anti-capitalism? Capitalism is the name of the system which rules our lives. It is a system in which a few rich people control and exploit the rest of us. Other ways of living are possible based on cooperation and equality. They have been given many names, including anarchism, communism and ecology. This festival has chosen 'anti-capitalism' to embrace the diversity of these different traditions and to stress that we do

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27 The global Mayday activities in 2000; reports by participants, posted at [www.ainfos.com](http://www.ainfos.com) and summarised at [www.pcworks.demon.co.uk/magazine/newhomepage.htm](http://www.pcworks.demon.co.uk/magazine/newhomepage.htm)

28 F. Le Play, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 699.

29 BBC, 26 April 2001, 12:36 PM.

not have all the answers but need to seek solutions together. Imagine what we could do if we replaced capitalism with a system based on our needs and desires, not their profits.<sup>30</sup>

What is Globalise Resistance? Globalise Resistance is an emerging worldwide force uniting peoples and organisations against the growth of global corporations. Environmentalists, anti-capitalists, debt campaigners and many disparate groups have shown through the results of Seattle and Prague that a new global movement is emerging against self-serving profit hungry global corporations and the IMF/WTO institutions, and that a new world can be possible. This website's purpose is to unite Irish people and organisations who want to get involved in the struggle.<sup>31</sup>

The game of monopoly is one of accumulation, making it perfect for our times. The aim is for each player to make profits through the sale of a single commodity - land - and to expand their empire. In real life one single commodity generates all profits - our labour power. Since labour power cannot be separated from people, we are literally bought and sold in the market place. To prevent stagnation, capitalism must constantly expand. Thus we must also consume as well as produce. Originally invented as The Landlord Game, to expose the parasitic role of landlords, it was repackaged as Monopoly in the USA at the height of the great depression, as a sop to be sold to those workers who were being laid off and losing their livelihoods, a distraction from the reality of capitalist poverty. Such distractions may have got more sophisticated - TV, the internet, holidays abroad, flashy cars etc - but our exploitation continues unchecked. As capitalism is a social relation between classes its continuation requires the participation of both exploiters and exploited. By continuing the repetitive cycle of work and consumption we reproduce this alien mode of production. We are therefore our own jailers. However, since capitalism is opposed to human needs and desires, there is a constant struggle between those of us who produce and the bosses who reap the rewards. Capitalism is a global system, with the rule of the market imposed everywhere, usually by force. Hence the destruction of indigenous cultures.<sup>32</sup>

International Human Rights Community Condemns Nike's Inaction on Labour Rights Abuses. Nike's refusal to end labour abuses in its suppliers' factories will be documented today in an open letter signed by more than 40 human rights and labour groups from around the world. The letter will be presented to NIKE's Annual Shareholders' meeting in Hilversum, Netherlands. On-site investigations reveal evidence of:

- \* physical and verbal abuse of workers in Nike factories in Vietnam and El Salvador;
- \* the Indonesian military being employed by a Nike contractor to intimidate workers during wage negotiations;

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30 [www.freespeech.org](http://www.freespeech.org)

31 [www.ingenious.ie/~gwalsh/resist/whatis.html](http://www.ingenious.ie/~gwalsh/resist/whatis.html)

32 [www.maydaymonopoly.net](http://www.maydaymonopoly.net)

- \* Nike refusing to reinstate Vietnamese workers who have been humiliated and dismissed for talking to journalists;
- \* workers being sacked for trying to organise unions in Nike factories in El Salvador, Thailand and Indonesia;
- \* severe fire hazards in a Nike factory in China.

The joint letter was motivated by frustration at Nike's continued failure to match its rhetoric with action.

"NIKE responds to its human rights abuses of its workers with cynicism, denial and concealment," says Bob Jeffcott of the Toronto-based Maquila Solidarity Network.

"Personally, I am very angry with Nike for their endless lies. The reality of what is going on should be disclosed to the world," says Alice Kwan of the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee.

"Nike is a great pretender. They know the reality in Indonesia, they know it well, but forever they always keep in silence; they never show their concern for the labour situation or condition," says Ara Tibi from the Indonesian human rights group SISBIKUM.

The letter calls on Nike to reinstate all workers who have been fired for organizing unions or talking to journalists; ensure workers are paid a living wage for a standard forty hour week; publish the addresses of all its suppliers factories and put in place a credible system for monitoring conditions in those factories.

Representatives of the Clean Clothes Campaign in the Netherlands will attempt to read the letter aloud during Nike's Shareholders' Meeting. The meeting is being held in Nike's new European headquarters in Hilversum, the Netherlands starting at 4:00 pm, Wednesday, September 22.<sup>33</sup>

William Wood, 9 years old, 'was 7 years 10 months old when he began to work'. He 'ran moulds' (carried ready-moulded articles into the drying-room, afterwards bringing back the empty mould) from the very beginning. He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m., and left off at about 9 p.m. 'I work till 9 o'clock at night six days in the week. I have done so for the last seven or eight weeks.' Fifteen hours of labour for a child of 7! J. Murray, 12 years of age, says: 'I turn jigger and run moulds. I come at 6. Sometimes I come at 4. I worked all night last night, till 6 o'clock this morning. I have not been in bed since the night before last. There were eight or nine other boys working last night. All but one have come this morning. I get 3 shillings and sixpence. I do not get any more for working at night. I worked two nights last week.' Fernyhough, a boy of 10: 'I have not always an hour (for dinner). I have only half an hour sometimes: on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.'<sup>34</sup>

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33 [www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/5232/](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/5232/)

34 Karl Marx (1976) *Capital, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin, p.354 quoting the Children's Employment Commission, First Report, etc., 1863, Appendix, pp. 16, 19, 18.

Being a dialectician means having the wind of history in one's sails. The sails are the concepts. It is not enough, however, to have sails at one's disposal. What is decisive is knowing the art of setting them.<sup>35</sup>

fitter happier more productive  
comfortable  
not drinking too much  
regular exercise at the gym (3 days a week)  
getting on better with your associate employee contemporaries  
at ease  
eating well (no more microwave dinners and saturated fats)  
a patient better driver  
a safer car (baby smiling in the back seat)  
sleeping well (no bad dreams)  
no paranoia  
careful to all animals (never washing spiders down the plughole)  
keep in contact with old friends (enjoy a drink now and then)  
will frequently check credit at (moral) bank (hole in wall)  
favours for favours  
fond but not in love  
charity standing orders  
on Sundays ring road supermarket  
(no killing moths or putting boiling water on the ants)  
car wash (also on Sundays)  
no longer afraid of the dark  
or midday shadows  
nothing so ridiculously teenage and desperate  
nothing so childish  
at a better pace  
slower and more calculated  
no chance of escape  
now self-employed  
concerned (but powerless)  
an empowered & informed member of society (pragmatism not idealism)  
will not cry in public  
less chance of illness  
tyres that grip in the wet (shot of baby strapped in back seat)  
a good memory  
still cries at a good film  
still kisses with saliva  
no longer empty and frantic  
like a cat

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35 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 473.

tied to a stick  
that s driven into  
frozen winter shit (the ability to laugh at weakness)  
calm  
fitter, healthier and more productive  
a pig  
in a cage  
on antibiotics<sup>36</sup>

The concept of progress must be grounded in the idea of catastrophe. That things are “status quo” *is* the catastrophe. It is not an ever-present possibility but what in each case is given. Thus Strindberg (in *To Damascus?*): hell is not something that awaits us, but this life here and now.<sup>37</sup>

It is important that “once upon a time” it was like that. We can do it again. We need independent working class politics. No collaboration with government and bosses. Real solidarity with fellow workers in struggle, not a blinkered sectional outlook. We still need a further reduction in working hours, without loss of pay, to make work for the unemployed. We need revolutionary politics. That means politics that can lead us towards a genuine socialism where freedom knows no limit other than not interfering with the freedom of others. A socialism that is based on real democracy - not the present charade where we can choose some of our rulers, but may not choose to do without rulers. A real democracy where everyone effected by a decision will have the opportunity to have their say in making that decision. A democracy of efficiently co-ordinated workplace and community councils. A society where production is to satisfy needs, not to make profits for a privileged few. Anarchism.<sup>38</sup>

It is clear...that a left alternative can *only* consist of the construction of a different system of equivalents, which establishes social division on a new basis. In the face of the project for the reconstruction of a hierarchic society, the alternative of the Left should consist of locating itself fully in the field of the democratic revolution and expanding the chains of equivalents between the different struggles against oppression. *The task of the Left therefore cannot be to renounce liberal-democratic ideology, but on the contrary, to deepen and expand it in the direction of a radical and plural democracy*<sup>39</sup>

May 1 1886 saw 340,000 workers striking all over the United States demanding an 8-hour day. In Chicago alone, 80,000 came out and there a number of anarchist militants

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36 Radiohead (1997) ‘fitter happier’, on *OK Computer*. London: Parlophone.

37 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 473 (emphasis in original).

38 [www.ainfos.ca](http://www.ainfos.ca)

39 Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 176 (emphasis in original).

agitated inside the movement. The following Monday, the police fired on strikers at the McCormick Harvester works and six workers were killed. The next day a protest meeting at Haymarket Square was broken up by the police. In the following confusion, a bomb was thrown at the police, killing one outright and fatally wounding 7 others. Evidence came to light later that the bomb had been thrown by a police agent. The bosses, however, used this incident to victimise leading working class militants and attempt to break the movement.<sup>40</sup>

1919 - Germany: From April 29 to May 2, Munich: Government forces crush in blood the Republic of the Councils of Bavaria. Resistance results in many hard-fought street battles. Many resisters are summarily executed, leaving more than 700 dead.<sup>41</sup>

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.<sup>42</sup>

02.05.1989: Unofficial May Day demonstration in Prague. 1000 take part. Stanislav Devaty, Charter 77 is arrested, along with BBC Central Europe correspondent, Misha Glenny. He is released in Prague in the evening. He says he was hit on the face, had his arms twisted and tape recorder smashed on the ground. Hungary begins to dismantle the Iron Curtain, at the instigation of Foreign Minister Gyula Horn. 10 000s march through Warsaw, ending with a meeting to support Solidarity candidates in next month's elections.<sup>43</sup>

Up to 500,000 demonstrators chanting slogans and waving banners marched through half a dozen East German cities last night to keep up pressure for political reform. The flood of refugees leaving for the West through Czechoslovakia continued. By last night, 23,000 East Germans had arrived in West Germany from Prague since Saturday. The biggest demonstration was in Leipzig where hundreds of thousands of people, some shouting 'the Berlin Wall must go', surged on to the streets in driving rain to call for free elections and unlimited freedom of travel. More than 135,000 people rallied in other cities, including Schwerin, Halle, Cottbus, Dresden and Karl-Marx-Stadt.<sup>44</sup>

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40 [www.freespeech.org](http://www.freespeech.org)

41 [www.ainfos.ca](http://www.ainfos.ca)

42 Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 462.

43 [www.centraleurope.org.uk](http://www.centraleurope.org.uk)

44 *The Guardian*, 7 November 1989.

Revolution is a drama perhaps more than a history, and its pathos is a condition as imperious as its authenticity.<sup>45</sup>

Rabble of the faithless, the soulless, the rootless,  
Who want to wipe out every art and industry,  
To crush underfoot the cult of the Cross,  
And drown in an ocean of blood and flames  
- Its waves have risen round the flanks of Paris -  
Temples, palaces, priests, peoples, and kings!<sup>46</sup>

John Zerzan doesn't have a car, a credit card or a computer. He lives a quiet life in a cabin in Oregon and has sold his own blood plasma to make ends meet. So why does corporate America think he is the Antichrist? "It's the effort to understand and do away with every form of domination, and that involves questioning very basic institutions, including the division of labour and domestication upon which the whole edifice of civilisation and technology rests ... If you took away division of labour and domestication you might have something pretty close to what obtained for the first two million years of the species, during which there was leisure time, there was quite a lot of gender equality and no organised violence - which doesn't sound too bad. They say: 'Oh, you want to be a caveman.' Well, maybe that's somewhat true." ... "The idea of technology being a neutral, discreet thing and whoever is in charge can use it this way or that way, that's really missing the point. It's inseparable from the system, it's the incarnation of the system and it's always been that way. You can't take a totally alienating technology and use it for anything except more alienation, more destructive impact on every level from the psyche to the rest of the biosphere. Globalisation is a kind of buzz word at the moment and once again the lefties have come up with a soft core thing. Globalisation is nothing new; what's happening now is just the latest round of excesses." He does not, he says, "throw out all of Marx, the class struggle, all that we take for granted". But he includes in his condemnation "liberals, Marxists, members of left parties, Noam Chomsky, the anarchist left, the syndicalists, the Wobblies, all those people who think technology is fine and it just depends on how you use it and that there's nothing wrong with development and the industrial system, it just depends who's running it."<sup>47</sup>

There are really two varieties of globalisation: élite globalisation (which we oppose) and grassroots globalisation (which we promote). The top-down globalisation is characterised by a constant drive to maximise profits for globe-spanning corporations. It forces countries to 'open up' their national economies to large corporations, reduce social services, privatise state functions, deregulate the economy, be 'efficient' and

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45 Blanqui, cited in Geffroy, L'Enfermé, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 470.

46 Edouard d-Anglemont, L'Internationale, cited in Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 698.

47 *The Guardian*, 18 April 2001.

competitive, and submit everything and everyone to the rule of ‘market forces’. Because markets move resources only in the direction of those with money, social inequality has reached grotesque levels. But there is another kind of globalisation that centres on life values: protecting human rights and the environment. Grassroots globalisation comprises many large and growing movements: the fair trade movement, micro-enterprise lending networks, the movement for social and ecological labelling, sister cities and sister schools, citizen diplomacy, trade union solidarity across borders, worker-owned co-ops, international family farm networks, and many others ... Even George Soros, the billionaire financier, admits: ‘Markets basically are amoral.’<sup>48</sup>

‘[G]lobalization’ is not a new phase of capitalism, but a ‘rhetoric’ invoked by governments in order to justify their voluntary surrender to the financial markets and their conversion to a fiduciary conception of the firm. Far from being – as we are constantly told – the inevitable result of the growth of foreign trade, deindustrialization, growing inequality and the retrenchment of social policies are the result of *domestic political decisions* that reflect the tipping of the balance of class forces in favour of the owners of capital.<sup>49</sup>

From: classwarrior1926

Date: Sun Apr 29, 2001 8:11 pm

Subject: Re: Anarchist Origins of Mayday

All I can say is good job anarchism deals with the issues of patriarchy then isn't it..isn't it such a wonderfully liberational philosophy anarchism? All these other sectional philosophies pale into insignificance in comparison with it..ah, for an anarchic future, freedom to all the oppressed!!!..though since anarchy can trace its root to the taoists in china, did withes predate it?..dunno but with anarchy you are guaranteed freedom!! Embrace the truly libertarian philosophy!! For True Freedom Through Anarchy! CW1926<sup>50</sup>

In the absence of actual information about the May Day demonstrations they echo the self-fulfilling prophecy of the police - violent thugs have taken over and peaceful protesters are staying away, with the result that “ordinary people” and “families” will be too frightened to attend. A relentless media campaign over the past few weeks, coupled with increasingly aggressive police announcements, is plainly intended to divide anti-capitalist activists and criminalise protest. But “ordinary people” and “families” are the anti-capitalist movement. We are part of society, not apart from it. We are your neighbours, the people you sit next to on the bus, in the park, in the housing office.<sup>51</sup>

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48 Kevin Danaher, *The Observer*, 29 April 2001.

49 Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant (2001) ‘NewLiberalSpeak: Notes on the new planetary vulgate’, *Radical Philosophy*, 105: 2 (emphasis in original).

50 Email message posted to the mayday monopoly discussion group at [groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mayday-monopoly).

51 *The Guardian*, 16 April 2001.

The police have demonised May Day since the very first demonstrations were called in the 1880s, and if the police want a fight they're sure to get one, but that's not the point of the protest. The anti-capitalist movement is a broad coalition, and the wider the police's net is cast, the more "ordinary" people are caught in it. We have something to say and we're not frightened to make our voices heard.<sup>52</sup>

The idea of turning London into a life-sized Monopoly board on May Day sounded like a great idea to me. The most familiar criticism lobbed at modern protesters is that they lack focus and clear goals such as "Save the trees", or "Drop the debt". And yet these protests are a response to the limitations of single-issue politics. Tired of treating the symptoms of an economic model - under-funded hospitals, homelessness, widening disparity, exploding prisons, climate change - there is now a clear attempt to "out" the system behind the symptoms ... Let's call it McProtest, because it's becoming the same all over ... [O]ne of the greatest challenges of living in the high consumer culture that was protested against in London yesterday, is the reality of rootlessness. Few of us know our neighbours, talk about much more than shopping at work, or have time for community politics. How can a movement be accountable when communities are fraying? Within a context of urban rootlessness, there are clearly moments to demonstrate, but perhaps more importantly, there are moments to build the connections that make demonstration something more than theatre. There are times when radicalism means standing up to the police, but there are many more times when it means talking to your neighbour. The issues behind Tuesday's demonstrations are no longer marginal. Yet something is gravely wrong when the protests still seem deracinated, cut off from urgent daily concerns. It means that the spectacle of displaying a movement is getting confused with the less glamorous business of building one.<sup>53</sup>

There is the pin-up girl of the anti-globalisation movement, Naomi Klein, the author of the international bestseller *No Logo* which has itself become the international logo of the anti-globalisation movement. Miss Klein rages about how distinctive regional identities are being obliterated by a bland remote multinational homogeneity - and she does it through a column in Canada's *Globe And Mail*, reprinted in *The Guardian*.<sup>54</sup>

The logic of democracy is not a logic of the positivity of the social, and it is therefore incapable of founding a nodal point of any kind around which the social fabric can be reconstituted. But if the subversive moment of the logic of democracy and the positive moment of the institution of the social are no longer unified by any anthropological foundation which transforms them into the fronts and reverse sides of a single process, it follows clearly that every possible form of unity between the two is contingent, and is therefore itself the result of a process of articulation. This being the case, no hegemonic

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52 Jim Bradley, letter to *The Guardian*, 16 April 2001.

53 Naomi Klein, *The Guardian*, 3 May 2001.

54 Mark Steyn, *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 April 2001.

project can be based exclusively on a democratic logic, but must also consist of a set of proposals for the positive organization of the social.<sup>55</sup>

To put it plainly, much as I like expressing myself in images...: your life as apes, gentlemen, insofar as something of that kind lies behind you, cannot be farther removed from you than mine is from me. Yet everyone on earth feels a tickling at the heels; the small chimpanzee and the great Achilles alike.<sup>56</sup>

**discussion**

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55 Laclau, E. and C. Mouffe (1985) *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso, 188-189.

56 Franz Kafka, *A Report to an Academy*.