

ORGANISATION

WHAT IS 'ORGANISATION'? It's a vast subject so let's think about one kind of organisation relevant to anarchists. This is the 'Revolutionary Organisation'. Each kind of organisation has its own purpose enabling people to accomplish what they cannot individually, harnessing energy and resources in productive ways. However organisations are not pure rational constructs. They have their own culture, often obscured by formal structures. Strip away the theoretical organisation of states, corporations and political parties and you reveal the hierarchy, authority, fear and greed that is true organisation in a capitalist society. Because of this some anarchists reject not only the 'ordering' imposed on our minds by capitalist society but all forms of organisation. We in the ACF recognise the problems of organisation but accept that it is necessary both in and in achieving a libertarian society. What is important is to make organisations that reflect the ideas of anarchist communism in their own practice.

Determination and Solidarity

To create effective organisations we must know our own and other's minds, therefore there must be a high degree of communication, of sharing. We must set about creating aspiration, setting achievable targets, celebrating success, rededicating ourselves again and again to the reasons why we have formed or participate in the organisation. And because organisation is a mutual, sharing activity these things cannot be contained within one mind or merely thought but acted out and given a tangible existence through words and actions. At the same time, we must remain individuals, capable of independent and objective appraisal, not cogs in some vast machine.

What then is the purpose of 'revolutionary organisation'? Can it be described? Given that the need for revolution already exists, revolutionary organisation must increase the demand for revolution. It must increase the measurable 'weight' or 'force' of the resources joined to demand revolution. The structure must increase the ability of the organisation to perpetuate itself while its ends remain unrealised. It must increase the ability of the organisation to resist attack, by

increasing the determination and solidarity of members and by so arranging itself that damage caused to it (from external attacks, defections, internal conflicts and so on) are minimised. It must be flexible, be able to absorb or deflect change or challenges to it, have the ability to change or cease as circumstances dictate and the self-knowledge to initiate change when change is required. High levels of positive communication, mutual respect and celebration, shared aspirations and solidarity all describe the revolutionary organisation.

"Anarchism is organisation, organisation and more organisation", Malatesta

Creating a Revolutionary Structure

Anarchists in a free society will be self-ordering and society will be self-regulating. The organisations we construct will arise out of the needs of the moment, filtered by our knowledge and perceptions. Organisations, whether free associations, collectives, federations, communes or 'families' will be fluid and flexible but retain the ability to persist. They will be responsive to individual and social need. They will have a structure and culture matching the needs, beliefs

and purpose of members. They will not have the super-ordered, monolithic or divergent cultures of competition, fragmentation, subordination or conflict that exist within organisations today. Creating organisations that have a revolutionary structure is an act of revolution itself. The more we do it, successfully, the better we will be at making the revolution and the closer we will be to achieving revolution. But to be successful we have to learn far more about the nature of organisations, what is effective communication and how we respond to demands for change.

The ACF is one attempt to put these ideas into a practical form. We do not claim to have all the answers, but we are convinced that anarchist communism can only hope to make real progress as the leading idea in a united revolutionary movement. Working

as an organisation has made our interventions in the class struggle stronger and our ideas clearer than they could be alone or in local groups, and though we still have a long and hard road to travel, ever increasing co-ordination is unmistakably the way forward. A powerful revolutionary organisation will not come about by people simply agreeing with each other. Only through the dynamics of working together can we achieve the unity of activity and theory necessary to bring about a free and equal society.



ORGANISE!

FOR CLASS STRUGGLE ANARCHISM

ISSUE NO 42 SPRING 1996

60p (FREE TO PRISONERS)

10 YEARS OF THE ACF ORGANISING FOR RESISTANCE!



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SAME PRICE!

Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

Aims and Principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class.

Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real

class differences and achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow. Trade unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc.). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation for the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation.

We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method.

We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise of a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

infamous Poll Tax. Its mistake having been of attempting to attack our entire class head on.

Since then the attacks have continued, world-wide, as the ruling class has attempted to grind us further into the ground. But where there is oppression there is resistance.

The ACF has been reporting, analysing and, where our forces have allowed, actively participating in this resistance. Be it in the struggle against the Criminal Justice Act or against the Job Seekers Allowance, supporting workers in struggle or opposing the Asylum Bill. Those fights continue. We shall continue.

We shall continue to build our organisation despite the dark times our class is living through laying the bedrock for the emergence of a mass libertarian communist movement by bringing together working class militants nationally and internationally around our communist programme and communist organisation.

UPDATE ON THE JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE

SINCE LAST REPORTING on the Job Seekers Allowance in *Organise!* issue 40 and the realities of signing on under the current legislation, much has happened both inside and outside the dole office.

Inside

The new computer system known as Labour Market System (LMS), is up and running in the majority of offices, but remains to be connected nation-wide. LMS not only holds personal information about all claimants, such as interview history, it is the direct link to low paid jobs. The aim being to ensure that as many claimants as possible are forced into low paid jobs and off the register. LMS cuts out the middle-man, that being the job centre. It is a direct line to employers. That's all well and good if you choose to look for a job when you sign on and are well aware of the general shit jobs advertised through the job centre.

The introduction of LMS into the dole offices would appear to ensure that the preparations for JSA are well underway. This is motivated by the JSA implementation date of October 1996 and is aided by the performance related pay of dole office workers. However, those offices working towards JSA implementation ahead of the official implementation date, whilst unable to enact the JSA in terms of benefit criteria, are experiencing difficulties with LMS. Indeed LMS is proving to be a time consuming system. In some dole offices claimants are reported to be waiting over 1 hour just to sign on. The estimated reductions in staff, from 46,000 to 22,000 during 1996/7 will no doubt ensure that implementation of JSA is further complicated.

Outside

The recent dole office workers, Civil and Public Services No 42. Spring 1996

Association (CPSA) strike against management's pay offer brought limited media attention and the hope that the union would add to the sabotage of the implementation of the JSA currently underway. However the CPSA, officially opposed to the JSA, have remained primarily concerned with issues of pay. Its' opposition to the JSA has sadly gone no further than demands for the introduction of screens in dole offices, recognising that the JSA will be difficult to administer and that a backlash against the JSA will occur. Failing to recognise the environment that the construction of screens fosters, such as arrogant off handish behaviour on the part of staff towards claimants will ensure that the division between claimants and dole workers is reinforced.

Outside the dole office campaigning against the JSA is gathering momentum. Groundswell, best defined as loose network of autonomous groups and individuals united against the JSA has concentrated upon gathering information about the JSA, distributing and co-ordinating that information, and offering practical advice and support against the JSA. In practical terms groups and individuals have been involved in a variety of activities ranging from leafleting outside dole offices to the occupation of Restart courses and Job Plan Workshops in both Brighton and London. Central to Groundswells' campaign against the JSA, and the distinguishing factor between Groundswell and other campaigns such as the TUC's 'Jobs not JSA', is Groundswells' opposition to the idea of the 'right to work' and to have a 'good job'. Groundswell is organised around the idea of 'no wage slavery, no dole slavery', offering a critique of the work ethic so beloved of the left.



Guilty! Of believing that a trade union would actually do something for you

Arrangements for the next Groundswell, to be held in Sheffield, are currently underway. Information about this meeting and local and national campaigning can be obtained by writing to;

Groundswell
c/o Claimants Action Group
Princes Street
Oxford
OX4 1HU

Autonomous Centre of
Edinburgh
c/o Peace and Justice
St Johns
Princes Street
Edinburgh

or directly to the ACF at
c/o 84b Whitechapel High
Street
London
E1 7QU

Project Work

FROM THE 1ST of April the government has been piloting what it calls "Project Work". In the pilot areas claimants aged between 18 and 50 who have been unemployed for two or more years may be put onto project work at Restart Interviews.

Project Work will consist of two parts. The first part is 13 weeks of "help" in getting a job. This will probably mean restart courses, jobplan workshops, training for work and pressure to take any crap job.

If the claimant is still unemployed after 13 weeks this will be followed by 13 weeks of compulsory work. For this

work the claimant will only receive £10 on top of their usual income support. Failure to turn up for this compulsory work will result in loss of benefit. In fact the much harsher Job Seekers Allowance sanctions will be used even though the JSA is not due to be implemented until October. This means complete withdrawal of benefit for two weeks for the first refusal and for four weeks on the second refusal. Hardship payments are unlikely to be made during this period, so people will be left with no money at all.

The community action program has now been scrapped and it looks as if the government is looking to project work to replace it. The initial pilot in Medway and Hull will effect about 6,000 claimants, however, if the scheme is extended across the country it would effect about 370,000 claimants.

This is a major step towards workfare, where people are forced to do work before they are eligible for benefit. This is another attempt to force people into low paid jobs but will also effect the labour market by providing a large reserve of workers doing work for minimal wages.

The governments says 'for those who have lost heart or motivation, it may be just the impetus they need'. In reality it is another kick in the teeth for those who have already been demoralised by the effects of dole and wage slavery.

Editorial

WELCOME TO *ORGANISE!* 42, celebrating the first 10 years of the Anarchist Communist Federation. In 1986 when the ACF was launched the old 'advanced guard' of the industrial working class in Britain had taken a serious beating. The steel workers and miners had been defeated, the later after a fierce strike of over a years duration. After attending the founding conference of the ACF the assembled delegates joined the massed picket of News International at Wapping. Another struggle that felt the full weight of the state thrown against it, led to defeat by the unions despite the combativity of the pickets.

Since then we've seen our class suffer a series of defeats whilst fighting a retreating defensive battle, misled and sabotaged by its 'leaders' at every turn. The state had increased its powers at our expense and in this time has received only one notable bloody nose - when its forces were resisted during the imposition of the

THE MAD COW OF THE MARKET

WHATEVER THE LONG-TERM effects of BSE, whether or not a mass epidemic of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) does break out, some things are clear.

Regulations for the production of animal feed were changed, with no safety regulations and above all to cut costs.

Professor Richard Lacey - who was ignored and portrayed as eccentric - has for years been warning that between 5,000 and 500,000 people may die of the infection over the next 20-30 years. Similarly Dr. Harash Narang who devised a test to detect BSE in live cows was castigated by the government as a crank. Public health experts were kept off the government committee set up to look into the crisis. Scientists who were investigating BSE, who began

by talking about the dangers of eating British beef, have been silenced. Independent scientists have been denied information on the CJD outbreak which so far has claimed 12 lives.

Research to find out how widespread BSE is in the British herds has been refused funding by the Government, which up till now is still hedging its bets about slaughtering herds where BSE has been found.

The Government keeps repeating that British beef is safe, when there are strong indications that this is not so. Ironically, the beef scare has reduced prices, so that some poorer working class families who ate it as a luxury once in a while, have been buying it. At the same time, the prices of pork, lamb and poultry have

been raised to cash in on the scare.

Meanwhile 6,500 workers in abattoirs have been laid off, with the possibility of redundancies on the farms and in the processing plants. These workers will be added to the millions already out of work.

The Conservatives intend standing by the farmers. As their electoral support dwindles in sectors of society that have traditionally voted Conservative, they believe they can still count on the support of the farmers and landowners. Membership of the Conservative Party among these is high. However, the Conservatives are under pressure from the National Farmers Union and the Country Landowners Association, as well as the food producers, to

provide compensation. The potential millions that could be forked out would mean that they would find it very difficult to grant tax cuts as a vote-buying ploy.

Labour have, as usual been pathetic in offering no serious criticisms of the beef crisis. Their eyes too are on getting some of the rural vote. They don't want to go out of their way to alienate the farmers, and in the process be labelled as "unpatriotic".

As crisis after crisis appears, whether it be pollution of the rivers, water shortage, traffic congestion, the return of diseases like TB on a mass scale or food contamination, it becomes abundantly clear that the filthy system of profit is effecting every sphere of life.

THE END OF THE CEASE-FIRE AND THE POLITICS OF INTER-IMPERIALIST RIVALRY

NOWHERE IN THE world are the power politics of inter-imperialist rivalry more sordid and machiavellian than in the relationship between all the players in the act known as the 'peace process' presently being performed in Belfast, Dublin, Washington and London.

This particular series (presented to us by New World Order plc.) is showing regularly on a T.V. screen near you but we also saw explosive live performance in Canary Wharf on February 9th, with deadly consequences.

After almost 18 months of prevarication, stalling and what amounted to provocation from the British State, the IRA have been forced to apply a little pressure on Major and co., in the form of a large explosion in the British capital. Although the IRA cease-fire officially ended on February 9th, it would be wrong to see this as a return to the 'war of liberation' which the Provo's had been engaged in prior to the cease-fire. Although security has, understandably, been tightened in 'nationalist' areas, the

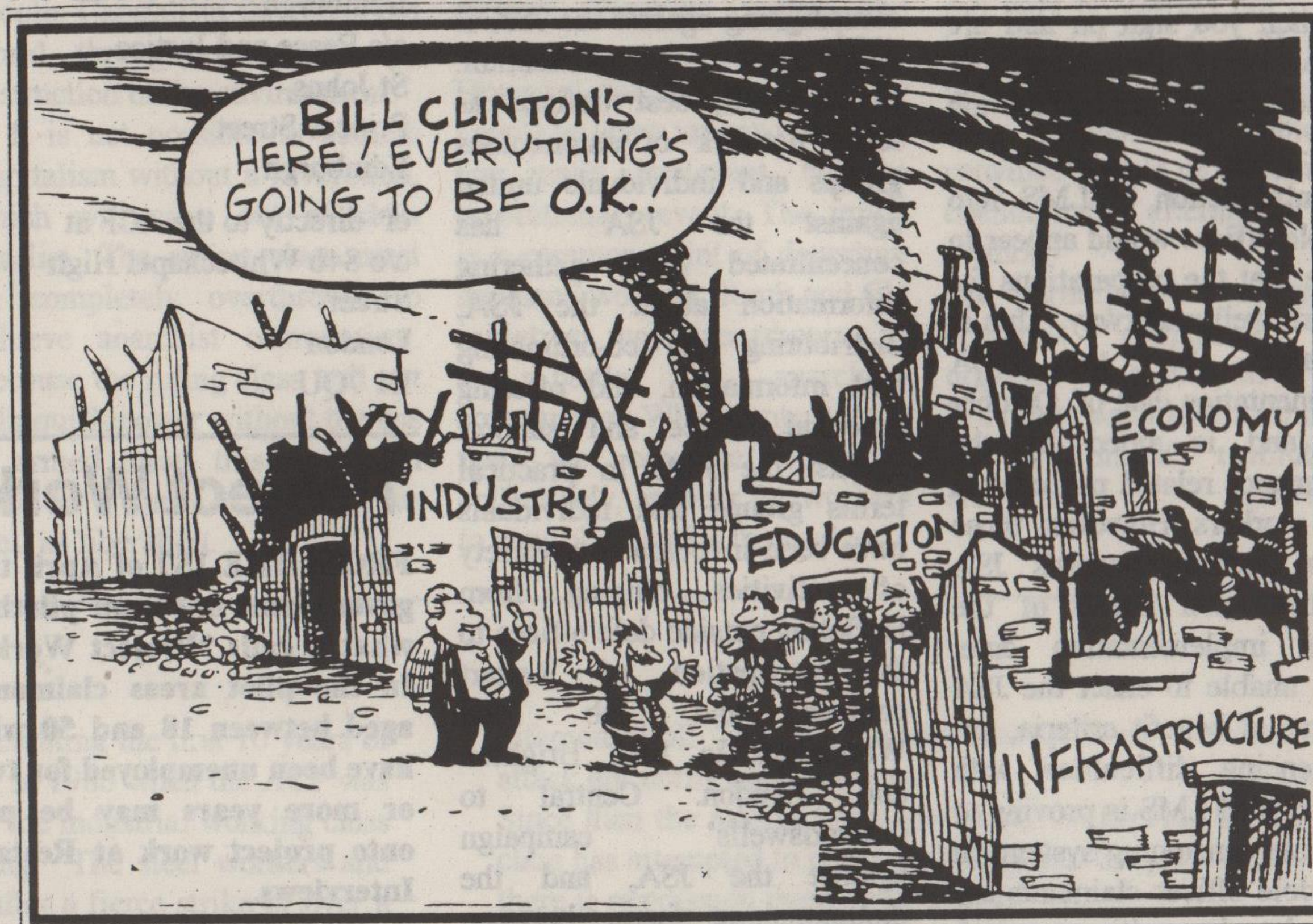
republican movement has not been put on a war-footing. 'War News' has not returned to the pages of An Phoblacht/Republican News and the 'unarmed strategy' has not been dumped.

Criticism

The Canary Wharf bomb and the ostensible return to armed

struggle has served a twofold purpose. One, it has reminded the British state that the IRA has not gone away and that it is not amused by the British tactic of chancing its luck. Two, it has delayed any potential split in republican ranks caused by the minimal tangible benefit accrued from the unarmed strategy by showing its

preparedness to engage the enemy. The response within the republican movement to internal criticism of the bombing has been to rally behind the Army Council in the safe knowledge that on June 10th, talks which will require not the prior decommissioning of IRA weapons but a commitment (total and absolute,



of course) to the "principles of democracy and non-violence", will include Sinn Fein.

Although the British have now confirmed these talks, they have also remained committed to elections, called for 30th May, to a peace forum. The elections will feature a new, hybrid, electoral system which guarantees not simply a Unionist majority but representation for 'fringe' candidates potentially helpful to British interests, such as the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party. Opposition to this election exists amongst Sinn Fein, particularly at grassroots level, which would favour a boycott if the SDLP would join them, but as Gerry Adams says "we live in the real world" and the elections are Sinn Fein's 'formal' invite to the talks on June 10th after all. What bothers Sinn Fein is that the Pan-Nationalist front already has an 'electoral mandate' and that democracy, a trademark of new World Order plc., is being used against them at a time when they find it difficult to say no. And on it goes...

Peace Farce

The response of the British left has been in predictable, as the 'hardest' of the Leninist left (for example the Communist Party of Great Britain) defend the bombings (often whilst criticising the 'petit-bourgeois' politics of Sinn Fein) in the name of anti-imperialism and the defence of the right to national self-determination. They have taken great pleasure in berating the softies of Militant Labour and the SWP for their condemnation of the IRA but the Leninists, hard or soft, as usual, miss the point completely.

The present peace farce being enacted over the heads of the working class of Britain and Ireland is the product of a conflict not between an intransigent British state dedicated, at all costs, to maintaining its military presence in the six counties and an anti-imperialist movement operating, somehow,

independently, but between the long-term economic (and short-term) political interests of US

imperialism and the same interests of its erstwhile little buddy, British imperialism.

As we have stated before (see *Organise!* No.36 'Processed Peace - the IRA and Cease-fire and the Pax Americana'), following the end of the cold war the price of continued conflict in the six counties is no longer worth it to the British state. When the Brits talk about no longer having any strategic interests it is stating fact. Even as a counter-insurgency/military training ground it's no longer required now it has Bosnia. It wants out, militarily. Economically, however, it wants to reap the benefits of demilitarization-multi(trans)national investment in the north, which could follow 'peace' (i.e. an absence of war, instability and economic draining of resources). On a domestic level it unfortunately has the baggage of the unionists, not least their present importance in parliament. The US too wants 'peace' and for the very same reasons. The northern and indeed, southern working classes are seen as having potential for super-exploitation, 3rd-world style, by both sides. But since both Britain and the US have national interests they are both keen to be No.1 in exploiting the potential. The question is who will get in their hardest and heaviest, the US or the Anglo-Europeans?

Sinn Fein has naturally backed America in this struggle. This is quite obvious with its opening of a mission in Washington, its very own "voice on the hill" and its dropping of silly talk of a united socialist Ireland. The republican movement's rank and file is now asked to move heaven and earth for...a place at the negotiating table. It's rather short of 'Ireland united and free' but it's an opportunity that cannot be ignored.

Independence

Sinn Fein, of course, is only being realistic. It really has no alternative but to take the part of

ACF pamphlets in Serbo-Croat

Thanks to the efforts of comrades in Yugoslavia we now have translations of our pamphlets *As We See It* and *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* available in Serbo-Croat.

If you know anybody who speaks Serbo-Croat in Britain, or you have contacts in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Slovenia or Macedonia where Serbo-Croat is understood then why not send them copies. They are available for 50p plus post from the London ACF address c/o 84b Whitechapel High St. London E1 7QX.

Similarly we have a Greek translation of *As We See It*. If you can circulate this among the Greek speaking population here, or you have contacts in Greece or Cyprus, then why not send for a copy? 50p plus post from London address. (A Portuguese translation of our *Aims and Principles* is also available for 20p plus postage).

one imperialism against the other. Independence, national liberation is impossible and the leadership of all such movements know it. The task now is to get the best deal available and even the best, in the case of Ireland, isn't looking like very much at all.

It should also be born in mind that if the Loyalist paramilitaries, or a faction of them, respond to the IRA 'resumption' of bombings on the 'mainland' (sic) then there is always the possibility of a return, against the wishes of the Republican and Loyalist political leadership, to sectarian slaughter. And rest assured there are Loyalist militants gagging at the bit for a fight to the finish. And rest assured also that it will be working class people who will be on the receiving end, as usual.

Peace of the Graveyard

So, what is in this dismal Peace Process for workers? Well if we keep passively sitting watching channel new world order plc. then its going to be less and less. At bottom, only class struggle can screw-up the plans of the various bourgeoisie's who plan our futures. One way or the other the only real peace the ruling classes offer us is the peace of the graveyard. Unless the working class of Ireland can unify itself in opposition to all the imperialist forces and impose its own interests then the choice will be between this cemetery peace and peaceful

exploitation by 'native' or foreign bosses.

With increasing numbers in both sides of the community looking for revolutionary answers it is, as ever, the task of Irish Libertarians to forge an organisation that can offer them an alternative.

Friends and Neighbours



If you like what you read in *Organise!* you might be interested in these publications:

Counter Information.

Quarterly newsheet produced by independent collective. Information on struggle worldwide. Free copy with SAE from Pigeonhole C1, c/o 11 Forth St, Edinburgh EH1, Scotland.

Subversion. Quarterly

magazine of group of same name, with politics close to ours. Free copy from Dept 10, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW.

Contraflow

Bulletin of the European Counter Network. For free copy send SAE to 56a Info Shop, 56 Crampton Street London SE17

WHAT A CARVE-UP! THE "END" OF THE WAR IN EX-YUGOSLAVIA

WE HAVE ANALYSED in detail the situation in ex-Yugoslavia over the last few years in previous issues of *Organise!* It's time now to take a look at the "peace" engineered by the West, above all the influence of the US, the various manoeuvres of the different nationalist leaders, whether they be Croat, Serb or Bosnian Muslim, as well as the attitude of the left and extreme left in Britain.

The peace agreement has been imposed under great pressure from the US. Three and a half years of civil war in Bosnia, have left at least 200,000 dead, many others maimed and mutilated and mentally scarred, mass rapes of women and girls, the devastation of many towns and villages, and millions of refugees scattered all over ex-Yugoslavia. The region of Bosnia is now divided into two-the Croat-Muslim federation and the Republic of Srpska controlled by the Bosnian Serb nationalists. Depending on what is decided by the West, this may further be carved-up with Serbia annexing Srpska and Croatia seizing much of Bosnia, leaving a rump Bosnian Muslim statelet.

The United Nations troops in occupation in ex-Yugoslavia already allowed carve-ups of territory. The United Nations troops stood by and allowed the Bosnian Serb militarists under Radovan Karadzic to invade the 'safe havens' of Zepa and Srebrenica, as a result of which 8,000 Bosnian Muslims were slaughtered and many others forced to flee. In a move backed by both the US and Germany, the Croatian leader Tudjman sent his army into the Serb-controlled area of Krajina, forcing 200,000 Croatian Serbs to run for their lives. At the end of this bloody month, August 1995, the Clinton administration approved joint NATO/UN actions under the pretext of raising the siege of Sarajevo. For 2 weeks NATO warplanes and the artillery from the Rapid Reaction Force



bombarded Bosnian Serb positions, destroying ammo dumps, telecommunications systems and gun emplacements. There were more than 3,200 air sorties, tons of bombs were dropped, and American warships fired Cruise missiles. Many Bosnian towns and villages were devastated, hundreds of civilians killed and wounded.

This allowed the Croatian army, in tandem with Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat forces, to overrun Serb-held areas of north-west Bosnia. Again this offensive involved thousands of dead and wounded and another 125,000 refugees fled north to Banja Luka.

Stage-managed

The US thus stage-managed the greatest acts of ethnic cleansing that have so far occurred during the Bosnian civil war. Asserting itself over its European allies, the US carved up Bosnia into separate Bosnian, Serbian and Muslim enclaves. 60,000 NATO troops will enforce the peace.

Slobodan Milosevic, the leader of Serbia, Tudjman and the Bosnian President Izetbegovic were summoned to the US Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio to rubber-stamp the deal. The US will give economic concessions

pursuing their own interests in the Balkans.

Any idea that the USA has fixed the Balkans for good should be forgotten. Tensions still continue with the main areas of the former Republic of Macedonia, aggravating conflicts between Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. Tension continues to mount between Turkey and Greece. Also important are the rivalries between the Allied Great Powers themselves. One indication of this is the unilateral French bombing raid on the Bosnian Serb headquarters of Pale, without prior consultation with NATO. This highlights the differing interests of the various European powers and of the US, as they attempt to establish their own particular spheres of influence in the area, and beyond into the former Soviet Union and its ex-satellites. They all want a slice of the pie, as new capitalist markets start opening up.

What about the left, both in Britain and throughout the world? Some of them, the Stalinists and those who have traditionally tail-ended the Stalinists, backed Serbia. For instance the Morning Star wrote approvingly of Serb victories. Others took up the idea of a multi-ethnic Bosnia, as something worth defending, deliberately forgetting about the particular class interests of the ruling elite, the bureaucrats and the military. The Bosnian leadership is just as much interested in opening up ex-Yugoslavia to the market as are the other leaders.

Contortions

This support for Bosnia as somehow better than the other sides, involved these leftists in all sorts of contortions. When Croatia allied with Bosnia to attack the Serbs, Workers Press, the paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party, drooled over the Croat victories, talking about the Bosnian people's "gratitude for the Croat soldiers' bold victory". It was conveniently forgotten that these

No 42, Spring 1996

6 *Organise!*

bold soldiers were responsible for massacres against Bosnian Serbs and, indeed, Bosnian Muslims! Bosnian military leaders touring Britain were cheered by the likes of the WRP and Workers Power. You got the glorious situation of self-proclaimed "internationalists" leaping from their seats to give a high ranking general, a militarist and class enemy, a standing ovation! Both the WRP through their front Workers Aid for Bosnia, and Socialist Outlook through its International Workers Aid, have established toady relations with representatives of the Izetbegovic regime.

There is a danger that some anarchists might be drawn into this circus under the banner of "anti-fascism", tail-ending the WRP, Workers Power and Socialist Outlook. For our part, we refuse to take sides with any of the capitalist States carved out of ex-Yugoslavia. In practical terms this means any effort to establish links between the working classes, be they Croat, Serb, Muslim, Albanian, or Gypsy. We support any strike against austerity programmes launched by any of these States, and any anti-militarist

Internationally, NATO/UN intervention and bombing was enthusiastically supported by a host of "radicals"-the same people who, decades before, had

denounced the US military intervention and bombings in Indo-China. From Susan Sontag to our old "friend" Daniel Cohn-Bendit, all these born again apologists for US imperialism gave a hearty thumbs-up.

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Africa Calling!

Comrades of the Nigerian Anarchist organisation the Awareness League are writing a new book *Anarchist Critique of Military Dictatorships in Africa*. They need any information, in English, on this subject. Please send them this if you can. The first book published by the League African Anarchism will soon be published.

Send all info to : Samuel Mbah (Do NOT mention Awareness League!)

PO Box 1920

Enugu, Enugu State,

NIGERIA

Fax: 234-42-250167

mobilisation against any further reality the building of new war moves. We encourage the national States thoroughly development of revolutionary committed to capitalism) and Anarchist groups and "anti-fascism" we advance the organisations throughout ex-ideas of international solidarity. Yugoslavia. Against the false ideas of "self-determination" (in

DIARY OF AN ANARCHIST COMMUNIST ROAD PROTESTER

Numerous anarchist communist militants have been involved in the resistance at Newbury, as they are at other road-building projects. Here, one comrade shares his experiences and impressions.

Fluffy Heaven

We get a good crowd together but problems at home force people to drop out. Five are left ranging Freedom Network Fluffy to anarchist communist (me). Arrive in Newbury late afternoon. After touring the countryside find the 'visitors camp' following the map and directions sent out from the Third Battle of Newbury group and clued up from the Friends of The Earth Internet sites. The visitors camp is on a friendly farmer's land just off the A34 and consists of a small office, cooking area, dishwashing area, wood-cutting area, large communal bender and planning office (another bender!).

We entered the Camp to the sound of drums, fiddles, whistles, tired, dirty faces and no conversation. After a while a 'non-violent direct action' workshop was announced for new arrivals and I found myself in Fluffy Heaven. Monica (local drama lecturer) took charge and the overriding theme was save trees (not people) - a blinkered, single-issue night where new recruits are told in no uncertain terms the acceptable scope of action. The workshop did answer the right questions for newcomers: security and police violence, bust-sheets, preparations for getting into and staying up trees. It explained current tactics

No 42, Spring 1996

and police strategies and gave the overall picture: 9 camps established, one on 48 hours notice of eviction and in desperate need of support. Many tree houses built over 9 miles of rural Berkshire, trees spiked and marked for chainsaw operators, tunnels with props for protestors to D-Lock onto - if they're pulled out, out come the props and Later by the camp fire I discussed 'alternative' action with a protester who had spent several weeks on-site. He was keen to establish a team to sabotage the guard's coaches (with which I agreed) but I had to hit the sack when other people started screaming at him for such potentially ruinous proposals. Autonomy...

Direct Action

Most people were asleep early as it is most effective for tree-dwellers to be up, fed, watered and ready to fill available transport once the message has come over the CB where the contractors are going to hit. The aim is to delay start of work by getting ahead of the game. Surprisingly, several coaches and police convoy can be hard to spot in a network of country lanes! Chaos descends (on them!) and the hierarchy of a modern security company starts to overload. Red helmets screech orders, yellow helmets manage the muddle in the middle, the white helmets at the bottom just stand in a line looking bored (although mid-day brings out the doggy-bags and a few smiles). Worst are the green helmets, Brays Private Detective Agency, hired by the Government just to compile lists of protestors. Arrive on time

and you get stuck in, arrive late and you're relegated to a support role throwing supplies into the trees - a difficult job with security cordons around them. The cordons move on once a tree has been felled. I saw one red helmet trying to drag a woman out of a small tree. Not allowed (!) but he only stopped when Julian Cope and a swarm of journos arrived. I asked Cope if he'd be climbing any trees. No, he only had limited time and would rally the troops with cider and tobacco.

Some protestors shout abuse from close range at the robotic security guards, a tactic frowned on but people also make jokes at the guards expense and some even laugh at themselves. It's this maybe that has led several to defect to the protestors or simply chuck the job. Everybody is filming everybody else. I was caught by surprise by a camera in some bushes! Shouting at guards just brings Brays and police evidence gathering teams (they have EG on their jackets, very hush-hush). At the moment the strategy is to avoid a massive police clampdown as progress has been slow and the battle could be extended for another twelve months. There is no doubt that these actions bring delay and therefore increase the cost to the contractors, forcing them to think twice before tendering for further work.

Unfortunately we couldn't visit all the camps and speak to the residents. The majority were middle-class with a fair amount of punks, travellers and homeless, a few

Organise! 7

marginally class-conscious. Equality and Co-operation through Direct Action did open things up. Mention of the Job-Seekers Allowance led to a lively camp fire discussion. As for the future of Direct Action in the anti-road/car culture struggle, I believe the hard core of protestors will continue undeterred even though facing lack of support during cold weather and increasing attacks via surveillance, benefit withdrawals and arrest. However, the collective buzz, on-

site entertainment etc make a trip worthwhile.

Anarchist Communist Consciousness

Anarchists and those genuinely committed to bringing about a libertarian society should not write off such protests. The communal meals, necessary co-operation, mutual aid and support create a good vibe we should be building on. Anarchists should be opposing the expansion of

capitalist markets and structures by spreading ideas to sympathetic ears. Perhaps out of the 'hordes' of anarchists at Newbury (according to the media!), an anarchist-communist consciousness will develop. Although the Greens and Friends Of The Earth are running the show and stealing the glory from the Newbury protest, I feel many of the resident tree dwellers are likely to move on to spikier forms of protest.

MILITANT ECO-ACTION

THE FOLLOWING IS an article sent to us by Andy, an ecological activist involved with the Flat Oak Society, a direct-action orientated environmentalist group based in Kent. We are publishing it as we feel it opens up some interesting debates on the nature of the present activist green movement, particularly those around opposition to road building.

We welcome comment from our readers.

THE DIRECT ACTION environmental movement in the UK has got its act together. Growing from being small isolated groups protesting against road schemes and mining operations, with their only goal being to cost the companies responsible as much as possible, now there is talk of real opportunities for damaging schemes to be stopped.

Earth First!'s recent Whatley Quarry action was well organised, planned and executed. £250,000 of criminal damage was reported to have been done and twenty metres of railway track 'disappeared'; the control panel for video monitoring of the plant fell apart and a 2 story crane pulled itself to bits; 3 control rooms dismantled themselves and several diggers and conveyor belts 'broke down'(1). Newbury has been an inspiration with direct action stopping security getting to work. Thames Valley Police have estimated the policing costs of the whole protest may be £12,000,000! Protests at the Thanet Way have cost the council about £8,000,000; 1.3 million on fencing; 3 million on security and approximately 4 million on delayed work. The last eighteen months have seen the three largest post-World War Two evictions, at Claremont Road, Stanworth Valley and Brighenlys. The arguments being put forward by the anti-roads movement (in particular) are very encouraging. Gone are the arguments that you shouldn't put this road here simply because it will destroy beautiful countryside. Along with this attitude was



a deep-rooted 'cosmic' consciousness; Mother Earth would avenge herself on the earth-rapists, even going so far as to striking down chainsaw operators at Twyford Down! Nice idea though... Now roads have been put in a social context. Claremont Road was a reclaimed, car-free zone, room to show what a radically changed world might be like. Reclaim The Streets have continued this message, with their enormously successful Street Parties. Selar and Brynhellys' success was because of strong local support. They only had this level of support because the open-cast mines were criticised in the context of deep-mine closures as well as environmental destruction.

To a certain extent this shift in attitude is a response to the state's attacks on the movement. With increasing arrests and prison sentences since the Criminal Justice Act was passed, eco-activists have been forced to question the whole system. There is a growing awareness that it is Capitalism's nature to pollute and destroy the environment. For a long time the police were seen to be really 'impartial keepers of the peace'. This is being replaced with open hostility and defiance of the law. When people were arrested at

Whatley Quarry and in Glastonbury at the Survival of the Tribes (2) activists attempted to block the police vans and sabotaged their vehicles.

Single Issue

Environmental concern is no longer seen as a single issue. To many activists in the eco-action movement 'the environment' now means man's (sic) environment as well as saving the natural world. Earth First! UK have adopted a more social analysis, organising around the Job Seekers Allowance and prisoner support, particularly MOVE prisoners in the USA. The Earth Liberation Front's annual Earth Nights in October calls for economic sabotage to all environmentally damaging projects, fascists and oppressive employers and institutions. The Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Group is "an International network for prisoners of conscience, be they fighting for Earth, Human or Animal Liberation, those basically are attempting to save the planet from self-destruction". The ELP editorial sets out a very good analysis, "we at ELP believe that we all have a common enemy, i.e. multinationals, big business, state control, fascism, call it what you will,

each wants power, and pursues this selfish interest to the detriment of others"(3).

But with the rise of support and success of the movement came the predictable political leeches. For once it was not Militant or the SWP who tried to hijack the protests, but liberal green groups like FOE, Greenpeace and the Green Party. When Twyford Down was being defended Friends of the Earth (FOE) said they could not support breaking the law and condemned the protesters. Now they are throwing money and support at Newbury. While many of their members are genuinely supportive and involved in the campaigns, it is hard not to be cynical about their change of attitude. Was the growing support for EF! draining FOE's membership and therefore income?

Greenpeace have always been about a team of hand-picked (and paid!) activists doing daring actions. Individual members are expected to pay their dues, turn up to a few media friendly stunts and organise fund-raising. They are not allowed to campaign on any issues except for official Greenpeace ones, such as their blatantly xenophobic 'NON!' campaign against French nuclear testing.

Recently a meeting was held between FOE, Greenpeace and leading members of Road Alert!, EF! and Reclaim The Streets. It was agreed that Greenpeace and FOE would help and support the other groups more in the future. While this may be seen as those groups going 'soft', none of the people involved in the meetings are

'leaders' of any groups. The loose network nature of EF! etc. means that it contains a whole range of opinions, from reformist to revolutionary. So these meetings only indicate the opinions of the individuals involved. Most of the activists neither sanctioned or agreed with any part of it.

Prejudice

Unfortunately there are too few people prepared to get involved in environmental actions and offer a class based revolutionary analysis of society to counter FOE etc. There is a lot of prejudice on the anarchist 'side' against environmental activists. They sneer at what they see as 'fluffy' actions and tactics, when if they talked to those involved, they would find a surprising level of militancy (4). Not all anti-roads protesters are drum-banging, stoned hippies, this is 'just' one of the media images of them (mainly the liberal media i.e. Guardian, Independent), and anarchists fall for this bullshit! It is nearly always the working-class who suffer most from environmental destruction, so why aren't we organising around these issues? A lot of radical 'eco-activists' show interest when offered a coherent analysis of capitalism and the class system. But we are in danger of losing ground to the ideas of FOE and Greenpeace. Get out there, get involved, get talking to people and spreading anarchist ideas. A huge breach has appeared in capitalism's 'armour' due to EF! and others, we must exploit this

weakness and use it to attack capitalism further.

Footnotes

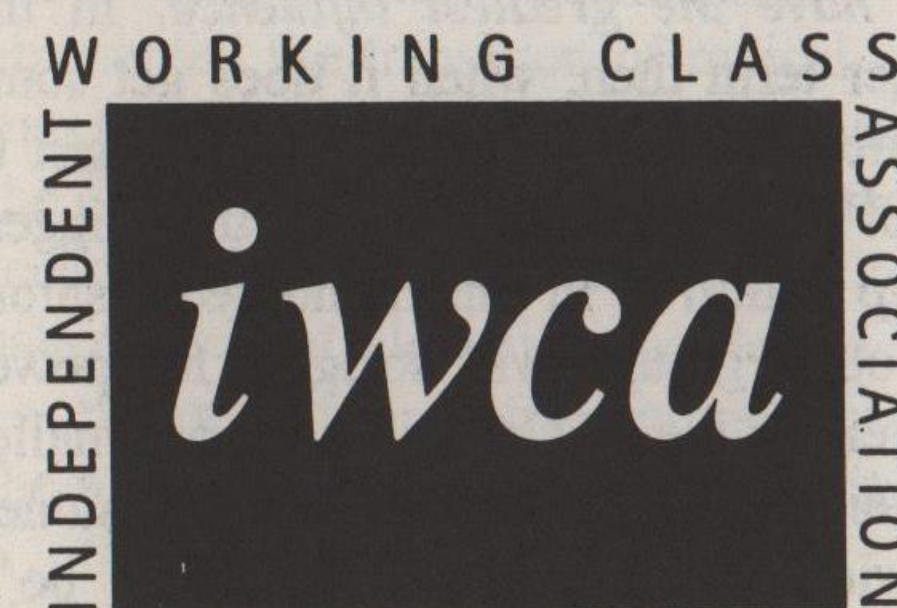
(1) EF! Action Update. NO 23, December 1995. Available from Action Update PO Box 7, Cardiff, CF2 4XX, send a SAE.

(2) Survival of the Tribes was a gathering and meeting of environmental protesters in September 1995. The local cops were spoiling for a fight, as were the local beer boys. Hassle started on the high street between protesters, cops and the local heavies. Seven people were arrested, so everyone sat down in front of the cop van and the cops started getting heavy. More people sat down, including shoppers and their kids. The Bristol riot cops were then called in.

(3) Earth Liberation Prisoners, Spring 1995. Contact ELP c/o Box 23, % High Street, Glastonbury, Somerset.

(4) There has been loads of controversy in the anarchist press about 'Keep it Fluffy' leaflet distributed at an anti-CJA demonstration. The leaflet was the work of one individual and distributed by the Freedom Network, only due to them being (in part) a distribution group. Anyone could have easily put out a 'Keep it Spiky' leaflet through them! Too much time and energy has been wasted arguing about this and other pathetic issues. It would be far more productive and much less damaging to just treat this leaflet with contempt and put energy into something more useful.

GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION- TURMOIL ON THE LEFT



THE ACF HAS always argued that the Labour Party is little more than an expression of the interests of a faction of the ruling class. With the launching of New Labour this is now more evident than ever. Various sections of the Left are now re-aligning in attempts to fill the political void - i.e. to claim to speak for the working class and to win our votes. Last *Organise!* featured analysis of Arthur Scargill's new baby, the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), which is still rooted in the old fashioned belief that socialist trade unionism, with the appropriate political support, can turn things around

for the working class. In response, new initiatives by Militant, Workers Revolutionary Party Workers Press and others concentrate on political manoeuvring to win over the class.

However, one of the new groupings is of special interest to anarchist communists, because its political orientation and structure appears to reflect many of our own priorities. The Independent Working Class Association (IWCA) is an alliance of individual activists and sponsor groups (mainly political organisations). It says that it is for working class self-activity, that it will expose redundant Labourism and workplace based politics, and that it is in favour of a 'bottom up' structure in which all its members can participate equally. Is this an organisation which we should be joining? After all, one of the organisations which founded it, Anti-Fascist Action (AFA), has already shown itself willing and able to defeat the racist class enemy on the streets - surely an

indication that the IWCA is not all mouth and bureaucracy like most of the Left. The other main founder of the IWCA is Red Action (RA). They split from the party hacks in the Socialist Workers Party in order to pursue pro-working class politics. Unlike most of the Left they also recognise that the potential power base of the class no longer lies solely in the workplace but, arguably, predominantly in the community.

Unholy Alliance

But there are real problems with the IWCA. The most obvious of these is its lack of a political programme. It sees this as a positive virtue in that it will prevent it being dominated politically by any one group. But what good is a political organisation without a basic programme or a set of aims and principles? Without these, it is merely a protest group. In reality, the lack of political discussion conceals the fact that the unholy alliance

of groups which comprise the IWCA will be incapable of working together on any long term basis. Genuine working class activists who are opposed to party politics, capitalism and the state will surely grow disillusioned with putting time and energy into working with most of them. Most of the sponsors are Leninist opportunists who will use the IWCA as a recruiting ground. For example, the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), are orthodox Leninists who will not tolerate anything which conflicts with their own party organisation, and will join any faction under the sun if it means they can recruit. Open Polemic an internal faction of the CPGB, and Partisan are also ex-Communist Party Leninists. The Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), will no doubt be arguing that the IWCA support the Cuban 'social revolution'!

Anti-Fascist Action

AFA's declared reason for its involvement is in order to be able to offer a practical alternative to many working class people who may vote for the fascist British National Party (BNP) because they feel betrayed by Labour (rather than because they are inherently racist). In the past AFA, in order to preserve unity and effectiveness, was a single issue anti-fascist organisation, but its paper Fighting Talk is now stating its need for a politically Leftist agenda, which it hopes the IWCA will provide. But to tell working class people that voting for some minority Left candidate in opposition to Labour and the BNP will improve the shit in which they live, is only to play the state's game. AFA aren't doing this for the cynical reasons for which politicians and the rest of the Left do it, to build their party's power base, they are doing it to stop fascist candidates getting in at election time. But it is a diversion from where many in AFA know the real fight lies.

Whatever the working class credentials of Red Action, they represent a vanguardist tendency which is common to most Left groupings. Whereas Anarchist Communists emphasise the need for



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working class 'self-organisation', RA emphasise the need for 'an organisation' to represent the working class. They are unconditionally pro-Republican on the Irish question, a position anarchists do not consider either anti-capitalist or pro-working class. Yet, in their aims and principles they extol the virtues of *working class self activity*. This phrase also features heavily in IWCA literature, but so does the rather dubious assertion that *working class militants, on joining, would form the bridgehead between the IWCA as a political opposition within the Left and the working class proper*. RA and the IWCA, it would seem, view 'the organisation' as something outside the working class. So is the class to be active on its own behalf? Or is it to be represented by militants acting within already established political boundaries? In truth, the IWCA concept of self-activity is a far cry from the anarchist communist one. Although the IWCA does not actually define the sort of society it wishes to create, we can assume that RA will assert their own view of a workers paradise which, they state, is *democratic authority, not the abolition of authority*. And RA are also correct in saying that this *most perfect democracy would be regarded by anarchists as authoritarian*. In the absence of a political programme, the IWCA cannot blame us for looking at the agendas of its component parts for an idea of what kinds of politics it will eventually adopt, and it looks like this will be a variety of militant, activist, born-again (non-Trotskyist) Leninism.

Political Party

The IWCA's 'bottom up' structure is designed, whether cynically or naively, so that once the organisation picks up more individual members than political sponsors, policy will be determined by democratic process. That is to say, whichever tendency, party or faction in the IWCA can get most members to a meeting will get their way, whether or not their ideas are best. This is what is wrong with democracy. Organisations like the ACF have long ago recognised this, but the IWCA states unashamedly that *the groups and individuals who work hardest will have the greatest influence*. In the longer term then, when it does get some political content, the IWCA will begin to adopt the same agenda as the biggest group within it. In time honoured fashion, the other groups will struggle for power and either the IWCA will split or smaller factions and numerous disillusioned individuals will leave. It will then be a political party. It is not at all certain the IWCA structure has been adopted with party building in mind. Very possibly the founders believe their claim that *this structure...is not designed for the sponsors*, but to limit the influence of the sponsors. But in its vague desire to create a new structure for working class political organisation, and in pig-headedly ignoring anarchist critiques and models for organisation, the IWCA structure is open to abuse by majority views.

continued on page 24

Anarchist Communism in Britain

IN THIS ARTICLE we take a look at the development of Anarchist Communism in Britain since the late 19th century. In the first section we deal with the early days of the Socialist League and of William Morris. In the second part we look at the grouping around Sylvia Pankhurst and at the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation and Guy Aldred. In the third part we look at the groupings of the 70s, the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, the Anarchist Workers Association, the Anarchist Communist Association and the Libertarian Communist Group. An article on the first ten years of the Anarchist Communist Federation, appearing in this issue of Organise!, ties in with this series.

PART 1. THE FOUNDING YEARS

The working class activists Frank Kitz and Joe Lane provided a link between the old Chartist movement, Owenism, the British section of the First International, the free speech fights of the 1870s and the newly emergent socialism of the 1880s. Lane developed anti-state ideas early on, even before he came to call himself a socialist in 1881. A real power-house of an activist, he set up the Homerton Social Democratic Club in that year and attended the international Social Revolutionary and Anarchist Congress as its delegate. Kitz also attended as delegate from the Rose Street Club. Kitz met the German Anarchists Johann Most and Victor Dave there and was deeply influenced by them. With the help of Ambrose Barker, who was based in Stratford in east London, Lane and Kitz launched the Labour Emancipation League. The LEL was in many ways an organisation that represented the transition of radical ideas from Chartism to revolutionary socialism. The demands for universal adult suffrage, freedom of speech, free administration of justice, etc, sat alongside the demand for the expropriation of the capitalist class. The main role of the LEL was that it was to offer a forum for discussion and education amongst advanced workers in London, with 7 branches in East London and regular open-air meetings in Millwall, Clerkenwell, Stratford and on the Mile End Waste. Nevertheless, anti-parliamentarism was already developing in the LEL.

The LEL succeeded in moving the Democratic Federation of Hyndman over to more radical positions. The intellectual and artist William Morris had recently joined this group and Lane was to have an important influence on him for several years. The organisation changed its name to the Social Democratic Federation. The autocracy and authoritarianism of

Hyndman repulsed many members and a split took place in 1884. Morris, Belfort Bax, Eleanor Marx (Karl Marx's daughter) Edward Aveling and most of the LEL left to form the Socialist League. The League itself contained both anti-parliamentarians and supporters of parliamentary action, who had been united by their opposition to Hyndman. A draft parliamentarist constitution inspired by Engels was rejected, but the divisions continued. One of the results of this was Lane's Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto, which had originally been a policy statement that had been rejected by the parliamentarist majority on the policy subcommittee.

Anti-Statist

The Anti Statist Communist Manifesto is not a brilliantly written or particularly well argued document. Nevertheless it stands as probably the first English home grown libertarian communist statement. It spends too long talking about religion. It rejects reformism through parliament or the trade unions. It calls for mass revolutionary action. In the Manifesto, Lane describes his ideas as Revolutionary Socialist or Free Communist. He never publicly used the word Anarchist to describe his politics, feeling that the word put too many people off, and wishing to distinguish himself from individualists. In private he was sympathetic to openly declared Anarchists and remarked about the Manifesto: "I do not claim that I have expounded anarchy; it is for others to judge". Lane must be considered as one of the most important pioneers of libertarian communism in Britain.

Whilst Anarchism was self-developing within the League, and attempting to achieve coherence, other developments were taking place. The veteran Dan

An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto

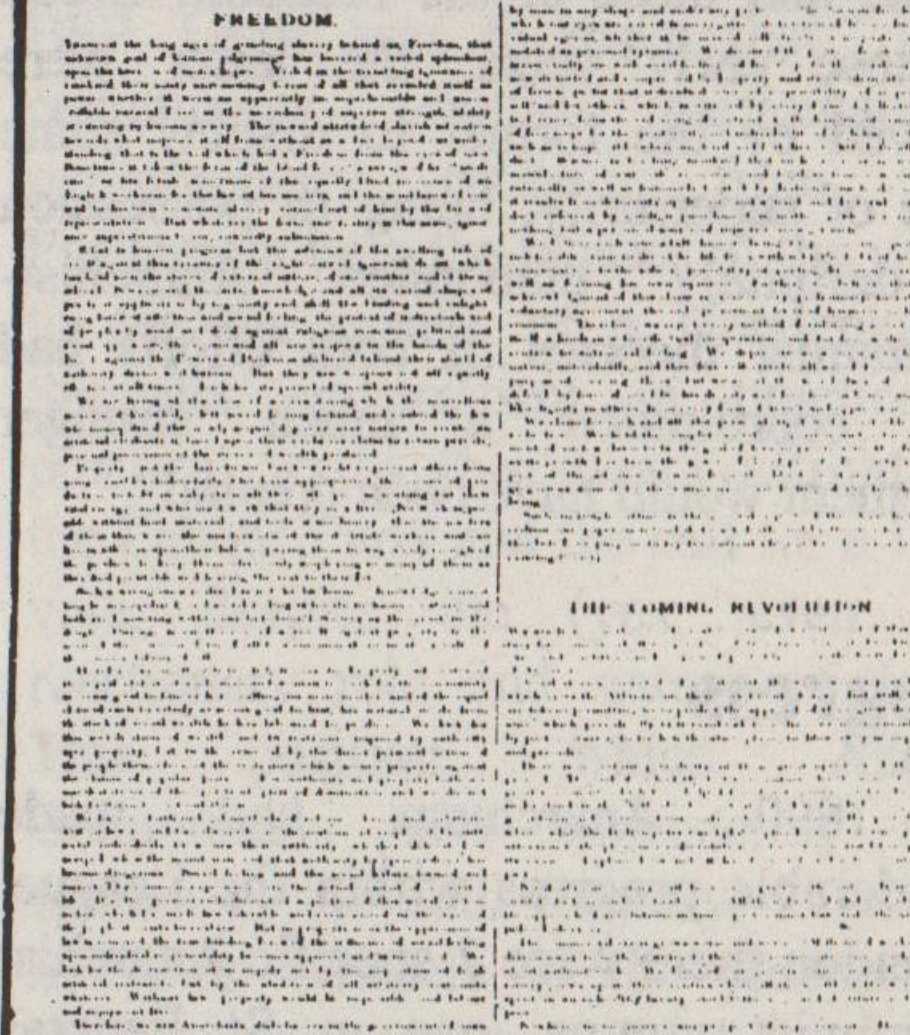


Joseph Lane

FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST SOCIALISM

Vol 1 No 1 OCTOBER 1884



Chatterton, who had participated in the Chartist agitations of 1848, produced his own Anarchist paper Chatterton's Commune-the Atheist Communistic Scorchers. This ran for 42 issues from 1884, produced in conditions of extreme poverty. Meanwhile one of the pioneers of Anarchist Communism, the Russian Piotr Kropotkin, had arrived in Britain. Kropotkin's lectures to many Socialist League branches reinforced the Anarchist tendencies among many of its members. Charles Mowbray, a tailor from Durham, active in the London Socialist League, was one of the first to specifically call himself an Anarchist Communist. Kropotkin also helped set up the paper

Freedom which was specifically Anarchist Communist. The Freedom Group also undertook the organisation of large public meetings and open-air public speaking. As a result a number of workers, especially from the Social Democratic Federation, were won to Anarchist Communism, like the composers Charles Morton and W. Pearson, whilst Socialist League members like Alfred Marsh and John Turner joined the Freedom Group. Regrettably, whilst Socialist League branches distributed Freedom around the country there was a certain antipathy between the Leaguers and the Freedomites. As the Anarchist historian Nettlau was to remark, Kropotkin's failure to work within the Socialist League was:

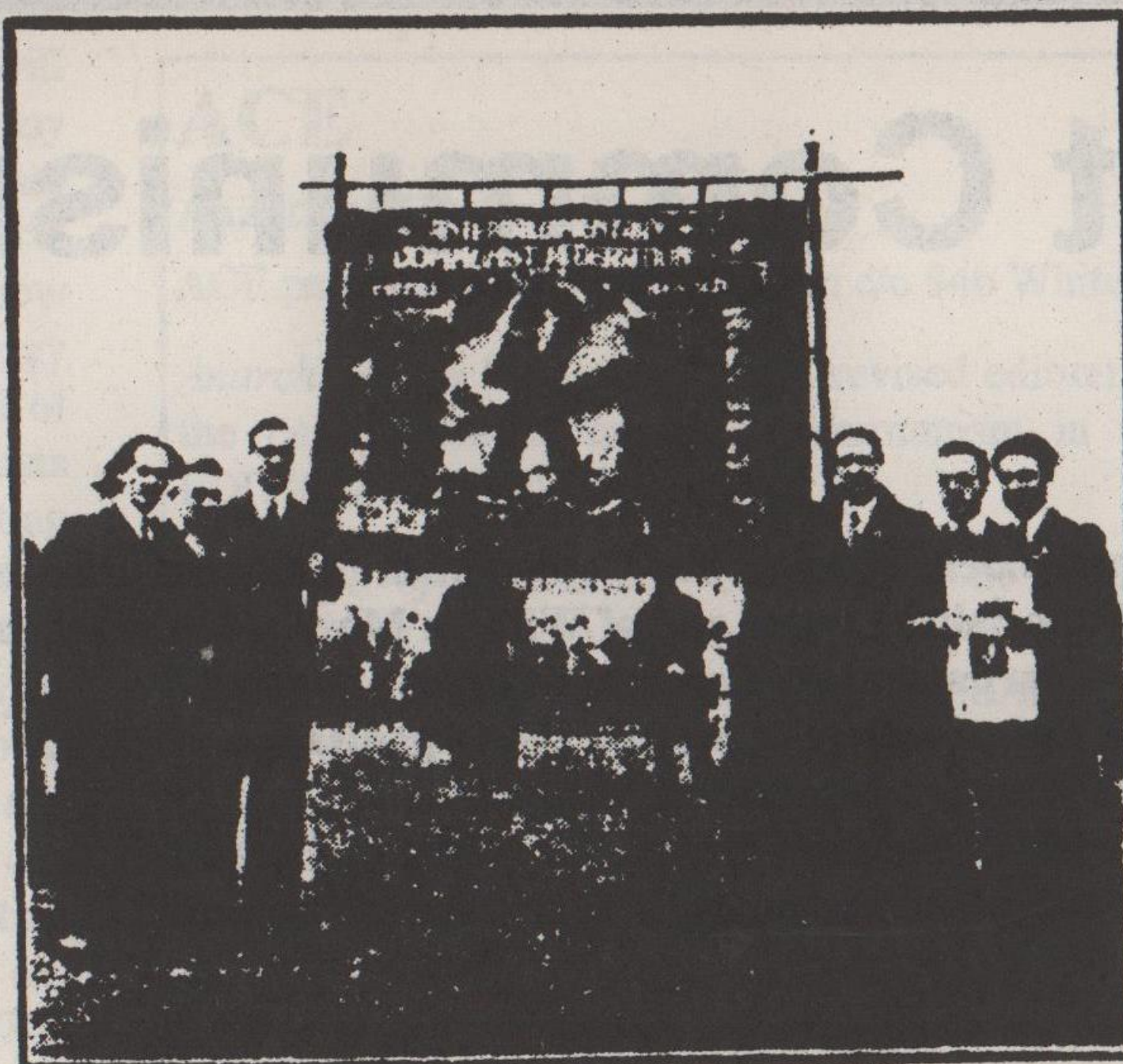
"regrettable, for in 1886 and 1887 the League contained the very best Socialist elements of the time, men (sic) who had deliberately rejected Parliamentarianism and reformism and who worked for the splendid free Communism of William Morris or for broadminded revolutionary Anarchism. If Kropotkin's experience and ardour had helped this movement we might say today Kropotkin and William Morris as we say Elisee Reclus and Kropotkin...There was a latent lack of sympathy between the Anarchists of the League and those of the Freedom Group in those early years; the latter were believed by the former to display some sense of superiority, being in possession of definitely elaborated Anarchist-Communist theories...if both efforts had been coordinated a much stronger movement would have been created".

Progress

By 1890 Anarchism had made considerable progress within the League. In London there were 2 specific Anarchist Communist groups, one in St Pancras mostly formed from Freedom Group members, the other in East London, members of the Clerkenwell Socialist League in different hats, which produced the free handout the Anarchist Labour Leaf.

1888 saw the withdrawal of the parliamentarians from the League. There was still tension between those who like Morris, did not describe themselves as Anarchists but as free communists. This tension was aggravated by a pedantic approach among some of the League Anarchists. The Anarchists insisted too much on philosophical principle and not enough on social practice. Morris wrote: "I am not pleading for any form of

12 Organise!



Banner of the APCF - Glasgow Central 1920's

arbitrary or unreasonable authority, but for a public conscience as a rule of action: and by all means let us have the least possible exercise of authority. I suspect that many of our Communist-Anarchist friends do really mean that, when they pronounce against all authority". The Anarchists H.Davis and James Blackwell were too ready to take issue with Morris's phrase 'the least possible exercise of authority', failing to see that the 'public conscience' he proposed as the basis of Communism was the culmination of the voluntary principle in a society where it had become custom and habit. If Morris chose to call that a situation where authority was exercised then the dispute was semantic". (The Slow Burning Fuse, John Quail.)

Morris's tendency felt that far more propaganda and education needed to be done before the Revolution could come about. Many Anarchists felt that mass action was in itself educational, transforming those taking part. Both were right, but only partially right. There should have been a dynamic dialogue between these 2 positions. This was not to happen. The dead-end of the advocacy of individual acts of 'propaganda by the deed' couched in fiery language meant the departure of Morris, not to mention Kitz and Lane. It also meant the infiltration of the movement by police agents, and a resulting clamp-down by the State. Some Anarchist Communists, like Samuels were ferocious advocates of the 'propaganda by the deed' others like Tochatti, were just as ferociously opposed to such tactics. The loss of Morris, the withdrawal of Lane and the temporary withdrawal of Kitz were a disaster for the development of libertarian communism in Britain. The Socialist League collapsed nationally.

Ruins

A number of specific Anarchist groups emerged from the ruins of the League. In fact despite the repression, in the period 1892-4 the movement had a massive growth. For example, Morris had estimated the membership of the League in London as 120 in 1891. In 1894, Quail estimates the Anarchist movement in London as up to 2,000. (see work cited above). The 'bomb' faction had lost out, and the 'revolutionist' tendency was re-affirming itself. As a veteran of the League, David Nicoll was to say in the Anarchist which he brought out in Sheffield in 1894: "We are Communists. We do not seek to establish an improved wages system like the Fabian Social

Democrats. Our work for the present lies in spreading our ideas among the workers in their clubs and organisations as well as in the open street". The revival was not to last. An attempt to unite the fragmented groups - the Anarchist Communist Alliance - in 1895 was stillborn and the movement was in definite decline by the following year. A period of reaction and lack of struggle within the working class as well as bitter internal conflicts was sapping the movement.

There was to be no revival till mid-1903. The growing industrial unrest, the growth of syndicalism and industrial unionism, were to be contributory factors to the refound vigour of the Anarchist movement. Examples of the returning strength of the movement can be seen in the secession of a group from the Social Democratic Federation in Plymouth, the majority of whom set up an Anarchist Communist group in 1910, and a similar secession from the industrial unionist Industrialist League in Hull in 1913. That year was to see considerable agitation in the South Wales valleys, where small propaganda groups were set up, called Workers Freedom Groups. At a meeting in Ammonford with 120 present, a Communist club house was opened. It was reported that: "The Constitution and programme of the Workers Freedom Groups have been shaped upon the model of future society at which they aim, namely Anarchist-Communism". A Workers Freedom Group was established in the pit village of Chopwell in Durham, by among others Will Lawther (later to be a right-wing miners' leader.) The Chopwell Anarchists also set up a Communist Club. Anarchists set up a Communist Club in Stockport in the following year. In London groups mushroomed and agitation was intense. Here Guy Aldred., a young man who had

No 42.Spring 1996

started out as a Christian preacher, moving through secularism and then the SDF to Anarchism, began to attempt to synthesise his earlier Marxism with his Anarchism in 1910. He had set up a Communist Propaganda Group in 1907 and he now revived this, and helped set up several Communist Groups in the London area, as well as travelling regularly to Glasgow and helping form the

Glasgow Communist Group there. He had serious criticisms of trade unions and had fallen out with the Freedom Group because one of its members, John Turner, was a leading trade union official. As Aldred noted: "...I gradually fell out with the Freedom Anarchists...Their Anarchy was merely Trade Union activity which they miscalled Direct Action. Their anger knew no bounds when I insisted that

PART 2. THE WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH

The Anarchist movement, not just in Britain, but world-wide was shaken to its foundations by the news that Kropotkin and others were supporting the Allies against Germany and Austria-Hungary. To their credit, the majority of Anarchists took a revolutionary abstentionist anti-war position, including Freedom and the Spur, edited by Aldred. A fiercely active anti-war propaganda took place within the North London Herald League, where Anarchists worked alongside socialists from different organisations. This joint activity was reflected right across Britain. Indeed the Anarchists were beginning to have a growing influence among the latter.

Aldred was to remark on the growing number of "Marxian anarchists" within the movement, who accepted a Marxian analysis of the State and of the importance of class struggle. These activists were becoming impatient with those, who to quote Freda Cohen of the Glasgow Anarchist Group, were satisfied with "fine phrases or poetical visioning". Alongside this was the heritage of Morris and Co within the broad socialist movement, which was asserting itself within the Socialist Labour Party, the British Socialist Party, (the successor of the SDF) and the Independent Labour Party. Antiparliamentary ideas were re-emerging within these organisations- for instance, within the Socialist Labour Party, members were questioning the pro-parliamentary ideas of DeLeon who had founded the Party. Some left to become Anarchists.

An attempt was made to unite the Anarchists around Freedom and the Spur, edited by Aldred, with the anti-parliamentary dissidents of the SLP. This initiative came from within the SLP and at a unity conference in March 1919 the Communist League was founded, with a paper the Communist. In it George Rose was to remark: "we know that there must develop the great working class anti-Statist movement, showing the way to Communist society. The Communist League is the standard bearer of the movement; and all the hosts of

No 42.Spring 1996

Trades Unionism was the basis of Labour Parliamentarianism."

But now the First World War loomed and its outbreak and repercussions were to have cataclysmic effects on the whole revolutionary movement, not least the Anarchists.

Communists in the various other Socialist organisations will in good time see that Parliamentary action will lead them, not to Communist but to bureaucratic Statism...Therefore, we identify ourselves with the Third International, with the Communism of Marx, and with that personification of the spirit of revolt, Bakunin, of whom the Third International is but the natural and logical outcome." Rose shows himself under the influence of Aldred, who looked for a fusion between Bakuninism and Marxism, in the process glossing over some fundamental differences. Indeed an initial report in Freedom on the conference, whilst noting that the League was not an Anarchist organisation, remarked that the "repudiation of Parliament is a long step in our direction", but on the other hand there was a sharp exchange between Anarchists and League members over the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and economic determinism. At a Conference of London Anarchists it was remarked that "The anti-parliamentary attitude of many Socialists and Communists was greatly due to our propaganda in the past, and good results would undoubtedly follow if we worked with them. "A resulting conference was very friendly in tone, although controversy over the dictatorship of the proletariat was not absent. However, this initiative of cooperation between revolutionary anti-parliamentarians was to evaporate when the Communist League disappeared without trace at the end of 1919.

The attempts at cooperation and unity continued however, although the whole process was clouded by the issue of the Russian revolution and support for the Bolsheviks. Aldred himself was at first a staunch supporter of the Bolsheviks, hardly surprising considering the lack of any hard information about Lenin's Party in Britain. (This was reflected in general ignorance in the revolutionary movement throughout the world). A series of critical articles by an Austrian Anarchist which were printed in the Spur in September 1919 were lambasted by Aldred and others, although in time he came to the same conclusions as he gained more solid

information. Most revolutionaries, however were the slaves of wishful thinking, despite evidence that all was not well in Russia. This attitude, the unity-at-all-costs syndrome and "loyalty to the world revolution" position (Translation=slavishly carry out whatever Lenin and the Bolsheviks tell you to do) was to have disastrous consequences for the British revolutionary movement. As Bob Jones says in his pamphlet Left-Wing Communism in Britain 1917-21: "There was, as happens repeatedly in the history of British socialism in the twentieth century, a complete abdication of critical judgement when basic principles and beliefs are put to the test by supposed friends and allies". This is something that should be borne in mind at the present with various "unity" moves.

Despite the continuing growth of anti-parliamentarianism in both the SLP and BSP, Lenin was to insist that: "British communists should participate in parliamentary action... from within Parliament help the masses of the workers to see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice". In practical terms this meant affiliation to the Labour Party and the call for a Labour vote, despite the (yes, even then!) reactionary role and nature of Labour. This position, which Anarchist Communists have consistently argued against in the 20th Century, is still very much an obstacle to the creation of a revolutionary movement in this country.

Sylvia Pankhurst

Anti-parliamentary communism had also developed inside the Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF). This had evolved out of the Womens Suffrage Federation based around Sylvia Pankhurst in the East End of London, above all in the Bow and Bromley districts. With her mother Emmeline and sister Christabel she had led a vigorous and militant campaign for votes for women. But differences developed between her and them over a number of issues, including Sylvia's emphasis for activity among the working

Organise! 13

Workers Dreadnought

Tells How to Get THE SOVIETS in BRITAIN.

Plenty for all when we Abolish the Capitalists.

class, and for joint action between working class women and men for common demands. This gap was widened by the War, which Emmeline and Christabel fiercely supported, whilst Sylvia came out in opposition. During the war the WSF were very active among the East London working class, setting up free or cut price restaurants, day nurseries for children of working mothers, and distributing free milk for babies. In this period it dawned on Sylvia Pankhurst that capitalism could not be reformed, but must be destroyed and replaced by a free communist society. She saw in the Russian revolution the model for a revolution based on workers councils, where committees of recallable and mandated delegates would be elected and answerable to mass assemblies of the working class. She rejected parliamentary action and the domination of leaders, calling for the development of self-organisation and self-initiative through class struggle. Indeed at the time of the 1923 General Election when 8 women M.P.s were elected she remarked: "Women can no more put virtue into the decaying parliamentary institution than can men: it is past reform and must disappear...the woman professional politician is neither more nor less desirable than the man professional politician: the less the world has of either the better it is for it... To the women, as to men, the hope of the future lies not through Parliamentary reform, but free Communism and soviets".

Unfortunately, like Aldred, Pankhurst was a headstrong and egotistical individual. Like him, she often put the narrow interests of her own group before that of the revolutionary movement as a whole. So, she and the WSF rejected a merger with the Communist League because the 2 organisations were too similar for that to be necessary! The WSF then in June 1919 transformed itself into the Communist Party. Lenin put pressure on the

Pankhurst group to arrange talks with other groups for a unity conference, at the same time fearing the establishment of a Communist Party that had pronounced anti-parliamentary positions. In his attack on left and council communists Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder he singled out Pankhurst, along with the Council Communists Pannekoek and Gorter. Another singled out was Willie Gallagher, who had left the SDF to join the Glasgow Anarchist Group in 1912. Gallagher, an admirer of Bakunin, was now a member of the Scottish Workers Council, which promoted 'communes'. In his pamphlet Lenin quoted Gallagher: "The Council is definitely anti-parliamentarian, and has behind it the Left Wing of the various political bodies". For his staunch anti-parliamentarianism (not so staunch as it turned out) Gallagher was chosen to represent the Scottish Workers Councils at the second congress of the Third International in Moscow. Gallagher pleaded with the delegates not to force on the Scottish revolutionaries: "resolutions which they are not in a position to defend, being contradictory to all they have been standing for until now." Lenin singled Gallagher and his associates out at this Congress, winning him over completely to his positions. From then on Gallagher was a loyal servant to Lenin, (and then to Stalin) working towards the establishment of a Communist Party of Great Britain which appeared in January 1921. The manoeuvres of Lenin and Gallagher were sharply attacked by Aldred in his new paper the Spur and by Pankhurst in the paper of the re-established WSF the Workers Dreadnought.

Pankhurst continued with her criticisms of Leninism. In 1924 she condemned the new rulers of Russia as: "Prophets of centralised efficiency, trustification, State control, and the discipline of the proletariat in the interests of increased production...the Russian workers remain wage slaves, and very poor ones, working not from free will, but under compulsion of economic need, and kept in their subordinate position by State coercion." The WSF was very close to the positions of the Dutch and German council communists, evolving increasingly Anarchist Communist positions by 1924, when it disappeared.

The collapse of the revolutionary wave of 1917-21, the Bolshevisation of the movement, and the repression of 1921, during which time Pankhurst and Aldred were both jailed had taken its toll. Many had been won to Bolshevik positions, whilst many others dropped out including Pankhurst herself, who ended up as a

supporter of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, with a burial in Addis Abbaba.

The Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation

The anti-parliamentary opposition to Lenin's positions coalesced around the Glasgow Anarchist Group and Aldred. It was to express solidarity with the Russian Revolution that this changed its name to the Glasgow Communist Group in 1920. This became the nucleus of the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation set up in January 1921.

In many ways the APCF was an unstable alliance of those who accepted Anarchist Communist views and those who took a Council Communist position. Aldred and Co. still kept up illusions in the Russian Revolution up till 1924, flirting with the newly emergent Trotskyism for a while and launching attacks on Anarchist individuals and groups. As one member of the APCF in Leicester remarked in a letter to the editor of Freedom in 1924, Aldred was "running with Communism and hunting with Anarchism". Aldred also insisted on what he called the Sinn Fein tactic of running as an anti-parliamentary candidate in the 1922 General Election. This was opposed in the APCF by Henry Sara, who left to join the Pankhurst group, and Willie McDougall and Jane Patrick. Other differences were over the question of economic determinism, with economic development as the motor to social change, and over the need for a transitional workers state.

The APCF had branches in London, the Midlands and North of England, although its base was primarily Scotland. It published the monthly The Commune from 1923-9. The seething differences over the use of anti-parliamentary candidates erupted in 1933 when Aldred left over these differences to form the Workers Open Forum.

Aldred claimed that the APCF stagnated after his departure. However, this is not true as the activity of the APCF continued unabated. Further splits were to come with the Spanish Revolution and Civil War. The APCF uncritically supported the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists of the CNT-FAI, the notion of anti-fascism with its unity at all costs message, and the false ideas of democracy versus fascism. They published, without comment or criticism, a statement by Federica Montseny, one of the chief Anarchist advocates of anti-fascist unity and Anarchist participation in the Spanish Republican government. Jane Patrick was one of the first to question these positions after her visits to Spain. She was disowned by the APCF, and went

off to join Aldred's group, now called the United Socialist Movement. The uncritical attitude continued in the APCF, though it published several articles in its new paper Solidarity including a statement from the Friends of Durruti (see Stormy Petrel pamphlet on the Friends of Durruti). A split took place in the APCF in 1937 when some Anarchists left in 1937 to set up the Glasgow Anarchist Communist Federation, although the reasons for this remain obscure. This evolved into the Glasgow Group of the Anarchist Federation of Britain, active during the Second World War.

The APCF for its part redeemed itself during the War by adopting a revolutionary defeatist position, with opposition to both sides. However as was stated in the Wildcat pamphlet on the APCF: "...the APCF was too tolerant in allowing views fundamentally opposed to their own to appear unchallenged in the paper. These included at various times, pacifism, trade unionism, and 'critical'

support for Russia...". Wildcat also noted that: "The APCF also seemed to suffer from a lack of proper organisation. It appeared to be content to remain a locally based group, with no interest in trying to form a national or international organisation. It is sometimes argued that revolutionaries should only organise informally in local groups, to avoid the dangers associated with larger organisations...These dangers have to be faced up to, not run away from". These comments should be taken seriously by revolutionaries at the present time.

The APCF with Willie McDougall as its leading light, transformed itself into the Workers Revolutionary League in 1942, eventually becoming a Workers Open Forum and continuing into the 50s.

As for Aldred and Patrick, their United Socialist Movement had become a populist organisation, espousing things like World Government and fellow-travelling with Russia after Stalin's death.

PART 3 POST WAR LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

A specific libertarian communist current did not re-emerge in Britain until the sixties and seventies. Anarcho-syndicalism was to be the dominant current within the Anarchist movement, alongside the newly emerging "liberal" anarchism that was developing through the likes of people like George Woodcock. In one part, this was a response to the major defeats of both revolutionary Anarchism and the working class movement as a whole, in another part it was an uncritical adaptation to the rise of the anti-war movement (Committee of 100 and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament). It was, of course, correct for Anarchists to aim their propaganda at mass movements, putting a revolutionary case against capitalism and the State as the root causes of war. What was lacking, however was a theoretical strength that allowed for the recruiting of activists from C100 and CND that fought against the dilution of ideas and transformed these activists into fully-fledged revolutionaries. This was not the case, however, and the revolutionary core of Anarchism, already deeply effected by the erroneous ideas of the Synthesis as devised by Voline and Faure (which sought a fusion between individualism, syndicalism and libertarian communism within the same organisation) was further diluted in Britain. The development of the hippy and alternative culture movements were to further dilute and confuse the movement, as once again the Anarchist movement showed itself wanting in ways of relating to these movements on a revolutionary basis

without surrendering to pacifism and marginalisation.

Solidarity

One healthy development was the group

of activists who had been expelled from the Trotskyist Socialist Labour League of Gerry Healy in 1959, many of whom had served on its Central Committee. Revolted by the authoritarianism of

Despite all this, the contributions of these groups and individuals were important. They courageously pursued revolutionary politics at a time of great isolation. They must be recognised as the forebears of present day libertarian communism in this country.

libertarian struggle special

MAY DAY all year round

Anarchist Worker
Formerly LIBERTARIAN STRUGGLE

Inside: Ireland, Workers' Power & Drugs

National Interest or Workers Unity

HOW DO the present leaders of the most powerful 'workers' organisations in Britain - the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress - exploit their attitude to the crisis?

WHAT - apart from their far incomes and the numerous benefits of power - encourages them to stifle any real features in those grim battle lines, where the rest of us actually pay the price demanded by the system they so reluctantly defend - obscuring real wages, unemployment and cuts in the

This is something which you can see clearly when you compare the actual manifestations of support in the Labour Party and the TUC.

Import Controls?

The Labour Party and Trade Union Congress are quite clear where they stand.

Their talk of 'import controls' is an elaborate veil for us to see the 'heart' of the economic emergency before us.



Healyism, this group began to develop libertarian socialist ideas, continuing to base themselves on class struggle and class analysis. They began to edit a journal, *Solidarity*, from October 1960, as well as a flurry of pamphlets, at first on a monthly basis! They developed trenchant analyses of the industrial struggle as well as the peace movement, and their analysis of the unions was a huge step forward, as was their rejection of syndicalism. As time progressed *Solidarity* began to identify themselves more and more as libertarian communists. However, they had developed a distrust of organisation as such as a result of their experiences of Healyism. Their unflagging publishing programme and their perceptive analyses had gained a great deal of respect among many activists. Their wilful failure to translate this into the establishment of a national organisation was a disaster, as International Socialism (the precursor of the Socialist Workers Party) was able to build on this territory abandoned by *Solidarity* (and by the Anarchist Federation of Britain). They failed to engage as fully with the Anarchist movement as much as they could have, as their contributions at meetings and conferences could have considerably strengthened the class struggle current within it. Finally, there was their use of the ambiguous term self-management (which could be open to a number of interpretations, including one involving a market society) and their assertion that the main differences in society were not so much between classes as between order-givers and order-takers. In the end the contents of the magazine became less and less distinguishable from the contents of *Freedom*, with, for example, long articles on Gandhi. *Solidarity* magazine stopped appearing in the early 90s and the group is to all intents and purposes, dead - failing to live up to its promises of the 60s.

The Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists (ORA)

The Anarchist Federation of Britain (AFB) had slowly emerged in the aftermath of the political dead-end and decline of the Committee of 100 and the growing new radicalism of the 1960s, with its founding conference in Bristol in 1963. There was an impressive list of group and individual contacts featured in *Freedom*. National conferences began to be organised that were well attended. On the face of it things looked very good indeed, with the potential for an Anarchist movement to grow and once again have

some influence as the pre-WW1 movement had. In reality things were far from rosy. Anyone could attend conferences, often to make contributions and then never to be seen again. There was no structure of decision-making, and therefore no decisions made at conference. There was no paper controlled by the AFB, and often groups loosely affiliated within it contained all sorts of "anarchists" from individualists, pacifists and gradualists, lifestyleists and agrarian communards, through to syndicalists and anarchist communists. No clear analysis could be developed because of the huge array of differing and opposing ideas. Indeed the AFB only had an internal bulletin from late 1969.

The AFB was unable to respond to the huge potential offered to it, and began to drift. Indeed there was a massive exodus of activists to International Socialism (IS) and the International Marxist Group (IMG). A group emerged in the AFB around Keith Nathan and Ro Atkins, the former who had been a driving force in the very active Harlow Anarchist Group. This group produced a document called *Towards a History and Critique of the Anarchist Movement in Modern Times* as a discussion paper for a conference of Northern Anarchists in November 1970. Militants in Lancaster and Swansea (including Ian Bone, the future founder of Class War) also had criticisms of the AFB. "The people in Swansea dropped out of the fray after their open letter was published, but their action had encouraged people in Lancaster, Leeds, Manchester and York to put a motion to to the AFB that it call a 'reorganisation conference' to discuss the criticisms raised" (from *The Newsletter*, bulletin of the ORA May 1971). The Critique and a joint statement produced by all the critics was taken from the conference to the AFB conference in Liverpool the same month. It should be pointed out that this critical current was made up of both anarchist communists and anarcho-syndicalists as well as those who had no specific identification other than Anarchist.

The Critique was a trenchant and deeply honest document. It is worth quoting at length on the state of the Anarchist movement: "the omission of an attempt to link present short term action with the totality of capitalist society and with the totality of the future alternative society, means that when the short term issue dies, as it will, then so does the consciousness created by this short term action.bitter personal disputes based upon spuriously advanced positions; battles for the soul of the revolution / movement / Individual / reified anything, fought in reams of paper attacking and defending positions long

since overrun by time. This is our 'theory'. Usually it totally replaces even the pretence of activity".

Ginger

Following on from the Liverpool Conference the group in York decided to set up the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists to act as a ginger group within the AFB. The attention at this time was not to leave the AFB. It wanted the AFB to open its doors to other libertarian tendencies e.g. *Solidarity*. "...The ORA people do not want to form another sect - we see our role as acting within and on the libertarian movement in general, as well as initiating our own work...we hope it can act as a link and a catalyst not only for ORA and the AFB but also to all libertarians" (ORA Newsletter see above).

ORA's objections to the traditional anarchist movement then, were more on the level of organisation than of theory. Their advocacy of collective responsibility, the use of a Chair and voting to take decisions at meetings, formal membership and a paper under the control of its "writers, sellers and readers" while warmly greeted in some quarters for example the May 1971 Scottish Anarchist Federation Conference was viciously attacked by others.

But the ORA itself was a hotch-potch including all sorts of anarchists, including syndicalists and those who argued for a pacifist strategy. When the ORA decided to bring out a monthly paper, *Libertarian Struggle*, in February 1973, it proved to be a forcing house for the development of the group, and these elements fell away. Also significant were contacts with the Organisation Revolutionnaire Anarchiste in France which had developed along similar lines within the Federation Anarchiste. Through the French ORA the British discovered the pamphlet the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists which had been written by a group of Russian and Ukrainian Anarchists, including Nestor Makhno and Piotr Arshinov. This argued for a specific anarchist communist organisation, and ideological and tactical unity.

The ORA produced a number of pamphlets and a regular monthly paper. At first this was lacking in theoretical content, in the main consisting of short factual articles on various struggles. Quite correctly, *Libertarian Struggle* gave extensive coverage to both industrial struggles and struggles outside the workplace, including tenants struggles, squatting, womens liberation and gay liberation. By issue 8 a greater analytical and theoretical content emerged. For example in an article on the Spanish

No 42.Spring 1996

Revolution of 1936 in *Libertarian Struggle* 1973 we can read about: "The failure of the anarcho-syndicalists who make a far too ready identification of their union with the working class as a whole. The way forward in a revolutionary situation is the rapid building of workers councils...union committees are no substitute for direct workers power". These anarchist-communist criticisms of anarcho-syndicalism were to be further developed within the libertarian communist movement over the years.

Similarly, the analysis of Labour was to be a consistent feature of British anarchist-communism over the following years. For example we can read in *Libertarian Struggle* November 1973: "Only by carefully explaining and exposing the role of the Labour Party to the working class can any progress be made to building a revolutionary anarchist alternative...It cannot be done by first insisting we vote Labour". The Labour Party was defined as a bourgeois party.

On the unions, however, the ORA was not so clear. The criticisms of the union bureaucracies were clear enough, and this included the 'left' NUM leadership. Also clear was the call to create workers action committees leading to the establishment of workers councils. However this was mixed up with calls to democratise the unions(!) and to democratise the various Rank and Files (all of which were IS fronts).

Standstill

The events of 1974, the Miners Strike and the 3-Day week, led many to think (falsely) that revolution was just around the corner. This led to the formation of the Left Tendency inside the ORA. They concluded that it was in the nature of anarchism that the attempts to form a national organisation were bound to fail, and turned to Trotskyism. Most of this group ended up in the horrific authoritarian Healeyite outfit, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), whilst others joined IS. Nathan himself, whilst not a supporter of the Left Tendency, also left at this time to join the WRP.

The Left Tendency had called for an elected Editorial Board rather than a paper edited in rotation by each group and for a "more coherent position on Ireland" among other things.

The organisation came to a virtual standstill, as these members had been among the most active, and many others, who were not prepared to take on the workload, dropped out.

Amongst those who remained, some took the initiative to revive the organisation. A

No 42.Spring 1996

limited edition (1000) *Libertarian Struggle* was put out in November 1974 and sold out in 10 days. There followed a period of recruitment and consolidation, until May 1975 when the paper began to appear again on a regular monthly basis.

The Anarchist Workers Association

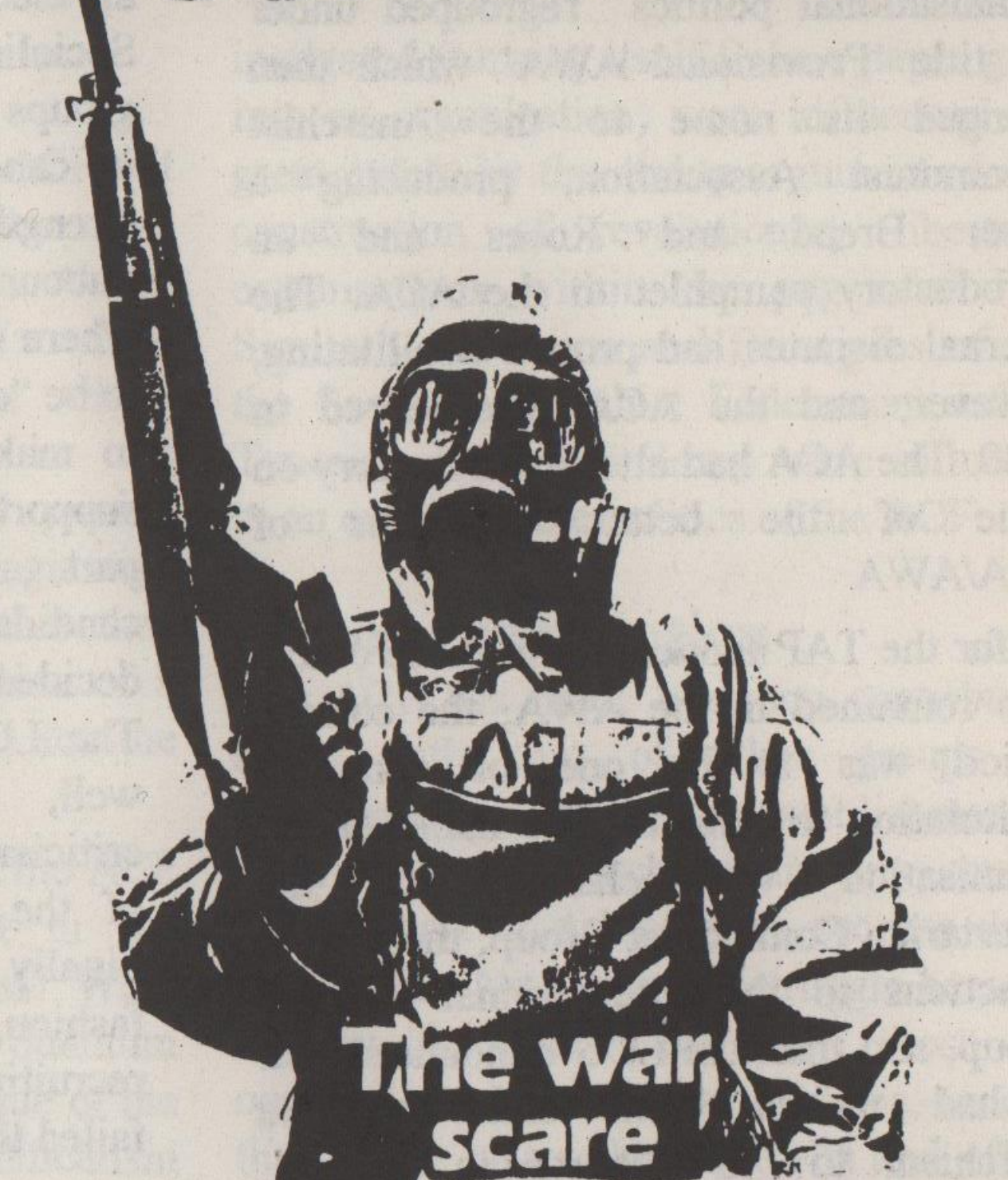
At the beginning of 1975 ORA changed its name to the Anarchist Workers Association, which it was felt implied more of a class commitment, although others criticised this change as a mistake, implying workerism, and a too narrow obsession with the workplace. It was true that most of the membership in this period were heavily involved in workplace activity.

By 1976 the AWA had 50 members, most of them active, with 3 groups in London, groups in Oxford, Yorkshire, Leicester, and Scotland. The paper now called itself *Anarchist Worker*, was a regular monthly with sales of 1500-2000, mostly street sales. It was to some extent 'a libertarian version of Socialist Worker' but the coverage was wider, for example covering the struggles of claimants and squatters and provocatively questioning the work ethic.

The organisation went through a vicious split between Spring 1976 and Spring 1977. The *Towards a Programme* (TAP) Tendency was founded primarily to change the 1976 Conference decision on Ireland, where the majority, had argued for an abstentionist, anti-Republican position on Ireland, and that "Troops Out" was only meaningful if they withdrew through united class action. The TAP kept to the classic "Troops Out" formula as well as the leftist "Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole". The TAP also argued for a less "ultra-left" position on the unions that is for "democratisation of the unions", "extend unionisation" etc. This tendency included Nathan who had returned to the fold.

The AWA did not have a tradition of political debate. Much of the debate there was conducted at a puerile level. The TAP tendency accused their opponents of "traditional anarchism" and wishing to lead the AWA back to the days of the

Libertarian Communist



SOLIDARITY

new series

vol.1/no.1



AFB" whilst the TAP tendency was accused by its opponents of "Trotskyism". The debate was clouded by controversy over the issue of abortion with a leading opponent of the TAP tendency taking an anti-abortion position., as well as some of the opponents of TAP (though only a small minority) taking increasingly anti-organisational positions.

Disgust

Eventually at a conference in May 1977, on a motion sprung from the floor expulsions against the opposition to the TAP tendency was carried by 2 votes, with no prior notice or discussion at

Organise! 17

previous meetings or in the Internal Bulletin. Others left the organisation in disgust at these manoeuvres.

The expelled comrades committed to organisational politics regrouped under the title 'Provisional AWA' which then changed its name to the Anarchist Communist Association, producing a paper Bread and Roses and an introductory pamphlet to the ACA. The internal disputes had proved debilitating, however, and the ACA disappeared in 1980. The ACA had attempted to carry on some of the better traditions of ORA/AWA.

As for the TAP tendency and those others who remained in the AWA, the coming period was to be one of complete capitulation to leftism. The name of the organisation was changed to the Libertarian Communist Group, there were defections to the International Marxist Group, and then the LCG announced that it had moved from class struggle anarchism to a "libertarian, critical, Marxism". The LCG backed "United Front Work" which in practice meant working in the Socialist Teachers Alliance, and the Socialist Student Alliance, fronts dominated by the IMG.

Conclusion

This history of the ORA/AWA/LCG with its history of splits, defections and gross political errors is far from inspiring. But these developments, sometimes as unifying as they were, signals the first attempts of libertarian communism to re-emerge in the post-World War II period. These attempts to re-emerge were as one member of the ACF noted in 1991 bound to be effected by the "present comparatively weak state of anarchist communism". Two "magnetic poles of attraction" would be at work, he went on to say. One would be Leninism, which would exert its influence through comrades moving physically and ideologically over to Leninist outfits, or adopting Leninist style politics whilst still professing to be within the revolutionary anarchist movement as happened with the LCG, and later with the Anarchist Workers Group.

The other pole of attraction would involve comrades committing some of the errors associated with parts of the left communist milieu-spontaneism, refusal to construct a revolutionary organisation, and where theoretical elaboration was divorced from effective practice and intervention, and seemed to involve finding as many differences as possible between comrades. The appearance of the Anarchist Communist Federation marked a dramatic move forward, a significant development in both the strengthening and elaboration of Anarchist Communist theory, as well as an ongoing practice. In a separate article on the first ten years of the ACF we will consider these contributions.

This United Front work which in practice meant collaboration with leftist political formations, led to the LCG committing one of their most heinous errors-entering an electoral front set up by IMG called Socialist Unity (SU) and backed by other groups like Big Flame. Socialist Unity put up candidates where it felt they had the strength, and advanced the slogan "Vote Labour But Build a Socialist Alternative" where it did not. The LCG was supposed to be "critically" supporting SU, but failed to make any serious criticisms of this support for Labour. The SWP for their part, peeved by the SU running candidates, and perceiving this as a threat, decided to stand their own candidates. The LCG endorsed these candidates as well, completely forgetting all the criticisms it had made of electoralism and of the nature of the Leninist groups. Finally, after the IMG, in their usual fashion, got bored with SU as a way of recruiting, it was wound up. The LCG failed to deliver any post-mortem on this.

The end was soon to come. The LCG compounded these errors by supporting a slate run by an anti-cuts group called Resistance (Keith Nathan and friends) for council elections in Leeds.

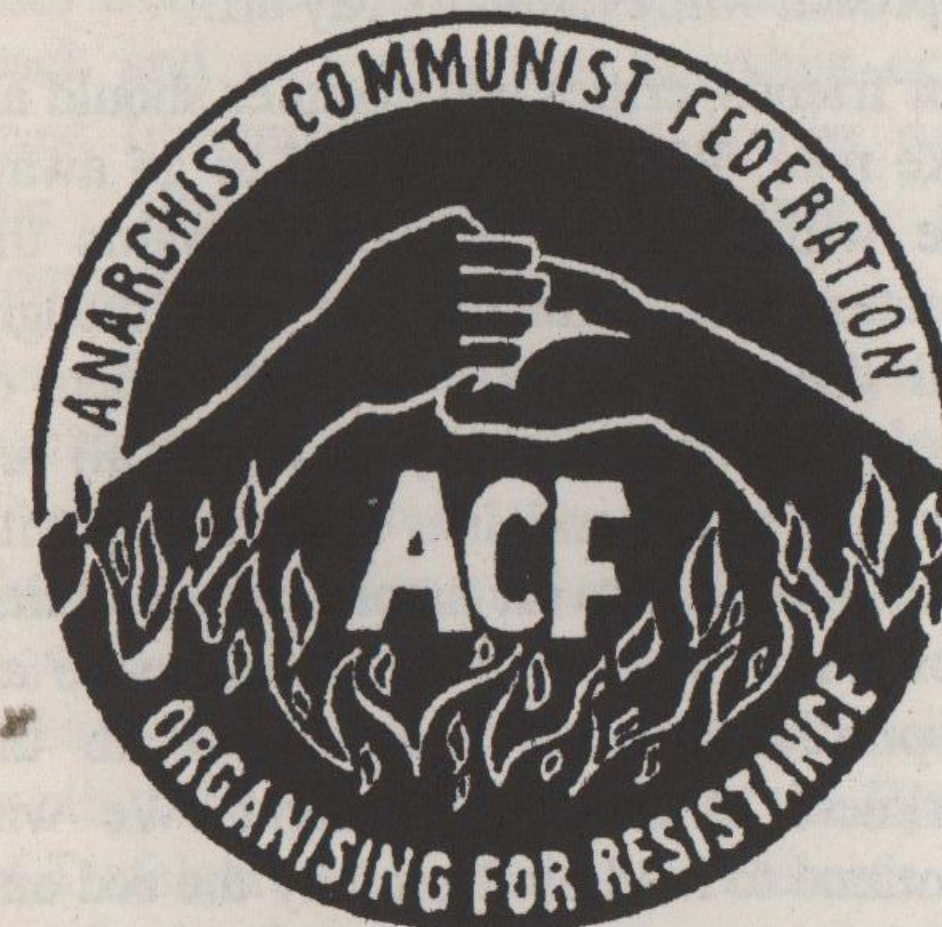
Relinquished

The LCG moved for fusion with the "libertarian Marxist" group Big Flame in 1980. This organisation had been previously described in Anarchist Worker as "schizophrenic libertarians/Leninists": "Big Flame leads in uncritical copying of Lotta Continua in Italy, from their spontaneism to softness on Stalinism". For its part Big Flame was unable to withstand the instabilities of its politics. The 'left' "victory" orchestrated by Tony Benn in the Labour Party resulted in the collapse of Big Flame as most of its members decided to enter the Labour Party, where they eventually wound up as apologists for Kinnock. The LCG had argued that they were "too small to give us an acceptable forum for political discussion" and that there were "no serious political differences between the two organisations". The LCG had relinquished any idea of constructing a specific libertarian communist organisation as well as any serious political analysis. But in any case, the politics of the LCG had transformed so much that there really was little difference between their leftism and that of Big Flame.



TOWARDS LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

ACF-THE FIRST TEN YEARS



THE SHIPWRECK OF anarchist communism in the late 70s meant that there was no anarchist communist organisation, not even a skeletal one, that could relate to the riots of 1981 and to the miners strike of 1984-5 as well as to mobilisations like the Stop the City actions of 1984. But in autumn 1984 two comrades, one a veteran of the ORA/AWA/LCG, had returned from France where they had been living and working and where they had been involved in the libertarian communist movement. A decision was made to set up the Libertarian Communist Discussion Group (LCDG) with the aim of creating a specific organisation. Copies of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, left over from the AWA/LCG days, were distributed to bookshops, with a contact address for the Anarchist-Communist Discussion Group (ACDG). Progress was slow, until contact with the comrade who produced *Virus*, a duplicated magazine that defined itself as "Anarcho-socialist". This comrade had broken with the politics of the SWP and rapidly moved in an anarchist direction. Apart from its sense of humour, *Virus* was defined to a certain extent by its critiques of Leninism and of Marxism-not surprising considering the comrade's past experiences. From issue 5 *Virus* became the mouthpiece of the LCDG, and there were a series of articles on libertarian organisation. Other people were attracted to the group, and it transformed itself into the ACDG, which proclaimed a long-term aim of setting up a national anarchist-communist organisation. This came much sooner than expected, with the growth of the group, and a splinter from the Direct Action Movement, Syndicalist Fight, merging with the group. In March 1986 the Anarchist Communist Federation was officially founded, with an agreed set of aims and principles and constitutional structure that had been developed in the previous six months.

Vacuum

Those anarchists who founded the ACF felt that there was a vacuum in the movement not filled by either the Direct Action Movement (DAM) or Class War. The objections to anarcho-syndicalism which would become more defined in the following years, precluded us joining DAM. Whilst we welcomed the imaginative approach of Class War, we saw that they lacked a strategy for the construction of a coherent national organisation and for the development of theory.

The development of the politics of the ACF is dealt with to a great extent in the accompanying article on *Organise!* What should be remarked upon is the quantum leap that the ACF made in its critique of the unions. A critique of anarcho-syndicalism was deepened and strengthened. At the same time the ACF broke with the ideas of rank-and-fileism which had characterised the ORA/AWA/LCG period, as well as any false notions about national liberation and self-determination. That this was achieved, and achieved on a collective level, seems to have surprised some of our critics. For them, any development of politics must involve vicious infighting and splits, accustomed as they are to Bolshevik ways of functioning. That this was achieved without such a split points to the increasing political maturity of the ACF. The overall theoretical development of the ACF was light years ahead of most articles produced in the previous period. This is vitally important. For Anarchist-communism to survive it must develop both its theory and practice. In this respect the ACF has made important steps forward.

Unlike the previous organisations, the ACF has maintained a certain stability. It has survived the last ten years in times of great political inactivity (Despite high points of struggle like the anti-Poll Tax movement). The number of militants fully committed to the organisation have increased and the ACF has a much more stable base than it had at its foundation.

The ACF has also developed its politics through the collective preparation of a Manifesto and Programme which will be published this year. The ACF has analysed the changes in capitalism and developed a strategy which it believes can be of use in helping re-create a revolutionary movement.

The analyses developed in the pages of *Organise!* and within the ACF in general have had their effect on what passes for a revolutionary movement in Britain. The organisational moves that Class War

instigated (turning itself from a paper group into an organisation) were influenced to a great extent by the strong arguments for the construction of revolutionary libertarian organisations within the pages of *Virus*. Similarly the Aims and Principles of both the Scottish Anarchist Federation and the Tyneside Anarchist Group were influenced to an extent by the politics of the ACF.

Strong contribution

The ACF has made a strong contribution, along with that of other groups and organisations, to the re-establishment of class struggle anarchism in this country. This is part of a long-term process dating back to the 70s, when the struggle began to reclaim the movement from those who opposed any talk of class analysis, (and for that matter of revolution itself) and offered various versions of pacifism, liberalism, individualism, and gradualism. Whilst these elements still exist, those who call themselves class struggle anarchists has increased considerably. This of course cannot just be put down to the theoretical illuminations of one or several groups, but to the stark reality of the ruling class attack in the last 20 years.

So much for some of the positive points of the ACF experience. What of the negative points of the ACF balance-sheet?

The ACF remains a comparatively small organisation. Its desire to create or be the component of a large revolutionary organisation and movement has failed to happen. Many are put off joining a group where a strong commitment and a lot of determination are required. Many libertarian revolutionaries are as yet unconvinced of the need to create a specific libertarian communist organisation. They remain tied to the ideas of local groups, or at best regional federations loosely linked, being adequate for the very difficult tasks of introducing libertarian revolutionary ideas and practices to the mass of the population. They remain unconvinced of the need for a unified strategy and practice, for ideological and tactical unity and collective action as we in the ACF have insisted upon consistently. Some remain mesmerised by the myths of nationalism and national liberation, some by illusions in the unions. They seem to be unconvinced for the need for a publication, distributed throughout Britain, under the control of its writers and sellers which could be an effective weapon in the fight to develop the anarchist movement. Of course some local groups or regional federations produce some fine publications, and we in the ACF would

encourage the proliferation of all sorts of propaganda and discussion publications, whether they might be based on a town, a district, a workplace or industry, or aimed at a particular interest group. But alongside this must be a publication that addresses itself and responds to the needs and problems of the working class as a whole on a Britain-wide basis.

As we noted in Virus 9, in late 1986-early 1987 "There has been little sharing of experiences among libertarians in various campaigns and struggles. Even on something as basic as a demonstration, libertarians have marched separately and in different parts of the demonstration". This still remains true today, despite several attempts by the ACF over the years to encourage coordinations, and even (still) on basic things like a united contingent on a demo. Libertarians remain within their separate local groups and organisations. There is little dialogue and

little attempt for united activity, for forums and debates where these are possible.

And yet not since the pre-World War 1 period and the late 60s has there been such a potential for the growth of the libertarian revolutionary movement. The collapse of Stalinism, the changes within social-democracy-including the British variety of Labourism- with the end of welfarism, and the effects of both of these on Trotskyism, have created a space which revolutionary anarchists must fill. That is why we will continue to argue for a specific, unified libertarian communist organisation, for coordination and dialogue between libertarian revolutionaries, for a revolutionary programme. We will continue to argue for these with determination. One of the points we have always made is that an Anarchist movement cannot be built overnight, through bluster, hype or stunts.

ORGANISE! ONWARDS

ORGANISE! HAS OCCUPIED a unique position amongst the many anarchist papers which have arisen in Britain by its consistent format and level of analysis. It has always been intended to sit between the agitational 'in your face' rag and the heavier theoretical journal. It is aimed at the reader who doesn't need to be convinced how bad our life is under capitalism and the state, who is looking for more information and a closer view of the class struggle. This has allowed us to present both current news with in-depth analysis, and longer feature articles on a great range of topics including histories of events and political groups from around the world, and forays into anarchist-communist theory. The ACF does not exist in a vacuum, which is reflected by an emphasis on reviews of books, pamphlets and music, in our interviews with other activist groups, and in the Letters section of *Organise!* which is an important forum for feedback, criticism and clarification.

Organise! began with issue 14 following directly on from the 13 issues of its

forerunner Virus...

Internationally, the greatest trend over the last 10 years is one towards a more globalised capitalism and a new world (dis)order. We have seen the ending of the Cold War between the two superpowers of the United States and Soviet Union, and a consolidation of the new European bloc. The manufacturing 'tiger' economies of the East have continued to grow, and at the same time we are subjected to the effects of an ongoing economic crisis in the West. All over the world, the working class is paying for these changes by increased exploitation with a worsening of working conditions and security on one hand, and nationalist wars and power-struggles on the other. In Britain, the dismantling of the welfare state has meant increased poverty for many, and privatisation of industries has meant a shift from traditional forms of struggle. At least in Britain, we have seen a change in emphasis from a workplace dominated struggle to a mixed industrial and community based one. This is something that most anarchists have recognised, but

one which the left-wing parties have had a lot of trouble getting their heads around, remaining stuck in their Marxist dogma. *Organise!* has attempted to analyse and comment on these changes so that we can modify our efforts to best push forward revolutionary ideas and tactics. In order to carry out this retrospective, we have chosen the anti-Poll Tax struggle, South Africa, Ireland, the Eastern Bloc and the Unions, as issues which have maintained a thread over

Steady, consistent work carried out with patience and dogged determination, unglamorous and not readily rewarding as it may seem, is what a movement is built on. And we think that such an approach will eventually pay off.

Our friends, critics and enemies should all take note. We do not intend to go away. We will continue to work towards the greatest idea humanity has ever thought and dreamed of. For us the vision of Anarchist Communism, in which all are free and equal and live in harmony with each other and with nature, is something worth fighting for. It continues to be an inspiration for us, a lighthouse in the darkness of the human night. We will continue to hold aloft proudly the red and black banner of Anarchist Communism.

Stand with us! Join us!

many issues of *Organise!*

An Eruption of Class Anger

From the beginning the ACF recognised the importance of the anti-Poll Tax struggle, and has probably produced more on this than any other subject, spanning ten issues of *Organise!* and two pamphlets *The Poll Tax and How to Fight It* and *Beating the Poll Tax*. In the early days, at the same time as describing the personal effects of the tax as it was piloted in Scotland, *Organise!* was talking about its effects on the power of local councils, and why Labour councils would be second to none in their enthusiasm for implementing the collection process whilst they and the TUC would focus on it as a 'Tory' tax. Furthermore it was seen why the Poll Tax could be beaten purely as a community based struggle, even though attempts could be made to involve council workers. While news of 300,000 non-payers in Strathclyde was being reported, *Organise!* was vigorously encouraging 'twinning' initiatives between Scottish and newly formed anti-Poll Tax groups in England, and warning of a re-emergence of Militant's parasitical behaviour. It seems to have become some sort of myth (that we're sorry to say even some anarchists believe) that Militant was there from the start in Scotland, setting up 'community' anti-poll tax groups in a genuine effort to help the working class struggle. It must be remembered that Militant leaders, like Tommy Sheridan, were still inside in the Scottish Labour Party at the time, just waiting to be thrown out and use the Poll Tax as a lever to build support for the party outside of

Labour. By the time the anti-Poll Tax struggle really got ahead in England, Militant was already well used to the tactic of setting up bogus community groups, so it might well have seemed that they were there first. It's important to look back and remember that anarchist or at least libertarian influenced groups were the prime movers initiating the community based campaigns.

As non-registration and non-payment continued all over Scotland and England, *Organise!* covered the council house demos and burning of forms, the Trafalgar Square and October poll tax riots and the subsequent defence campaigns, and bailiff busting activities. In the case of the Battle of Trafalgar, rather than just celebrate the fightback, *Organise!* put forward a clear case for class violence, against the idea of the riot as either 'anarchist organised' or 'police provoked', and against any alliance with the left. Many of these ideas have bearings on previous and coming struggles against the Criminal Justice Bill/Act (we put our case against the Fluffies in Issue 36) and the Job Seekers Allowance (see Issue 40), so the period of the anti-Poll Tax struggle must be seen as one of the most important since the Miners' Strike.

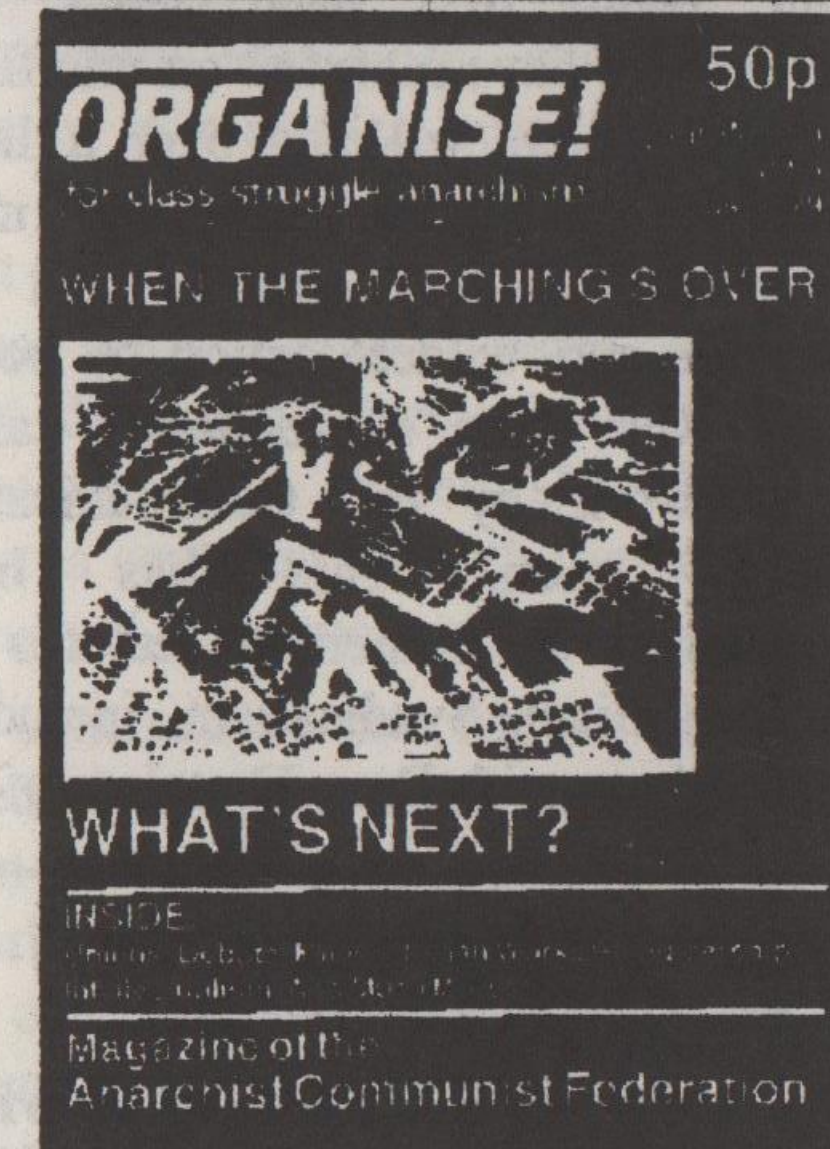
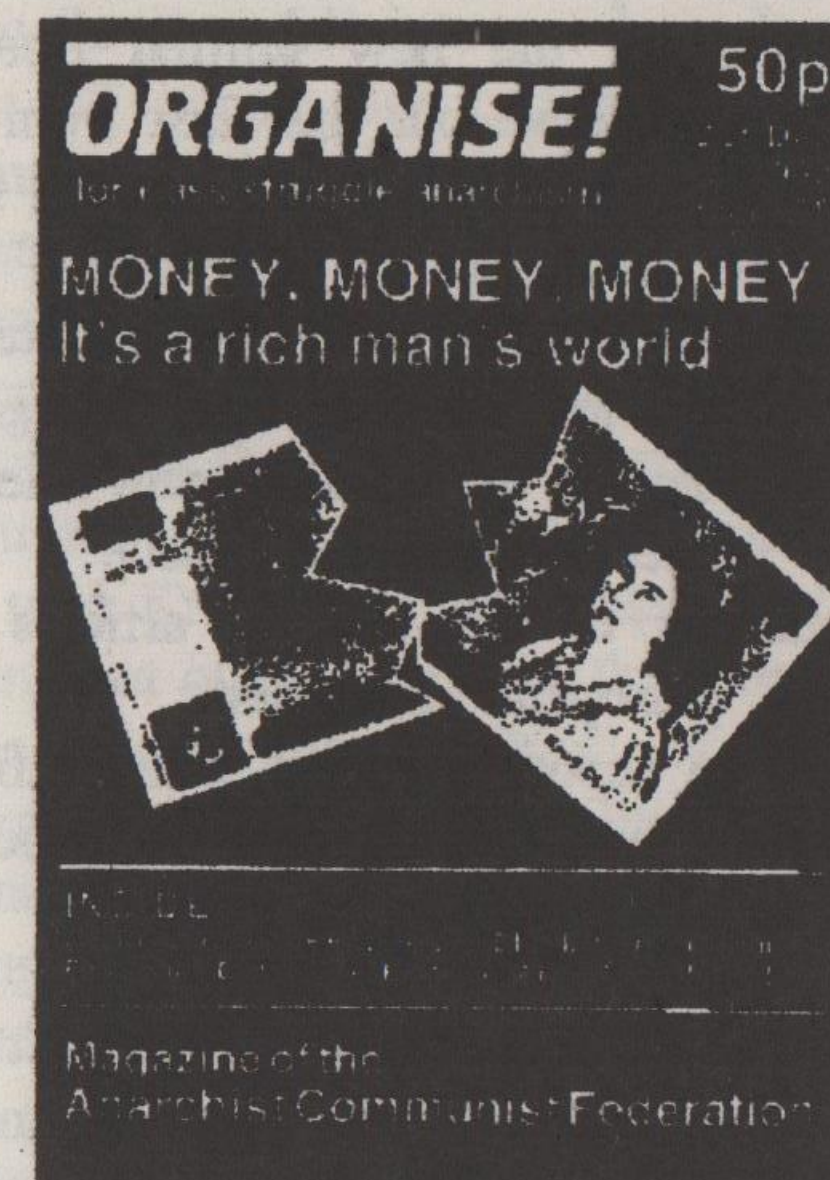
Not talking 'bout a revolution

The South African situation has long been a big issue on the left, and is an important one for anarchist-communists. The ACF has always been critical of Anti-Apartheid Movement's support of the African National Congress, poised as the 'government in waiting' - waiting to take political and military control over a new South Africa founded on a multi-racial capitalism. When Nelson Mandela was finally released from prison, *Organise!* was quick to quote his call for discipline, support of private enterprise and disowning of the Freedom Charter. Other articles covered the ANC's suppression of township activism, notably the murder of 14 year old Stompie Seipei. Whilst the ANC were carrying out elitist military campaigns on the borders and into Angola against UNITA, arms were being denied to the 'Young Comrades'. In spite of this, townships became no-go areas for police and military controlled by street committees, something both the white ruling class and the ANC could rightly fear. The politics of nationalism and Stalinist 'stages' theory have nothing to offer the South African working class. Now the reality of this 'democratic' stitch-up is clear. Mandela has negotiated the lifting of sanctions and has appealed for foreign investment, supported by President Clinton with his promise to permit lending from the International

Monetary Fund. The white Nationalist Party and ANC leaders then faced the problems of a power struggle with the AWB Boer right-wing and the Inkatha Zulu tribalists, which has resulted in ongoing warfare. *Organise!* also predicted swift action by the ANC against any attempts by the black working class to fight for immediate improvements in living conditions, and this was borne out in the waves of strikes in 1994 which were put down by batons, rubber bullets, tear gas and stun grenades, the last of these rarely used even by the old apartheid regime. Union leaders such as those of COSATU also showed their willingness to make workers demands more 'realistic', and called for orderly strikes and normal collective bargaining under the complete control of the unions.

Processed Peace

As the Western media was hailing a new peace in South Africa and the Middle East thanks to a new world order offered by the end of the Cold War, similar attention was being paid to the IRA cease-fire in Ireland. *Organise!* has continually put forward the anarchist-communist position against the nationalist politics of the Republican movement, against the IRA and Sinn Fein or any group calling for a 'united' Ireland, showing that to be anti-imperialist does not mean you have support the weaker state, or a state in waiting. As explained in the ACF's Ireland Commission statement (see Issue 20), "the presence of British troops in Ireland is only one aspect of imperialist domination. As in any fight against imperialism, we support the removal of capitalist troops through united internationalist working class action. The removal of troops on any other basis would only occur if the interests of the British and international ruling class were maintained, and such a move would have nothing to offer the Irish working class. As anarchist communists we see that nationalistic and hierarchical resistance can merely unite a capitalist Ireland". There are plenty of counter-revolutionaries with guns, and Ireland is no exception. Another aim of *Organise!* is to help us know our history in the face of the ignorance pushed by the media, and many of the articles on Ireland have concentrated on explaining traditions such as the Orange marches, the origin of British troops in Ireland, and the politics of both republican and loyalist groups. In the light of recent events, it is all the more important to be arguing the case for revolutionary politics in Ireland, and we support the difficult task of our comrades there.



All change in Eastern Europe?

The collapse of the Eastern bloc has a particular significance for anarchist-communists. On one hand capitalists all over the world have gleefully acknowledged the failure of 'communism', which gives us a new opportunity to explain the potential for real communism against the state capitalist and command economy nightmares of the old Soviet Union and its satellite states. On the other hand, the end of the Cold War has resulted in many left-wing parties floundering in disarray.

Again, we can usefully look back at history, so *Organise!* has included many articles on the people and events of the Russian Revolution, examining its successes and failures, and debunking of both the Stalinist and Trotskyist agendas. We have also presented analyses of events since Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, including the attempted coups by the old guard and fascists, the rise of Yeltsin and the break-up of the Soviet Union. It is clear that there are no guarantees that any unrest against the restructuring will result in anything other than reactionary conclusions, as we have



seen in the rapid rise of national liberation struggles. As the new unified Europe threatens to leave out the East from its promised prosperity, we are hearing less and less about Eastern Europe in the capitalist media. *Organise!* has countered this by articles on Romania, Hungary, Poland, though we did also print a letter from Czechoslovakia (Issue 27) complaining of our lack of articles on Eastern European anarchists. We are pleased to report a recent contact from anarchists in Lithuania and we hope to build up better links in the future.

When the marching's over...

The union question has occupied many column inches over past issues, and rightly so. We have reported on unofficial action and union sell-outs over a large number of disputes, covering most recently the dockworkers' lockout on Merseyside and wildcat action by postal workers who were subsequently called back to work by the Communication Workers Union. This has been supplemented by numerous features on Rank and Filism, Syndicalism, including an open debate with Dave Douglass of the

NUM and the then Direct Action Movement. Finally we have shown that far from being a British phenomena, unions are very much the same the world over and *Organise!* has printed articles on the rise of Solidarity to government in Poland, the COSATU/ANC collaboration in South Africa, and the antics of French unions in the recent wave of actions against welfare cuts and attacks on wages and working conditions by the Chirac/Juppé administration. We should expect similar union activities elsewhere in Europe in the near future, as many states attempt to pave the way for European Monetary Union in 1997. In a more general sense, *Organise!* has encouraged a more general view of the class struggle, which is not based solely in the workplace but is increasingly taking place in the wider community, by the unemployed, by homeworkers and in some aspects of campaigns like the anti-roads movement.

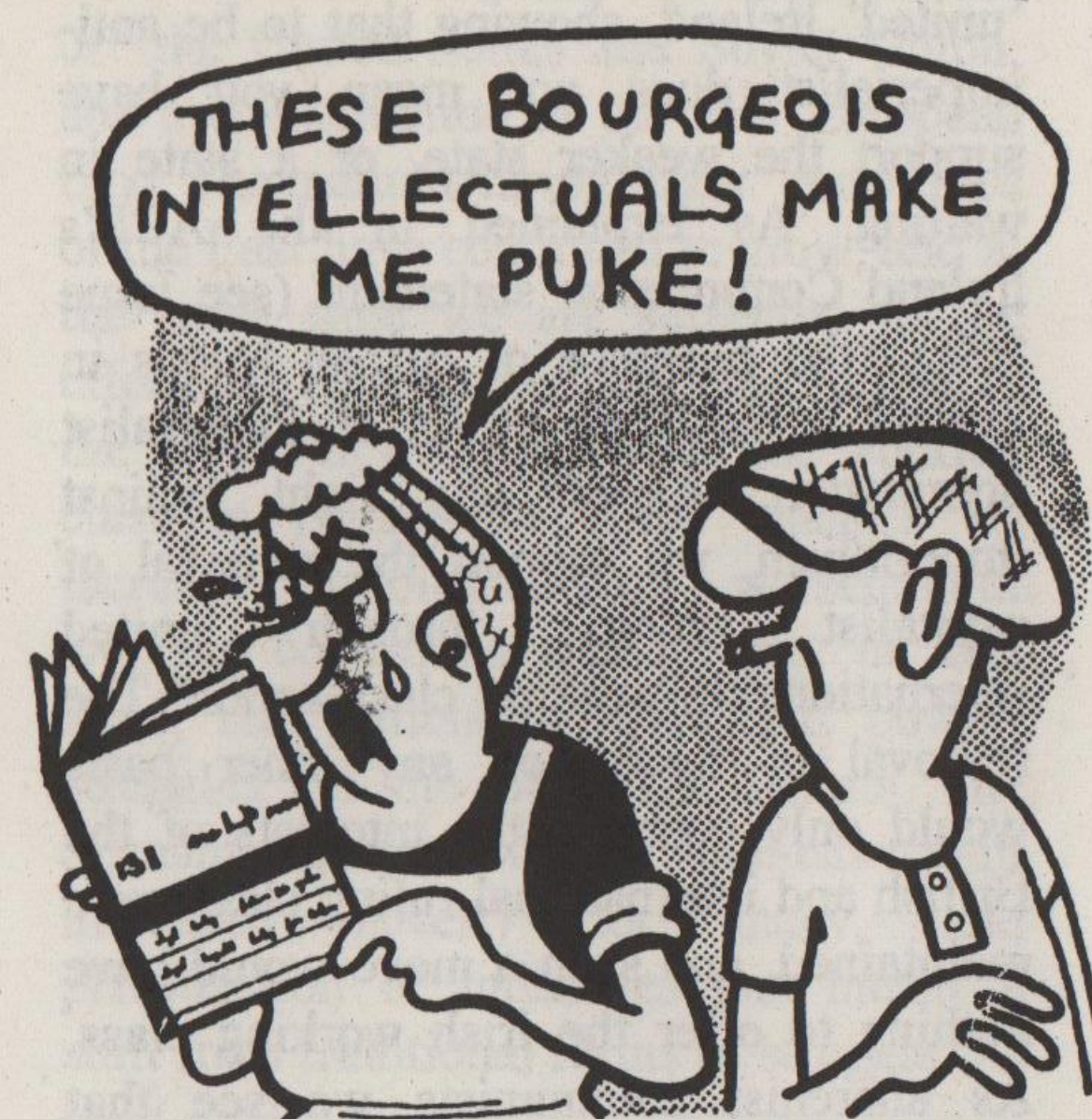
Although *Organise!* has remained in a similar format and style, and is constrained by cost (and number of ACF members!) as to its frequency and

thickness, we are open to suggestions from readers on how we can improve it. A questionnaire was sent out to subscribers, the results of which were given in Issue 25, which has helped us make changes in content. The back page Aspects of Anarchism series was started at the end of 1991, covering the fundamental areas of anarchist-communist theory, which is now approaching its 20th article. More recent issues of *Organise!* have included features on art and culture, including music and poetry, and special issues have been published on women, prisons and racism. Look forward to more articles about anarchist prisoners, the Job Seekers Allowance and the growth of anarchist-communism internationally. Look out also for the *Organise!* index which is advertised in this issue, listing and categorising the articles, reviews and letters from all previous issues. Finally, thanks to all readers for your support over the years, and everyone who has contributed to the Press Fund.

I'VE AN IDEA

HAVE YOU EVER tried to convince someone of the need to abolish property and replace it with communal goods and being told, "The right to personal property is established when an individual combines their labour with natural resources imbuing the product with the inherent property in themselves as argued in Locke's second treatise on government."? If it's not very often and you're more used to "it's a nice idea but it'll never work in practice" you may well wonder at the effectiveness of rational arguments for anarchism in the face of the apparent apathetic and apolitical nature of our class.

Obviously in times of increased struggle people are more responsive to our ideas but there has never yet been a revolutionary situation where most of the working class have taken on anarchist communist ideas to which we attribute a large part of their failure. In short if all the resources of capitalism in power for hundreds of years in this country cannot get its citizens to believe or even understand it's political theory what hope have we of convincing the working class of libertarian ideas, and if only a minority of people are able or willing to understand a comprehensive political viewpoint then a society of political equality is unworkable.



In response to this problem I will offer a theory of the nature of political commitment and its place in human consciousness and then consider what help this can be to the movement and what dangers it may bring.

Having put it off for the first paragraph, the dread word Ideology now rears its ugly cliché. To ensure some clarity I will try to explain what is meant by it in the context of this article. Firstly there is a distinction to be made between *an* ideology and ideology as a whole. An ideology can be considered as a body of political thought that forms a holistic view of how society should be organised. This is fairly controversial, the problem comes

with ideology as a concept. Here opinions differ between its detractors like Engels who characterised it as a false consciousness, or of Karl Popper who portrays it as the abandonment of common sense for abstract doctrine. The view of ideology taken here is that any useful description must be free of a value judgement of ideology itself or it becomes the argument of a particular ideology. This is not to say that you can adopt a superior overview but that different types of analysis must be dealt with on their own level. Consider this as a thesis.

Sharing the Concept

Ideology is a name for the way the mind gives political meaning to language and sense data it receives and expresses. All intelligent being have this process like it or not because it is essential to operating in society. A piece of property does not exist in a physical sense, only in it's mutual recognition by people sharing the concept of property. Ideology is a collection of concepts which people share in common. Although it exists in individual minds ideology can only exist where they are in contact with one another or retain the memory of contact and while it is created by the material universe it cannot be directly extrapolated from knowledge of the physical world as it is itself part of the observing process (as in Heisenburg's uncertainty principle).

No 42.Spring 1996

Ideology is thus based on acceptance of truths about the political world (not facts) so that people holding different ideologies can observe the same thing but understand different things by it (the concept of the duck/rabbit where two concepts can be seen but only one from any particular ideological viewpoint, we see an expletive boss but the capitalist sees an entrepreneur). Many factors, material and mental affect the success of Ideologies but since they cannot be proved false, the divine right of kings is still as valid logically now as in the 17th century, in so far as people accept them. You can chose to try and understand the ideology you have but you cannot consciously chose your ideology in a rational way as you can your political actions. Try choosing what your favourite food is, let alone your politics. Ideology is your political belief and your actions derive from it.

If that is boring wait for this. We must now ask where ideology fits into the map of human knowledge. Take the lack of successful libertarian revolution. Economics can tell us how far the "forces of production have developed", psychology can explain the workings of the human mind in their social context, history can tell us the balance of forces in struggle, even astrology can say the stars were in the wrong alignment, all ideology can do is say society is unchanged because it has not adopted a different ideology. It is in fact tautological. Here we see the level ideology acts on, it takes arguments

from analytical methods and gives them a political context and meaning - when are the economic conditions ripe for revolution? When it suits our cause to say they are is the reply. Ideology is the motivation force that changes understanding of the world into changing it as an interface between theoretical values and metaphysical comprehension.

False Consciousness

You will have noted by now that this view of ideology is as much a product of ideological view as the views rejected earlier for their positive angle towards their own particular ideology. Marxism isn't false consciousness because it's true, liberalism isn't ideological its living in the real world etc. This is true in so far as any theory of human activity is influenced by the inquirer's political standpoint and in this case the analysis is forwarded for the particular advantage to one in particular (guess which?). This does not invalidate it, or for that matter a Marxist analysis of scientific socialism being coincidentally correct but only discovered by people who just happened to be communists. The difference is in being conscious of the two levels of arguments and avoiding projecting fact onto convictions or making your convictions into facts. The theory of Ideology advocated in this article can have benefits for the movement because it does not elevate our ideology to a only possible correct theory. It places responsibility on

the movement to achieve anarchism not wait for it to fall into our lap. It shows that all people are capable of holding complex political theories. Its just a question of understanding what you already subconsciously know (people operate with a much more intricate system of property than Locke expounded) and in a future anarchist society we won't need to read Kropotkin and Malatesta before going out of the house in the morning. It also reduces the possibility of scientific changes ridiculing our values based on attacks of our analysis. There are also dangers principally of making all value relative so that anarchist communism is no better than any other system. This must be fought out in the arena of competing ideologies, and the constant danger of any idea being recuperated to the benefit of the present system. One last point is that while concentrating on ideas here it should never be forgotten that ideas do not spring from thin air. Our ideology (and indeed all others) came from a contestation with the very physical forces of our opponents.

To conclude we now have a very powerful method to bore to death those unwilling to join the movement but if that does not work anarchism, as the self actualisation of our class, may benefit as much from encouraging people to examine their own ideology as a straightforward dissemination of anarchist propaganda.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS



Mumia Abu-Jamal

MUMIA'S EXECUTION SET for August 17th was stopped when he was granted an indefinite stay of execution. The judge claimed that this was to allow Mumia time to complete the appeal process. More likely, however, since fairness has hardly been a notable feature of his incarceration, is the weight of international protest forced them to back down.

No 42.Spring 1996

However, this is no time to ease the pressure. We cannot allow him to grow old in prison, or for the authorities to execute him at a later date when outrage has died down. Continue sending letters of protest, demanding at the very least a retrial.

Also keep writing to Mumia. Increase the pressure!

Protest letters:

Governor Tom Ridge,
Main Capitol Building,
Rm. 225
Harrisburg,
PA 17120
USA.

Support Letters

Mumia Abu-Jamal AM-8335,
SCI Greene,
1040 East Roy Furman Highway,
Waynesburg
PA 15370-8090 USA

Eco-Prisoners

JIM CHAMBERS AND Stuart Edwards have been convicted of causing £35,000 of "criminal damage" to plant and machinery

on the north circular road widening scheme. They were both sentenced to 18 months in prison. Both have been long term campaigners against the M11 in London.

Drop them a line (Send them separate letters).

Jim Chambers PV2504
Stuart Edwards PB1864
HMP Pentonville,
Caledonian Road,
LONDON
N7 8TT.

Kenny Carter

IN JANUARY 1990, Kenny Carter was nearing the end of a short sentence for robbery, in Durham Prison. However, on January 4th and 5th, a series of disputes arose between Kenny and his cellmates, Jason Rochford and Darren Brook, over accusations that Darren Brooks was a sex offender. During the night of the 5th, Jason Rochford awoke to find Darren Brook had hanged himself. Both men were interviewed by police giving

consistent evidence, and it was generally accepted that this was a case of suicide. Seven days later, police informed Kenny that Jason Rochford had changed his story and that he would now be charged with Darren Brook's murder.

The Trial Commenced on 26th November 1990. The prosecutions case rested solely on Jason Rochford's story which had now changed several times. The judge, Mr Justice Potts, ordered this fact to be disregarded. There was no other evidence, the Home Office pathologist had reported after the death that there was no evidence of a forced hanging.

Kenny was sentenced to life imprisonment at the age of 20. He has been fighting his conviction ever since, with increasing support on the outside. He has suffered beatings and petty harassment. Kenny badly needs our support.

Write him a letter:

Kenny Carter,
AD3434,
HMP Hull Special Unit,
Hedon Road
Humbly Grove
HU9 5LS

Further Information:

Newcastle ABC,
PO Box 11A,
Fenham,
NEWCASTLE
NE9 9TA

Senegal Appeal

Two groups have been set up by revolutionaries in Senegal, who are fighting repression in their country, to support prisoners.

Solidarite Action aim to ensure that Mauritanian refugee children in Senegal and Senegalese children repatriated from Mauritania, street children, handicapped and impoverished children are given healthcare and education so that they can look after themselves. They also plan to arrange for released prisoners to talk to children about their experiences to help them avoid falling into the same traps.

Internationaliste Solidarite aims to provide support for both political and social prisoners both in Senegal and internationally. They hope to create links between prisoners in Senegal and Britain.

These groups are appealing for donations of money and materials. Send cheques, PO's (payable to R Taylor), or for further information to

Huddersfield ABC
17-21 Chapel Street.
Bradford
BD1 5DT

Internationaliste Solidarite
Mame Demba Diop
c/o 22b Fass Batiment
Dakar
Senegal

Solidarite Action:-Siege Social,
Appartement 4T
HLM Fass-Paillotte
Dakar
Senegal,

Writing To Prisoners

IF YOU ARE unsure about writing to prisoners, the ABC produce a useful leaflet to help you along. You can get this and other practical information by writing to any ABC group, or drop us a line, preferably with an SAE, and we'll pass them on to you.

ACF, PO Box 5754, ELGIN, IV30 2ZD



GUILT BY ASSOCIATION - TURMOIL ON THE LEFT continued from page 10

In the short term, before any group is able to dominate, political debate is being ditched in favour of activism. The IWCA emphasises that it will be an organisation of activists. But what will these activists do? All the emphasis so far is on building the organisation. Internal literature stresses the need to publicise the organisation at every meeting no matter how vaguely relevant, in order to recruit and to raise money, emphasising that membership is without precondition. Does this mean that we can expect frantic interventions from the IWCA in campaigns like the anti-Job Seekers Allowance, as this organisation without a political programme of its own attempts to set our agenda (as its literature says it aims to do)?

Hostile to Labour?

Then there is the issue of IWCA attempts to get the sponsorship of Anarchist and Syndicalist organisations. Are the IWCA seriously interested in attracting groups whom it knows will oppose their flawed structure, their lack of a political direction and the 'hidden' politics which will eventually emerge? Anarchists were invited to the initial IWCA meeting and

went along curious and open-minded. Seeing what sort of political forces were involved and realising the lack of potential for anything new or positive for revolutionaries, the ACF has since had nothing to do with the project. The Solidarity Federation (anarcho-syndicalists) appear to have distanced themselves, whilst the Class War Federation appears divided, at least one local group affiliating, with others taking a hostile stance. The whole episode looks rather as though the IWCA was trying to appear non-sectarian, and to label anarchists as sectarian. Bearing in mind the attacks on anarchism which regularly appear in the pages of Red Action, being out numbered by libertarian socialists in the IWCA was probably the last thing they wanted, not least because the presence of anarchist organisations would expose the lie that the IWCA is distinct from anything that exists in Britain now or in the recent past - a working class organisation not only independent, but hostile to Labour.

Hilarious Chaos

The political parties and organisations who comprise the majority of the membership of the IWCA are too small

themselves to have much influence on the Left, and they hope to change this first by joining and then by dominating a new organisation. In truth, they will probably either be discredited or lose their momentum in the face of the other new and revived groupings which are emerging. They are already completely overshadowed by the SLP and by various initiatives of Militant in England and Scotland (the Socialist Alliances). The IWCA is presumably planning to spring into public life around election time, when the working class will thrill to the hilarious chaos which will ensue when various Left groups try to work out their electoral strategy - not least regarding what policy to adopt regarding each other's candidates in marginal seats! What a spectacle!

It remains to be seen whether the IWCA, if they last that long, will be advocating the electoral system as a means to create a constituency within the working class. For our part, we think that the future lies not within the ballot box, which is always a diversion, but in the potential for working class self-organisation in both workplace and neighbourhood.

ANYONE BUT ENGLAND:
CRICKET AND THE
NATIONAL MALAISE.
Mike Marqusee. Verso Books.
273pp, pbk £9.95

Marqusee is a rarity, describing himself as a deracinated American Jewish Marxist who follows cricket. This excellent book is similarly ground-breaking; a critical, political study of race, class and cricket. The game is used by the ruling class to maintain and promote class rule; society, like cricket, is a 'level playing field' where playing by the rules - those set by the rich and powerful - is all important. Similarly cricket is a potent metaphor for the new racism's language of 'mutually exclusive cultural identities' - which just happen to coincide with race.

Class

Cricket's origin myth is that of a single rural folk game which all classes and both sexes, adults and children played together as equals, free from the evils of commerce-betting, wages, sponsorship, and advertising until the recent advent of professionalism at the beginning of the 1960's. The reality is that of a number of rural folk games standardised and codified into one national game by the ruling class in the late eighteenth century due to the high stakes arising from large scale betting. Women were barred, though this was usually only enforced after puberty in order to protect men from the threat of female contamination. The founding of the new game was bound up with the capitalist enclosures of the common land in the second half of the eighteenth century. Breaking into the newly created closes was an offence - landowners now had to allow people to play in areas where they had previously played as a right. Class distinctions were institutionalised, and money pervasive in the form of betting and shambateism; cheating necessarily followed. Almost from the beginning of cricket there was the lament

that the game was not what it used to be, with technique, sportsmanship, loyalty, patriotism, crowd behaviour, and the corrupting qualities of money all cited. Cricket was associated with a rural childhood innocence and a social harmony arising from a 'natural' - i.e. feudal-hierarchy; the ills of the game and the modern world arise from alien intrusions such as money, politics and immigrants (particularly black ones). Marqusee rightly concludes that the world's first large scale industrialised society lived on a cultural diet of sentimental ruralism, a mythical golden age. Central to this was the games development in and through industrial society under the control of the non-industrial class, the landed upper class.

The elitism and snobbery between 'amateurs' and professionals was another illustration of the class system in cricket. The amateurs were members of the upper classes who played alongside working class professionals in teams, but enjoyed far higher pay, under the guise of 'expenses' and a range of privileges to show their supposed superiority. Dressing rooms were segregated along with entrances to the field; amateurs also had separate travel, accommodation and dining arrangements (all first class), and had to be addressed as 'Sir' or 'Mr' at all times.

Their 'expenses' were often double the pay of professionals.

This divide parallels the split in the rugby codes between 'amateur' (until 1995) ruling class Union, and working class League, professional since the breach in 1895. Ostensibly the split was over 'broken time' payments which compensated workers for wages lost through playing rugby, but the main agenda was undoubtedly class. Arthur Budd (then RFU president) baldly stated 'The troubles of the Union commenced with the advent of the working man. If he cannot afford the leisure to play the game he must do without it'.

Empire and Race

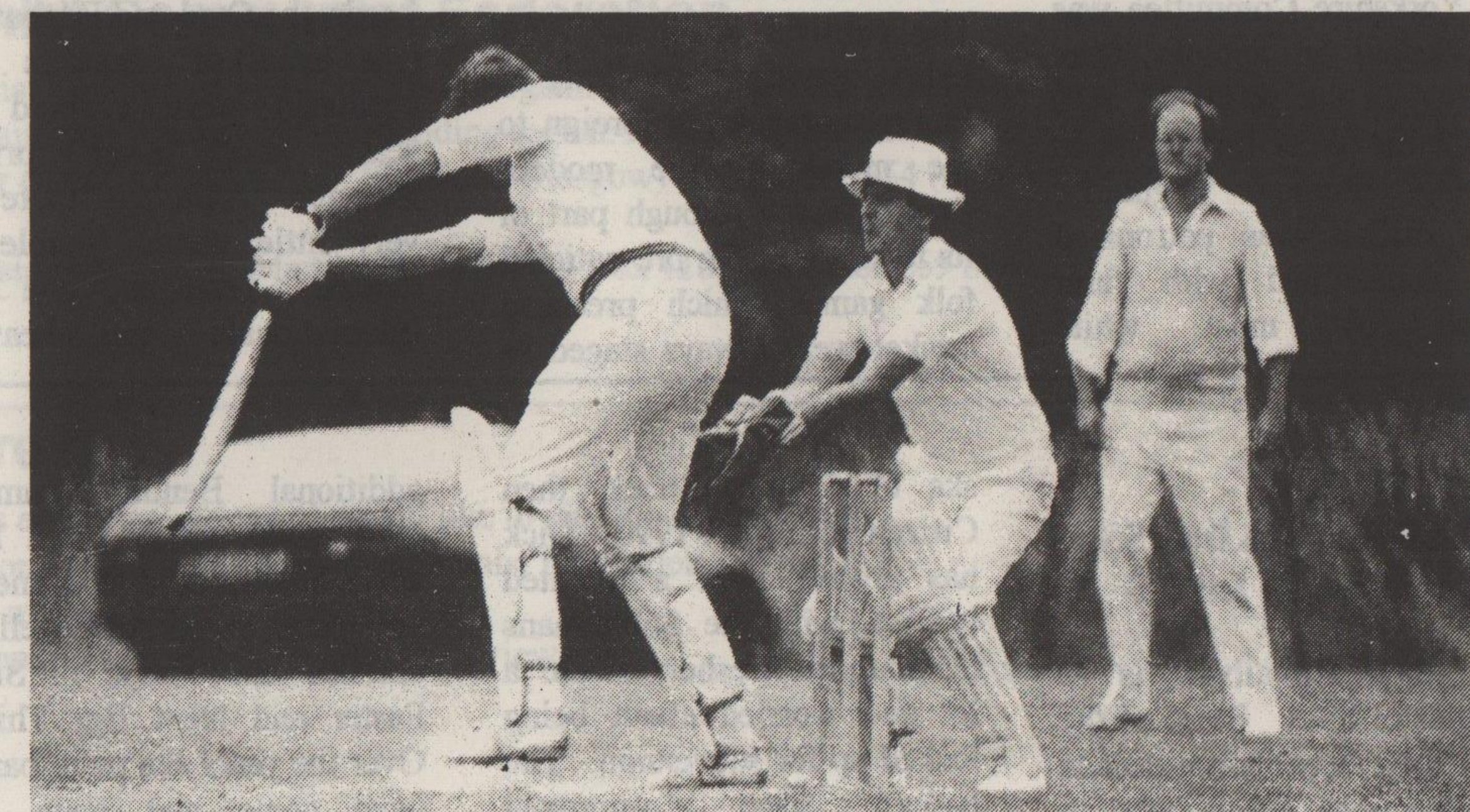
The Victorian sporting ethic was a paradox - the individual was subordinate to the team, and although winning was the driving force, the principle of 'fair play' overrode everything.

This was a moral for the higher and more important games in life, those of economics, politics and empire: those who lost these - the working class worldwide - must accept the rules and verdict of the system.

Cricket brought together the classes in a hierarchical way; racism was an inevitable consequence of this invented tradition of social inclusion. Playing cricket was a touchstone of people's

'Englishness', their right to be included in Empire. Marqusee points out the inherent contradiction of English nationalism - based on (the now defunct) empire - compared with other nationalisms such as those of America and France (based on the nation, with a 'popular and democratic content'). He is wrong to claim that nationalism can be positive however, which he does through asserting that 'nation' can be divorced from 'race'; and of course this means ignoring the class struggle for the national interest i.e. that of the ruling class. Following the collapse of the English Empire - and national capitals faltering fortunes - English nationalism is a weak and faltering creature, which can only define itself negatively through what is not. Thus Norman Tebbit's cricket test - 'Which side do they (black immigrants, particularly Asians) cheer for?' The 'intrinsic Englishness' of cricket is the background to this and other 'cultural' debates of the new racism. The new racists do not want to dominate, they merely want a space of their own -

Tebbit attacked British Muslim fundamentalists for their fatwah against Salman Rushdie and accused Rushdie of an assault on his own religion. If black immigrants (particularly those with Asian fathers) cheered India or



Cricket Whites...

Pakistan in tests/Internationals against England they failed. This cultural test is (un) surprisingly not applied to white English settlers in Australia, or Scots, Welsh or Irish settlers when their national sides played internationals against England. The games authorities have ignored the racism of the cricket test but continue to accuse those who adopt political stances such as condemning apartheid for 'whipping up hatred'. Similarly there is frothing at the mouth by the establishment and the media over the Mexican wave amongst spectators, but deafening silence about racist chants and abuse from crowds. Yorkshire cricket club is notorious for its racial exclusion policy - 'we only play (white) Yorkshiremen'. Until the 1992-3 season they were the only County side never to have played a black overseas player, worse they have never selected a Yorkshire born black player for the first team, despite the counties' strong Asian Cricketing leagues they are largely ignored by the white cricket establishment and media. Sections of the Hendingley crowd are notorious for their racism: after a match against Somerset where the great West Indian batsman Viv Richards was repeatedly abused, his teammate Ian Botham called the culprits 'racial idiots'. The response of the Yorkshire Committee was to demand an apology from Beefy. In the good old days before the West Indies began beating England regularly, their cricket was patronised and condemned with faint praise by most white

commentators as erratic - they were described as 'eager', 'confident', 'unorthodox', 'joyous', 'uninhibited' and 'masterful' at times, but losing heart when things were against them. With the rise of Clive Lloyds all conquering side of the late 1970s and 80s, (based on all an all out barrage of four highly skilled fast bowlers, copied from the successful Aussie Blitzkrieg of Lillee and Thomson), the patronising mask disappeared. The Windies were described as (an) 'army of weary mercenaries', and derided for their 'slow play' after their 5-0 'blackwash' of England in 1984 (although their over rate exceeded England's). David Frith described their cricket as "founded on vengeance and violence and fringed by arrogance... Even the umpires seem to be scared that the devilish looking Richard's might put a voodoo sign on them". The West Indies clash with England issue as the savage verses the civilised; Caribbean skill is ascribed to 'national ability' and 'spontaneity'. Marqusee points out that cricket is in fact a difficult, unnatural game (e.g. the side on axis required for batting and bowling), so to make it look natural requires great skill. Similarly, spontaneity means risktaking; complicated calculation, quick reaction and sophisticated technique.

Pre-national

The carnival spirit of West Indies crowds, particularly at English grounds, is foreign to the mores of the modern English game (though part of its folkroots). The pre-national folk games which presaged cricket were always staged as

part of the local saturnalia: on festival days the lord of the manor provided meat and ale, and tolerated disorder and insubordination in order to lessen class antagonism. At Caribbean cricket grounds the local lords of misrule entertain the crowd with music and mockery. Some cross-dress (e.g. Chickee at Trinidad) an ancient symbol of social inversion mirroring the world turned upside down on the field of play as ex slaves beat the former master. Carnival is naturally very unsettling for the upholders of authority and hierarchy. The first West Indies victory over England in 1950 was dubbed 'calypso cricket', it coincided with the start of the large scale immigration from the Caribbean. As the West Indian community grew and their national side achieved dominance, the cricket establishment and media's amused tolerance changed to shrill hostility. Complaints grew about the 'endless din', 'mindless cacophony' and 'inescapable racket' of black fans who banged cans, and blew bugles and conch shells. In 1987, in reaction to disorder at the Edgbaston test against Pakistan (partly due to racist baiting of black fans by whites) the cricket authorities barred spectators from bringing in flags, banners and excessive amounts of alcohol. This was soon followed by a ban on the spirit of carnival. Within 2 years open areas at Lords, the Oval and Edgbaston (the haunt of boozers and chanters) were covered in seats and ticket prices rocketed. Although there is very little crowd trouble at matches, Tests and one day Internationals are heavily

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policed by robotic stewards eager to stamp out the first sign of carnival. Additionally the vast majority of seats for major fixtures now have to be booked in advance. The net effect of these changes has been a huge decline in black spectators for the last 3 West Indian tours (1988,91 and 95), particularly at Edgbaston and the Oval, which were previously strongholds (due to their large black population).

This important book looks at the mythology and politics of cricket worldwide, and benefits from the author's honesty, humour and warts-and-all love of the game. The analysis is flawed by the leftist politics however, for example the notion that nationalism can be positive, and the failure to discuss the broad question of whether competitive team sports can be libertarian.



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This, their 5th album, is 40 minutes of bliss. Some of the band have more than a decade of experience going back to the Punk Subhumans of the early 80s before the festival

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additional Bender trumpet loan works nicely on a few songs and the core instruments are made to perform well in classics like Phone In Sick, Faster and Next Big Thing. Over the years ska punk bands have come and gone but Citizen Fish have got something original and

special. This album is being distributed in the US which I think is a first for them. Look out for live shows, best anarchist gigs around. Unfortunately for us they never seem to get north of Birmingham...

No 42.Spring 1996

ORGANISE!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation(ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals. All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

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