

Green Politics

IT CAN BE argued that the logical consequence of libertarian communist thought has always been the creation of a 'green' society since it has always posited the need for the destruction of capitalism, the system which, as we know, must expand or die and which has given birth to the ideologies of productivism and consumerism.

Anarchist and libertarian communist thinkers in the early days of the revolutionary working class movement, in their criticism of the 'modern' industrial system and its tendency to transform the worker into a part of the machinery, can be seen as proto-greens. But it would, however, be stretching things to say that the early anarchist movement was anything like a consciously 'green' movement, despite the critical contribution of people like Elisee Reclus, William Morris, Edward Carpenter and Peter Kropotkin. Whilst all of the above writers produced work that contained, 'green' implications or at least sentiment, none can be seriously considered as systematically 'green' thinkers. What can be argued is that the communist vision of people like Morris and Kropotkin, that of a decentralised society of integrated labour in humanised environments, stands in stark contrast to many 'socialists' (beginning with some of the 'utopian' socialists but scientified by Marx) who considered (and still consider) the Factory as a model for the new society.

Socialist Productivism

Such thinking found its realisation in the rapid industrialisation under state capitalism in the Soviet Union, which although bound to do so by its need to compete in world markets, found a perfect ideological support in the (generally unchallenged) belief amongst socialists that the industrialisation of the world was an 'historical necessity'. It is no coincidence that some of the most horrendous environmental destruction has been carried out under the banner of socialism! Unfortunately, anarchists have not been exempt from holding an uncritical attitude towards industrial 'civilisation'.

The Green 'Revolution'

Yet today much of the green movement claims to hold much in common with 'anarchism'. Even some of the most reformist elements in the green movement, from time to time, feel obliged to make noises about non-hierarchical organisation, devolved decision-making and other things historically identified with anarchist politics. Amongst large numbers of the direct-action orientated green activists,



'anarchist' sentiment is strong, though often very unfocused, and there is contempt for traditional forms of politics. There is also alienation from the traditional focus of anarchism, the class struggle. Often the working class are identified with the 'culture of industry' and, understandably, the notion of class solidarity is easily lost on, for example, road

protesters (often unemployed) whose regular contact with their class brothers and sisters is in the form of £2.50 an hour rent-a-cop security guards!

Social Ecology

The anarchist movement itself has been forced to take on board explicitly green politics, has had to confront the issue of productivism and has had to seriously discuss the nature of technology. Perhaps the first libertarian communist writer to comprehensively address the question of the ecological crisis and its solution has been Murray Bookchin. Indeed, Bookchin can be counted amongst the first theorists of the modern ecology movement itself, with books like 'Our Synthetic Environment' (1962) and 'Crisis in our Cities' (1965) setting the agenda for what would later be known as Social Ecology. Whilst using the anarchist critique of hierarchical power and the relationship between means and ends as a starting point.

Bookchin has developed a political perspective that has had a considerable impact upon, particularly, the North American green movement. His popularity amongst US and Canadian greens has been bolstered by his argument that the 'traditional' focus of revolutionary attention (whether Marxist, Anarcho-syndicalist or Anarchist Communist), the struggle of the working class, is no longer central to the revolutionary project. His belief that the key to social revolution lay in the development of oppositional lifestyles and the 'new' social movements (feminist, anti-nuclear, anti-racist etc.) has recently been revised to some extent. Social Ecological thought, which sees the potential for a liberatory technology (liberated from its present owners) in a future ecological libertarian society has come into conflict with another

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ORGANISE!

FOR CLASS STRUGGLE ANARCHISM

ISSUE NO 43 SUMMER 1996

60p (FREE TO PRISONERS)

ROADS TO REVOLUTION?



INTERVIEW WITH A ROADS ACTIVIST • GREEN POLITICS • ARTISTS OF THE CLASS WAR • POLITICS OR RAVING AND 'E' • AND LOADS MORE!

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.

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.

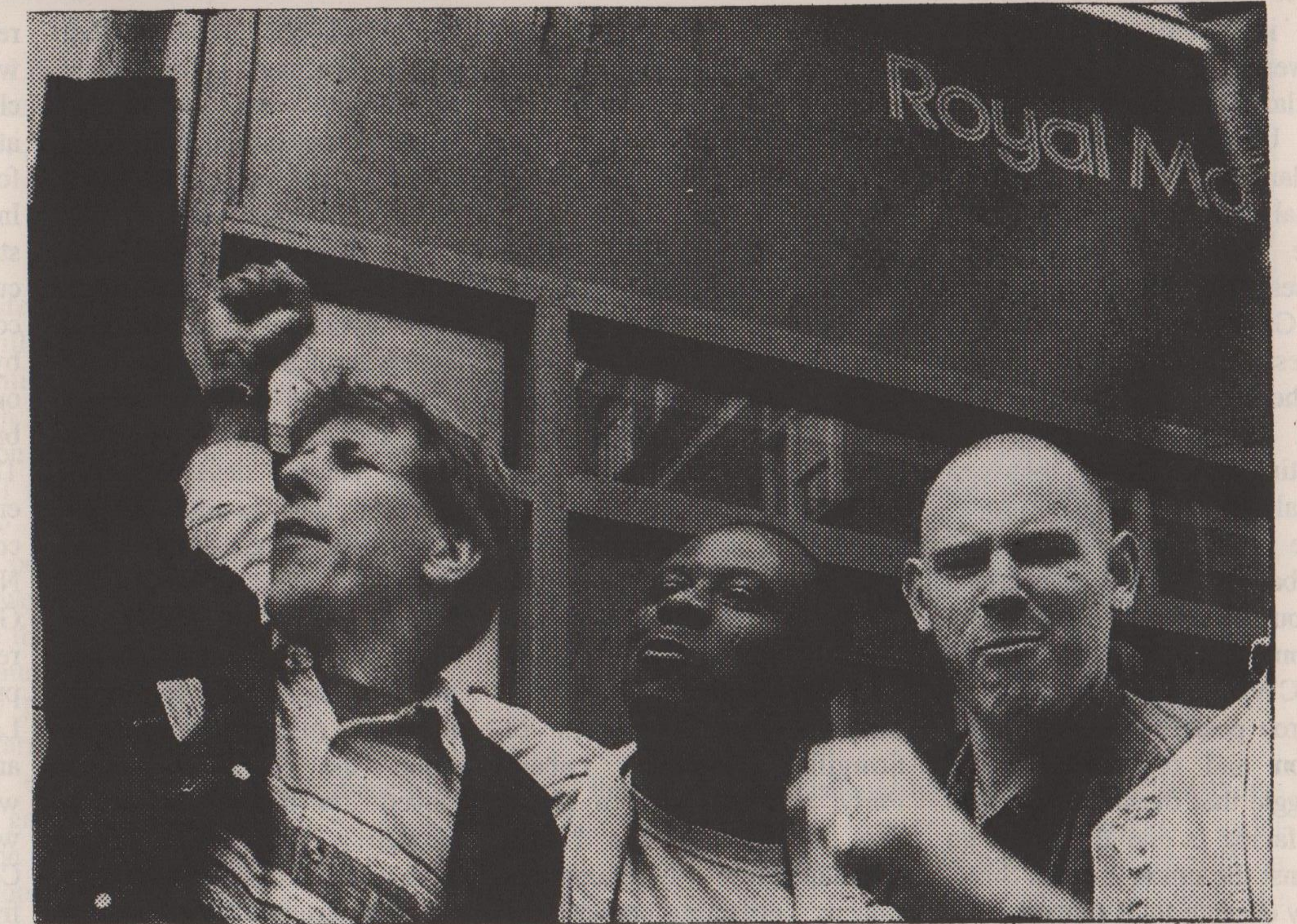
Similarly we have a Greek translation of *As We See It*. If you can circulate this among the Greek speaking population here, or you have contacts in Greece or Cyprus, then why not send for a copy? 50p plus post from London address. (A Portuguese translation of our *Aims and Principles* is also available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

Industrial Notes

Postal strike

AFTER MORE THAN 2 years of wildcat strikes throughout the postal service in Britain, the postal workers union, the CWU, was forced to call a ballot for strike action. In 1993 there were 32 major work stoppages—this does not include the many actions that lasted less than a day—and in 1994 there were 65. This number increased in 1995 to 88. Through this guerrilla war, and certainly not due to the resistance of the CWU, Royal Mail's attempts to increase exploitation through extra workloads, speedups and job cuts have been seriously checked.

The CWU has consistently denounced the unofficial actions. Now it needs to call a series of strikes under the control of the union in order to "let off steam". In the second place it wants to use the strike to show the bosses that it is needed to police the postal workers. At the CWU National Conference in early June union leaders and many delegates spoke repeatedly about voting in a Labour government. The joint general secretary Tony Young emphasised that the CWU must keep in line with Labour and that some of the laws passed by the Tories against workplace militancy must be retained under a Labour government. He was echoed by his partner as general secretary, Alan Johnson. A motion to commit the union to backing Labour's plan for a commission with the bosses to decide a minimum wage was carried. The Labour shadow foreign secretary Robin Cook made an appearance at conference, as did fellow shadow cabinet member Margaret Beckett. Both Beckett and Cook are the soft cops of New Labour. They aim to portray themselves as the real heart of Labour. Cook is



beginning to specialise in these appearances. At the Scottish TUC conference in April he reaffirmed that Labour's links with the unions were unbreakable. Despite what the national newspapers say, Cook is not a leader of the Left (as the Daily Mail described him) but works in tandem with Blair. Whilst Blair is off pleasing the CBI and newspaper tycoons, Cook's job is to keep the unions sweet and make sure that Labour retain the union vote and union support.

Johnson and Young are important allies of Blair. They will attempt to defuse the struggle and call off any action carried out by postal workers. The Labour leadership is putting massive pressure on the CWU executive to sabotage the strike action. At the CWU conference Johnson made reference on a number of occasions to the "British public" and "public opinion". He is seriously worried by the mood of militancy among postal workers. Already an unofficial conference of 150 activists in March in London has met with condemnation by the CWU. In a continuation of the wildcats, 60 workers at Gateshead Team Valley sorting office walked out after management refused to stick by an agreement on overtime and using temporary workers a week before the first

official strike. They did this without a ballot and were soon joined by another 500 workers. The bosses went to the courts to declare the strike illegal and the CWU denounced the strike. 50 workers at Willesden walked out briefly on June 20 over the same issues. At the beginning of June, posties officially struck in Wakefield and Harrogate over the victimisation of a worker who had refused to carry out bosses' instructions.

Over the last 10 years the CWU has directly collaborated with Royal Mail bosses by agreeing to Sunday working and a continuing erosion of work conditions for postal workers. Indeed thanks to the CWU productivity—read more efficient exploitation of the workforce—has increased by more than 60%. During the strikes, continuing CWU sabotage continued when it issued a circular telling postal workers not involved in the strike ballot to cross picket lines. This involved mainly part-time casuals, although some full-time workers scabbed as well. The CWU told those posties who had begun their shifts before the start of the strike at midnight to continue working to the end of their shift. The official union strike leaflet handed out said that the postal workers "didn't want to be out on strike"!

What is directly at stake is the rejection of the Employee Agenda proposed by the Royal Mail bosses. This proposes the introduction of Team Quality Management which would introduce 'team working' through 'team talks, action plans and personal development modules'. Teams would have to agree to improve efficiency and performance and cover for other workers off sick or on holiday. Local and national agreements would be scrapped so that workers would get a cut in pay! This despite profits this year for Royal Mail of £500m and the productivity increases already mentioned. But now the Royal Mail has to compete with national and international rivals, who already have these methods of working.

Behind all of this is the Conservative Government which is talking about suspending the Royal Mail's monopoly of mail delivery so that the private outfits can strike-break. The Government also wants to hand the delivery of junk mail over to private companies or separate it off into a Public Limited Company within the Royal Mail. This is in line with the European Union plan for privatisation of all direct mail throughout the EU. This would mean the end of national first and second class stamps, with zone charges so

that it would cost more to deliver from London to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and between the regions of England.

Postal workers will not only have to fight the Royal Mail bosses, they will have to fight the Government and all of its forces, as well as the schemes of the EU. They will have to start increasing contacts and creating coordinations between postal workers on an Europe-wide scale. They will have to combat the private companies. Labour has condemned any actions and through its allies in the CWU will do its utmost to destroy postal workers militant action and organisation. The struggle that the postal workers are facing is one that must go against the union and the State. They deserve total support from throughout the working class.

Tube Workers

A number of one-day strikes has taken place over this summer on the London Underground starting out with train drivers who are members of the rail union ASLEF. There is simmering discontent among Tube workers and the union has attempted to head off strike action by calling a number of ballots over the last few years, which were then cancelled. Last year a massive strike vote was ignored and a dirty deal stitched up between ASLEF and the bosses. This ploy has exasperated Tube workers. For the same reasons as the CWU, to head off pressure from workers and to show that ASLEF has some clout and is worth the employers' while negotiating with, ASLEF has now called a number of actions

for a reduction in the working week. The Tube bosses are attempting to renege on a one hour reduction agreed last year. Meanwhile the other rail union on the tube, the RMT, has-surprise, surprise! failed to call out train driver members at the same time as the ASLEF actions. Under pressure from workers, a combined strike has taken place as we go to press. The RMT has been equivocal to say the least in whether it will instruct its members to cross ASLEF picket lines. The message given by assistant general secretary Bob Crow and executive council member Pat Sikorski (Both members of Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, and the latter a closet Trot, member of the Fourth International Supporters Caucus, operating inside the SLP as Scargill's heavies) was ambivalent on this question when they addressed RMT members in the first week of June. Both RMT and ASLEF have continually sabotaged strike ballots, and collaborated in introducing the bosses plans for privatisation which they began introducing in 1991. Both Crow and Sikorski have acted as saboteurs of militant action in the past. In the late 80s they were active on the Shepherd Pie rank and file committee which attempted to force unofficial actions into a trade union straitjacket. They then became important RMT officials, and as such helped in the sabotage of the 1992 strike (It's no surprise that they are part of the leadership of the SLP-this party represents the interests of the "left" union bureaucrats). Tube workers have to ignore all union

affiliations, and come together in coordinations, going out to make contact and get support and solidarity action from other workers, in particular other London transport workers like the bus workers and BR workers, who are as much under attack as they are. Bus drivers throughout London have been involved in strike actions over the last year, the most recent being 3 days of strikes in South East London, in the Plumstead, Catford and Bromley garages bossed by Selkent. The third strike was bolstered by 60 maintenance and cleaning staff starting a work to rule. However, the union the TGWU, quickly moved to defuse the action through a ballot. The strikes were against conditions and pay for new starters with 48 hours a week behind the wheel, no sick pay, £% an hour, 13 hour spreadovers, and no bonuses like spreadover payments. The union officials said that new starters were no concern of the workers and they should only think about their own pay packet. New drivers knew what they were accepting! So no the TGWU has sabotaged the actions and given a thumbs-up to a two-tier system, which will pit worker against worker. The Union divides us workers! We must organise outside and against it!

Firefighters

Like the post and the tube and buses, the fire brigades have had a history of militant action over the last 2 years. On Merseyside, firefighters threatened to strike in early June when a worker was threatened with the sack for

refusing to attend a course, which was used as a pretext to change shifts by the fire bosses at Croxteth. The bosses were forced to back down

In Derbyshire 800 firefighters struck twice for 9 hours against cuts planned by the Labour council. The Council responded by trying to get an injunction out under the anti-union laws brought in by the Conservatives. This failed, and the Council ended up with a bill for £40,000 costs paid out of council tax! Now the Council is using Army Green Goddesses and RAF rescue vehicles as we go to press. Tony Benn, so called Left Labour MP for the area, has argued against the strike action, which he said would damage workers and the Council. The Council hopes that firefighters from neighbouring regions will scab. Manchester and Nottinghamshire firefighters made it clear that they would refuse to do this.

In Essex the firefighters union the FBU sabotaged strike action after a massive vote in favour against cuts imposed by the council. The FBU accepted cuts of £700,000 after the Council revised its original cuts package of £1.3 million. The strikes were to coincide with the June 10 actions of the Derbyshire workers. Again the FBU has okayed wage cuts, station closures, speed-ups, part-time working replacing full-time working. Again the message is clear-firefighters must organise outside and against the unions, against the Armed forces strike breakers and the Tory and Labour central and local authorities.

traditionally voted Conservative or Liberal. This means that it has to present itself as a staunch advocate of law and order, and of traditional values.

Straw Dog

This is why Jack Straw has stated that when Labour are in office they will adopt "zero tolerance" towards "anti-social behaviour". Part of this get-tough policy will apparently include a curfew on under 10 year olds after 9pm. This will not be carried out by the State. Straw would offload the burden of this extra policing onto local councils. At one fell swoop he can demonise children and prepare the way for methods of the Strong State. Not surprisingly, seeing as how New Labour look towards the US Democratic Party as a model, Straw has taken a leaf out of Clinton's book. The US President gave his backing to a 8pm curfew imposed on under-17s in New Orleans. Straw also proposed a single final warning for young offenders to replace the present system of a series of cautions.

Wet Blunkett

David Blunkett, Labour's spokesman on education, has demanded a return to traditional teaching methods. What this means is not smaller classes and good facilities, as well as well qualified teachers, but larger classes and lessons by rote. Labour will make no effort to put any more money into schools, but instead seeks to steal one of the Conservatives' traditional slogans. Earlier he had stated that student grants would be abolished under Labour, with a saving of £1 billion. He proposed a system of extended loans. This would aggravate the situation for any working class student, already suffering hardship. But as Blunkett himself said: "The great advantage of this scheme is that it helps substantially the middle and lower-middle income parents". Tough if you're working class.

Cuts and gagging

For his part, Gordon Brown, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, made clear that the squeeze on public spending, initiated by the Callaghan-led Labour government and then perpetuated by the Conservatives, would continue under his rule. He talked about "making Britain great again", about partnership with the private sector, about cutting out waste. Translated into plain English, this means that the rundown of the public sector will continue, as will the creeping privatisation, as well as continuing sackings and virtual wage freezes for public sector workers. Brown is ending out signals to the boss class that things will be

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the same in Labour hands, in fact this way of carrying on will be applied more efficiently!

Chris Smith, speaking on Labour's plans for welfare, stressed the increasing role of private insurance. He also called for a redefinition of poverty, copying Conservatives' oft-expressed views. This means that millions can be taken off welfare benefits by saying that they're not poor in the first place! Coupled with proposals to cut child benefit and the projected "work for benefit" schemes Labour shows that it is as fully committed to the dismantling of welfarism as the Conservatives.

Any signs of dissent, indeed any indications that Labour will adopt even 'liberal' measures are quickly stamped on by the Labour leadership. When Clare Short, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, echoed what several chief constables had already said about the legalisation of cannabis, she was promptly reprimanded. Her later pronouncements on taxing the rich were also slapped down. Mark Fisher, the Shadow Arts spokesperson, was similarly reprimanded after he announced that the Elgin Marbles might be returned to Greece. Ron Davies, Shadow Welsh Secretary, was mugged by the Labour leadership after his mild criticisms of the monarchy. In the aftermath Tony Blair fell over himself in showing how much he adored the Royals.

Firm and Unfair

Every indication is that if Labour come to power either later in the year or next year, they will continue to supervise the boss class's attacks on the mass of the population. Further, that they will be prepared to use very strong measures to carry their policies out, increasing police powers and deploying the Armed Forces if necessary, to counter any strike action.

There should be no complacency that things will be better, if only slightly, under Labour. We must be ready for attacks on our class from Labour, ready with the arguments against Labourism and ready with plans to organise the resistance.

Since the above was written, the new stance of Labour was firmed up in late June. In preparation for The Road to The Manifesto, a policy prospectus put out by the leadership, Blair made it clear that the national executive will draw up a list of approved parliamentary candidates after the next election from which local parties should choose, in order to weed out any dissidents. Trade spokesman Kim Howells stated that Labour was pro-competition-he was speaking the truth!- and his counterpart for Home Affairs George Howarth said that he would be tougher on drugs than the Conservatives.

The Road to the Manifesto itself gave full form to the Labour Party's policies. It emphasised its toughness on crime with fast-track sentencing of "persistent young offenders", and swift reduction in unemployment which can easily be translated into forcing people off the dole into low-paid jobs, it stated that it would do little to reverse anti-strike laws, it encouraged private pensions, it condoned privatisation in the health service, it pledged to keep on with building Trident nuclear submarines, it emphasised it was for one nation and for a stake-holder economy. There can be no excuse at all for anyone calling themselves a socialist to remain within the Labour Party. *The Labour Party is a capitalist party, it always has been.* The fact that developments in capitalism have forced it to drop any "socialist rhetoric" should not blind us to this fact. Any vote for Labour, with or "without illusions" is a vote for the continuing of Business As Usual.

Labour breaks out the riot gear!

AS THE POLITICAL parties gear up for an impending election, Labour is energetically seeking to mark itself out as the party that speaks for the "Nation". To do this, it needs to show that it is the defender of so-called social unity, that it is the inheritor of the social consensus constructed by both the Conservatives and Labour in the

immediate post-war years. It has to underline national unity, it has to speak as the voice of reason. It has to show it enthusiastically supports the values of what is portrayed as a Golden Age of Britain before the last 15 years of ruling class attack under the Thatcher and Major regimes. This means it has to show it is able

to govern well. It has to impress sections of the boss class, who are showing themselves more open to backing Labour, both verbally, financially and through the ballot box. It seeks to get the support of some of the press barons, whose support at election time would be valuable. It looks towards the vote of sections of the population that have

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Poverty Related Pay

OPPOSITION TO THE Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) from inside the dole office is hampered by the idea that implementing the JSA is in the 'interest' of the workforce. This so called 'interest' is commonly known as Performance Related Pay (PRP). So how does PRP work? Firstly, objectives are set for the dole office on a national level, these objectives are then broken down into regional objectives, further divided into districts and divided again into office objectives, where finally the manager breaks the objectives down for individual workers.

Objectives Equal More Money

So how are those objectives used to improve pay? Each individual worker is set objectives, agreed with their line manager and in turn with their office manager. Each worker is monitored throughout the year by their managers (by themselves and other workers for that matter). Once a year how well each worker has 'performed' is assessed, whether they have met their objectives, failed to meet them or, as in the case of the over enthusiastic worker, superseded them. Then a 'box marking' is attributed to each worker. The 'box marking' is just like being graded at school; Box 1/A (A is for ACE), Box 2/B (B is for BRILL) and Box 3/C (C is for CRAP). Once each worker has been graded their cut of the wage rise for that year has been decided.

Objectives Equal Hassle

So what are these objectives which are in the 'interests' of the workers to achieve? The typical list of objectives will require each worker to;

1. get a varying number of claimants benefit cut or stopped on the grounds that they are

A. Not available for employment B. Not actively seeking employment C. Placing restrictions upon themselves D. Refusing employment.

2. Place a varying number of claimants into employment via the job centre.

3. Place a varying number of claimants onto specific government courses.

Getting claimants to sign off, usually using tactics not dissimilar from those used by the police, is one of the fraud officers PRP objectives and is not as yet a written objective for the ordinary dole office worker.

The Unions

The dole office workers Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) may claim to be opposed to PRP on the grounds that it is "divisive", but in reality it fails to have had any effect on this pay scheme. Whilst the CPSA accurately point out that workers are divided by PRP, and encouraged to be interested only in themselves developing contempt for one another, CPSA fails to recognise the consequences of PRP on the claimants and how it divides the workers and claimants further. Consequently the CPSA's opposition to the JSA is failing to reach dole office workers, as is its argument that PRP is not in their 'interest'.

PRP Equal Hassle

PRP is allowing dole officers to treat claimants like shit, creating the idea that 'they're only doing their job', and at the same time acting out of 'self-interest' improving their chances of getting a bigger cut of the wage rise. PRP is a god send to those over enthusiastic individuals who take great pleasure from treating claimants like shit. So next time a claimant is hassled its

not a simple case of faceless bureaucracy treating people as no more than numbers, but that claimant may well be on the way to being a statistic achieved and marked against a list of objectives.

Effective Organising

A hassle free signing on is largely reliant upon the worker who hasn't bought the idea that PRP is in their 'interest' and doesn't care if they meet their objectives or not. However opposition to the JSA from the inside needs more than that if it is to work. Effective opposition to PRP coupled with a sense of unity with claimants, as opposed to contempt for them, would be welcome. But in the meantime Groundswell and unemployed activists aren't sitting on their backsides waiting for the pig to learn to fly. We are getting active, and organising from the 'outside'.



GET ACTIVE

GROUNDSWELL IS A loose network of autonomous groups and individuals united against the JSA concentrating upon gathering information about the JSA, distributing and co-ordinating that information, and offering practical advice and support against the JSA. 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.

The next Groundswell is being held in Nottingham 10th August. 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 7QX

RETURN OF THE DIGGERS

ON SUNDAY 5th May, 1996 a campaign calling itself The Land Is Ours organised a land occupation on thirteen acres of derelict land. Around 300 people arrived in two coaches. The land is situated on York Road in Wandsworth, South London and is owned by Guinness.

When the people reached the site they began to transform it into a 'sustainable eco-village'. The name Pure Genius was decided on (it was previously called Gargoyle Wharf). They started off with building Octavia's Love Nest, a large wooden octagonal building in which to have meetings, workshops, entertainment, temporary sleeping, etc. People constructed their own temporary homes in the forms of tepees, tents, and benders.

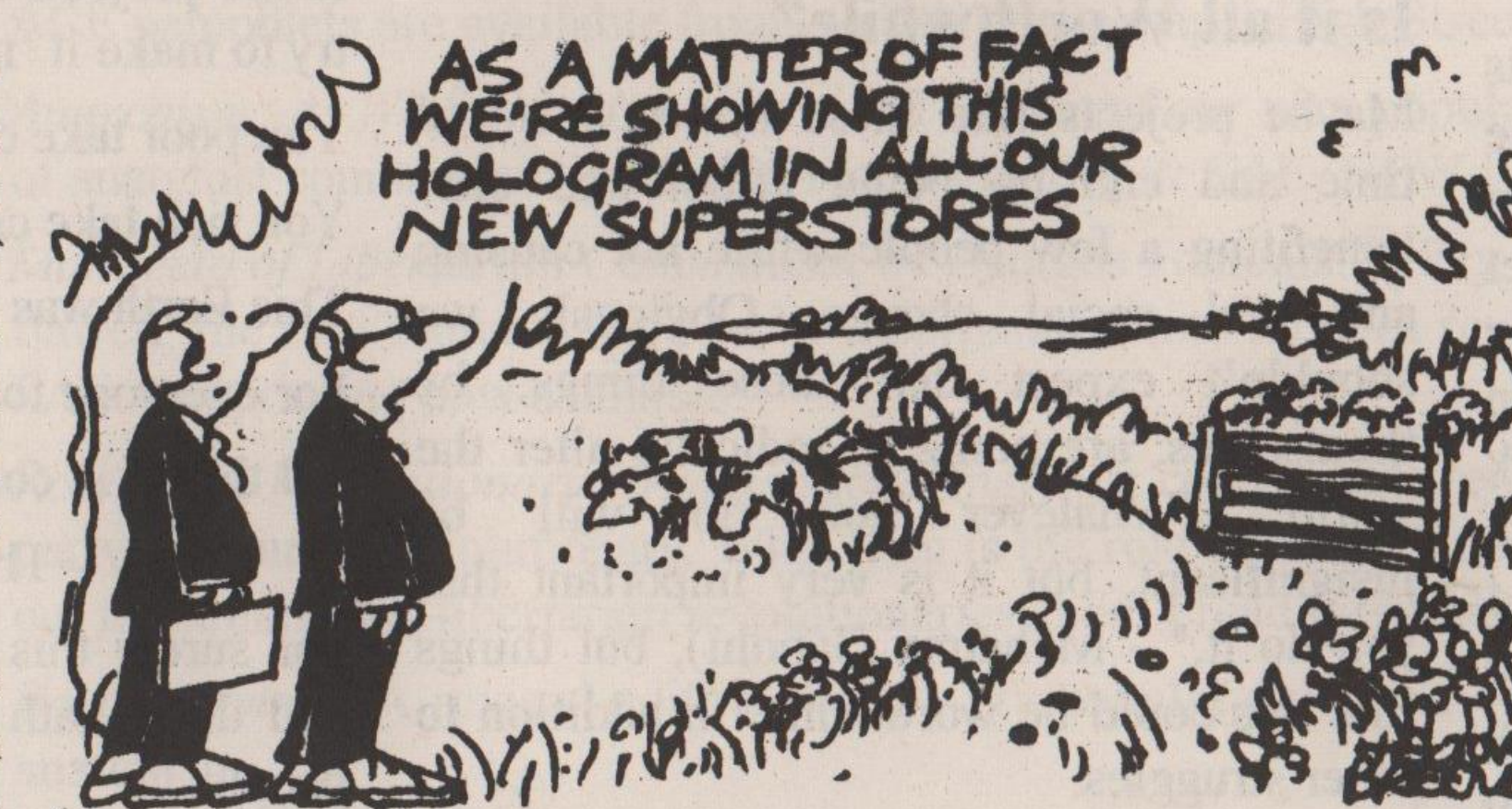
For the first week there were over 100 people permanently on site with a few thousand people visiting and participating during the week. Now roughly seventy people live on the site on a permanent basis and help to build more permanent, 'low-impact' housing both individually and collectively.

On Wednesday 8th, Colin Ward came to the site and gave a talk in Octavia's Love Nest about the British squatters movement in the mid-40's. The talk was attended by most people on site and seemed to be accepted very well.

As well as construction of the buildings, there was the task of making the flower and vegetable gardens, using an agricultural technique called "permaculture"; making the land (which was previously a brewery site and before that an oil refinery!) useable despite the poor soil quality and polluted land. People also made a pond, rock gardens, walkways lined with painted stones, wire sculptures, banners and beautiful murals around the front entrance and also inside of the site.

Meal times are usually communal, with most people gathering around the main camp fire. Food supplies come from people donating and also cheap or free food 'tatted' at the end of the market day. Toilet facilities include two compost toilets and a shallow trench.

Entertainment at Pure Genius has included acoustic music (with much singing of The Diggers' Song), circus stunts, story-telling and an excellent performance of the anti-capitalist environmental play Dinosaurs and all that Rubbish.



On the site are all sorts of people. There are many people from abroad: on the erection of a pyramidal sleeping structure, in which five people participated, one person was English, two American, one a New Zealander and the other a Canadian. There were also people present from the Green Party, Freedom (John Rety and Colin Ward), and many people from Newbury and other road protests. One ACF member stayed on site for all of the first week and on the evening of Saturday 11th, five other ACF members turned up, had a look around the site, visited someone in their tepee and left for the pub with two Class War members who happened to be visiting at the same time.

Anarchy in Action?

John Rety claimed that this is "anarchy in action" and that he has "now seen anarchy in practice and, so far, it works." (Freedom, 18th May) This is not anarchy. Anarchy means "freedom and justice for all". There are about seventy people living on Pure Genius and there are almost six billion people in the world. As long as most of the world lives in slavery, poverty and brutality, we will not see anarchy. If anarchy does not mean freedom and justice for all then we could say that a woman living isolated on an island is, of and by herself, Anarchy. (Not to mention that she would be a slave to her work, and that, as an individual, her potential could only be realised by its gratification in human society!) Also there is the fact that the people participating in the land occupation live neither under freedom nor justice. As long as the government has its army of policemen and soldiers no one will really be free, and the small amount of freedom they allow is transitory and only guaranteed to the extent that the people can fight for it. As long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few have all the good things of life, there is not justice.

Property is Theft!

This land occupation was undoubtedly propaganda by the deed (as opposed to propaganda of the deed). The question is, what was the message of this propaganda? Anarchists would, of course, have liked it to be a message of "Property is theft" (as the proto-anarchist Proudhon said). It seems however that the main

messages are things like "sensible land use" and The Land Is Ours (who can't seem to stress enough that they are "a campaign, not an organisation") also say that they "want to highlight urban dereliction". Their participation in the legal process and their negotiations with Guinness are not anarchistic and it is silly to be saying "The land is ours!" while at the same time saying "Please, can't we just use a little bit of the land which your not using right now?" Indeed, The Land Is Ours have said that they want to "make good use of derelict sites", but what about the good property, with housing and infrastructure already there?

They claim it is not an 'ideological squat' but they obviously do have an ideology, it is just one which is un-ambitious and reformist. The people 'behind' the 'campaign' have expressed that many of them are for common ownership of all social property etc. and so have most of the people involved. But none of this made it into the media and they have admitted that they are deliberately trying to tone the politics down for the sake of the media. The media coverage was very positive, but at what expense? They have either tried to portray it as a bunch of hippies doing earth dances or as some sort of experiment led by a few Oxford intellectuals (which it may well be).

There were three main positive aspects of the campaign.

1. The anarchistic organisation and structure of it. People live communally, eat communally and work collectively. No-one is 'in charge' and people organise their projects autonomously.

2. The Ideological and historical background for their actions is decidedly anarchist. On the whole they seem to have an affinity with the Diggers' anarchist communist ethic. They are unquestionably anti-capitalist and anti-government and pro-self-organisation and autonomy. The presence of Anarchists on site, including John Rety, ACF and Colin Ward, and their

participation in the decision making and work on the site definitely helped to strengthen the libertarian content of the campaign.

3. Involvement with local people. Leaflets were handed out to passers-by and all the local residences were leafleted telling them what's going on and asking that they get involved. Several locals were highly involved in the decision making process, in leaflet production and distribution and work etc. All the local people who visited the site were positive and said that they supported what was being done. This helped to strengthen links between ordinary working class people and political activists and to

expose them to ideas and attitudes which they otherwise might not have heard.

Is it all Worthwhile?

Maybe projects like these are a waste of time and end up being elitist and only benefiting a few people while not causing any real social change. Obviously we shouldn't expect that these things, by themselves, are going to radically alter the world ("Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it." - Mahatma Gandhi), but things like this could be worthwhile in addition to other struggles.

If we think that projects like this may be worthwhile, then we should ask ourselves whether we should get more involved in future projects and try to counter those who try to make it 'media friendly'.

You poor take courage,

You rich take care,

This Earth was made a Common Treasury

For everyone to share,

All things in common, all people one.

- The Diggers' Song

For surely this particular property of mine and thine hath brought in all misery upon people.

- Gerrard Winstanley

PEACE PROCESS IN PIECES

THE RECENT ELECTIONS in Northern Ireland on May 30 showed the rifts and stresses that are growing within both Unionism and Republicanism.

The Unionists had insisted on these elections, and the Major administration, who depend on their support for keeping in power, readily agreed. The results showed that support for the Ulster Unionist Party, led by David Trimble, has fallen in practically every area. The combined Unionist vote, was now split between 11 different parties. This reflects the fragmenting unity among Protestants, where class interests are beginning to re-emerge. The Protestant working class, was relatively cushioned economically, in comparison to Catholic workers, in terms of jobs and standards of living. But increasing levels of unemployment, attacks on welfare benefits and rising poverty have made many worry about the future. They begin to question whether the Northern Ireland State can

guarantee the living standards to which they were accustomed. This explains the vote for the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party, both of which use working class rhetoric. Both of these parties are the political wings of Loyalist paramilitaries, have the shadowy presence of British intelligence hovering behind them. Their bogus talk of class conflict is designed to ensure that the Protestant working class stays within the limits of Loyalist sectarianism (See the article in *Organise!* 38 on these parties). Nevertheless, a certain disenchantment and disorientation seems apparent in the lower than average turnout, where the vote is traditionally higher than in Britain.

For its part Sinn Fein did nothing to win over Protestant workers. In the past it has come out with the rhetoric of saying that it fights for all the people-notice the word people and not working class but its practice during the election revealed that this was

Nationalist cant and it concentrated on trying to prove how it represented and defended the Catholic minority. It got its highest vote ever in the elections - over 15 per cent, in some Catholic strongholds polling as much as 50 per cent.

In some ways, this vote for Sinn Fein vindicates Gerry Adams' position. One of several reasons that Sinn Fein abandoned its old policies was because electoral support was diminishing. Adams can justify his stance by pointing to this increased vote. Sinn Fein had decided that joint work with the Dublin government, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in the North and the Irish American lobby would "advance the struggle", leading on to the TUAS - totally unarmed strategy.

This culminated in to Adams' meeting with President Clinton at the White House. This collaboration with Sinn Fein is important to Clinton for a number of reasons. He hopes to retain and indeed increase the Irish-

American electoral support for the Democrats. He hopes to boost his image as world peace maker, also very helpful at the polls. In line with US interests, a world wide "American peace" is required to boost America's position as world policeman. US economic interests would prefer "peace" (absence of armed conflict and civil strife) so that they can better exploit the working class in Northern Ireland, and indeed throughout Ireland.



Defending the Orangemen

Sinn Fein and the IRA could be used as a pawn in the USA's game in Ireland, with its increasing economic and political influence in the South.

Collapse

Things have moved on from this scenario. A few weeks after the ceasefire, the Reynolds government in the South collapsed following a child abuse scandal in which Catholic priests were involved. The Major administration, under pressure from the Unionists, rejected the findings of the Mitchell commission on decommissioning and announced that elections would take place in the North. Labour failed to oppose this move, and abjectly followed every precondition for talks laid down by the Tories. This means a big reverse for the TUAS tactic. The leadership of Sinn Fein, in order to further its change in tactics, has made it clear, both to Republicans in general, and to the rest of the world, that its previous tactic of bullet and ballot box was a failure, and a United Ireland was not achievable using these methods. Indeed, the leadership dropped any talk of a United Socialist Ireland, in line with this, and in order to placate its allies in the new partnership.

These allies, including the SDLP, certainly do not want any sort of United Ireland. They want political and economic stability. This leads on to Nationalists and Unionists running their own areas, with the British, Irish and American administrations acting to police this. This would lead, not to a ending of the sectarian divide, but to its institutionalisation, and the possible development of specific 'enclaves'. Remind you of somewhere else?

Adams has publicly announced that Sinn Fein would drop the United Ireland demand. He admitted as much in a Financial Times interview. Sinn Fein has agreed to practically everything put forward by the Mitchell commission. The continued use of armed struggle by the IRA is either a bargaining counter used

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ACE

Anarchist Communist Editions

ACE pamphlets are available from c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Anarchism - As We See It. A new revised edition of our very popular pamphlet. Describes the basic ideas of anarchist communism in easy-to-read form. 60p & SAE. NEW EDITION JUST OUT!

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Making Progress is out of print at the moment.

COMING SOON! By the time that this issue of *Organise!* appears 2 new ACE pamphlets will be well under way- *Where there's Brass there's Muck*, our pamphlet on ecology, and a pamphlet on the History of Anarchist Communism in Japan, written by John Crump. October should hopefully see the appearance of our *Manifesto for the Millennium*. It gives an analysis of the present state of society and a revolutionary programme for how to fight for an Anarchist Communist world.

by the Republican leadership to squeeze more concessions out of the British government or a sign of dissent within Republican ranks, or a combination of both. Opposition to the leadership's manoeuvres does exist, both in the north and the south. For example Cork Sinn Fein sent out an open letter to all Sinn Fein branches calling for opposition to the leadership's concessions to Mitchell.

What is apparent in all of this is the increased failure of Republicanism to offer any solutions to the social and economic problems that plague Irish working people. This, and the divisions that are beginning to emerge within Loyalist ranks, point to the possibility of new spaces opening up for revolutionary libertarian politics. The small numbers of Irish revolutionary Anarchists must do their utmost to build a libertarian alternative, and revolutionaries in Britain must express their support and solidarity.

One interesting result of the dead-end in the peace-talks is the enhanced position of Labour in the eyes of sections of the British ruling class and State. A desire for "stability" to pursue economic interests in Ireland is hindered by the Conservative administration's blocking of the "peace process", hostages to the

Unionists as they are. A Labour government would be unlikely to be in this position. This is one of many reasons why Blair and Co. are being feted in the media.

Update

All of the above has been highlighted by the events of the "marching season" when the RUC, with the approval of the British government, allowed the Orangemen to march through a Nationalist area after 5 days of stand-off. This shows how deeply the Conservative government is in hock to the Loyalists; it also shows the stresses among the movers in the peace talks, with polarisation between the British government and the Irish government/SDLP. The TUAS policy of the Sinn Fein leadership is in shreds and there is clamour among the Catholic population of the North for a return to armed action to defend their areas against Loyalist aggression. The Enniskillen bombing is a strong indicator of this. There is a distinct possibility that now there will be a rift between those who want to continue with the policies of the leadership and those who wish to return to armed action, coupled with a call for a United Ireland-socialist or otherwise. This

scenario is borne out by history, with a series of splits in Republican ranks between those who wanted to do a deal with the British State and those who took a more intransigent position. But the intransigent position is not an option for Anarchist Communists. It is based on elitist armed action, and no attempt at united class action. The way capitalism has evolved, with production spread all over the world, makes the Nation State less and less important for the needs of ruling class economics. Separate national economies are more and more impossible, and this in its turn has rendered any national liberation movements mute in opposition to imperialism. They now hustle to be first in line in offering sources of cheap labour and raw materials to the multinational and transnational corporations.

For their part the mainstream Loyalist politicians like Trimble and co. are keen to broker a deal to hang on to power in their own areas. As we noted in *Organise!* 42 this will also be jeopardised by those who want confrontation with Catholics, and who advocate driving out Catholics from predominantly Protestant areas. The latest events have shown that the process of disintegration of both Loyalist and Republican blocs is accelerating.

ROADS OUT AHEAD

INTERVIEW WITH AN ANTI-ROADS protester and Essex Anarchist

ORGANISE! How did you become involved in the Anti-Roads movement?

EA I met some people in London and became friends with them. They were involved in the anti-roads protests and various other campaigns; they had been heavily involved in the 'No M11' campaign in East London since it started. I met some more people, and because I've got anarchist views anyway became more involved myself, because I saw that the motorway was just another way the authorities were taking liberties with people's lives, making people who have lived in their houses for years move out (like Dolly, who was 93). Also the ecological side of it, pollution and how they are fucking up people's health and the ozone layer.

ORGANISE! What campaigns have you been involved in?

EA - I've mainly been involved in the 'No M11' in East London, I was on that campaign for the best part of a year, doing other things as well like anarchist stuff, marches, meetings. I was involved in animal liberation campaigns like Brightlingsea, I nearly got nicked there for trying to climb up the side of one of the lorries, to get on the roof; I got grabbed but I pulled myself away from the police officer and escaped by running away through the crowd! I went down to Kent as well to a 2 day 'Stop Work On The Road', building site invasions and that. There was a full moon party, the organisers said in the local paper that they were expecting 2000 road protesters, so the police were ready for those numbers, out numbering the protesters by 6 to 1, as there were only about 250 protesters turned up.

They were at one of the two camps the Blue group had built and set up, 70 protesters on site, and about 200 Old Bill turned up and formed a circle all around us. They read out the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) about how they thought there was going to be a party or illegal rave there that night, and anybody who was (found) within a 5 mile radius of that area in the next hour was liable for arrest. One of the protesters who had been there for a few months asked us if we could help carry his tent, a big 12 person army job, me and my mates said yes. We helped him carry it and all his belongings, everything in the middle of the tent. We had to go across building sites, ploughed fields (for) the full length of the route. Then the police pulled up, 2 vans, they all came up to me and said was I at the site when the C.J.A order was given out, and as it was one and a half hours since it was given out I was under arrest as I was only three and a half miles away. They took me to an intelligence gathering unit set up in a local school, staffed by the C.I.D and photographed and questioned me. I had to go to court and was fined £40 and given a conditional discharge for the offence of failing to leave the land fast enough when the order was given. It was section B or C of the C.J.A, and the jury were out for three and a half hours deciding what to do with us, cause we was the first people to be up for that offence in Kent. Five of us went "not guilty", and four of us were found guilty. I also went to Newbury when it first started, the first three weeks, it was right good because we stopped them from doing any work in that time. Then the police started to help the security guards, they were no longer keeping an eye on things and having an unbiased view as they say they are supposed

to, being there to make sure there is no breach of the peace. Every time the protesters broke through the security lines or got the better of them, the police jumped in and took the security side.

Protesters

ORGANISE! What were the backgrounds of the different people involved?

EA - I would say that most of the people involved in these campaigns were 'alternative' types, hippies and new agers, and just local residents who has been around the area the motorway is built in. All sorts in general, but some lunch outs, (people who) don't do any work, just there for free grub and that.

ORGANISE! Has the movement changed, and if so, in what ways?

EA - I think the only way that it has changed really is that there seems to be a lot more people getting involved, at the start a lot of the protesters were alternative types, individualist anarchists and just locals. Now groups of people come from different areas all over the place, just for weekends and a week at a time, liberal "fluffy" types, middle class greens, seems sometimes as if it's become almost fashionable to be a protester, weekends away and all that, bed and breakfast style.

ORGANISE! -Has the Anti-Road movement radicalised people?

EA -Yes, I do think so, in some ways. Like normal people who you would have at one time called straight goers or law-abiding citizens, just local people, residents in the area where the roads are going through, have seen what attitude the police have, and been man-handled themselves, and even arrested. Old ladies and middle class, middle aged people who have been pushed about, arrested by police in full riot gear, the Old Bill have turned whole communities against them.

ORGANISE! -What are the politics of the people involved?

EA - I think that most of the hard core protesters that live in the tree houses 70 foot off the ground, and travel from one road protest to another where there are trees involved, the real McCoy sleeping in tree houses when it's minus 2 or 3, would call themselves anarchists. They are individualists, because when I tell them I'm a member of the ACF they always say if I'm an anarchist, why do I need to be a part of an organisation? They can't seem to grasp that we need to be organised, to be in the position to fight the capitalists and the Ruling Classes -the State- effectively.

I reckon that most people involved at the moment are fluffies and liberal woolly types: believers in non-violent direct action. There are a few socialists and people who call themselves nothing at all, also local residents who are sympathetic and donate food and stuff. All the different Green parties also try to get involved of course, trying to make it their protest, their banners all over the place. At the start of Newbury, when you phoned up the enquiry line, it was answered "Third battle of Newbury, can we help you?". Now it is "Third battle, Friends of the Earth speaking".

Politics

ORGANISE! - What roles have the various Green organisations taken?

EA - Many of the national organisations have taken part in different ways. Some of the big well known groups have donated goods and equipment to some of the smaller protests such as money, food, climbing ropes and equipment, cargo nets etc. and don't want their name used or even mentioned. They don't want their names associated with the protests, preferring that it is associated with big gimmicks to get their point across, or high class big money stunts that get them on T.V. Some of the smaller Green parties try to get their teeth into road campaigns so that they are, or seem to be, the main force behind a particular protest. They put all their banners and posters all over the place, you know the sort of thing, a take-over job really, the same sort of thing that the Socialist Workers Party do on a normal march. They give their ready made placards out to all the non politically involved people on the march, so that it looks as though the march is S.W.P. oriented. To quote Green Anarchist - "Friends Of the Earth and Earth First are dead!, long live the E.L.F!" (Earth Liberation Front).

Strategy

ORGANISE! - What are people's views in the violence/non-violence debate?

EA. -Most of the people involved in the roads protests take the non-violent direct action approach, they are really the people who get called fluffies, a lot of them class themselves as anarchists, but pacifists. On the other hand, all the protesters who think that that when the security get heavy handed or violent - as they do sometimes - that we should have a go back and fight, self defence really, they get called spikeys. There is quite a lot of conflict between the two different groups, mostly verbal disputes, but the fluffies heavily outnumber the "let's have a go" brigade. I myself think that we are entitled to defend ourselves if the police or security attack or get heavy with us, "by any means necessary," you know, the old anarchist saying, but there

isn't enough of us to get heavy at the moment, so I would say that tactically the non-violent approach is best at present. It gets more of the general public on our side, they like sit-downs, but not riots.

ORGANISE! -How are different strategies devised?

EA - Through discussions and debate, or people have learnt different ways that are good to stop the road builders or bailiffs at other road protests. The knowledge is passed around campfires during debates at night, tree people who have learnt climbing skills, and have equipment like ropes and harnesses, teach others how to climb trees safely, and how to move around the tree defence walkways without much risk, and how to set up a tree defence network. These are very effective, especially the tunnels, people lock themselves on to props holding the roof of the tunnel up.

State

ORGANISE! - How have the authorities (Police, Bailiffs etc.) reacted to the protests, and how have the police used the C.J.A? (Criminal Justice Act)

EA - On most of the protests I've been on, it's been the NVDA approach, so there is little violence or hostility from the protesters. I would say because of that most of the old Bill don't get wound up, but there is always some that want to get stroppy. They make remarks about how smelly we all are, "when did you last have a bath." ? It's the same with the Sheriff's men really, some are OK with you really, some are nasty horrible bastards. I think really (that) the most grief comes from the security men, a lot of them are quite aggressive, they like to think of themselves as tough guys, and us as silly hippies. They're silly fuckers if you ask me, they only get £3.50 an hour and they have to 12 hour shifts. On some protests, evictions from buildings and tree houses, when the police get you they just walk you away from the area, search you, and ask for your name and address. Sometimes, more recently, they have used the C.J.A, if you don't leave the area you will all be nicked for criminal trespass. They used it a lot at Newbury, nicking everybody they could grab for criminal trespass, and anybody who got in the way of the diggers or chainsaw men.

ORGANISE! - What is the role of the Media, and how do activists view them?

EA - A lot of the daily tabloids are against us: "hippy squatters, and they're all anarchist." I just wish it was all true, the bloody Old Bill wouldn't be able to move us so quick as they do. A few of the dailies are OK, give us good write ups about how we are doing it for the environment and that, but not many of them. A few of the local papers take the protesters side,

because they can see what the road in question is going to do to the area. A lot of the protesters don't trust the media, photographers or reporters. There's been a lot of photos taken by freelancers, and when their photos to the papers they sell them to the police cheap, so that they get good close ups of people's faces. Some protesters like the press because they say it gets the point across, and shows that somebody is trying to do something about it, or it might bring more support from local people.

ORGANISE! - Has the response to the Authorities changed?

EA - I do think that quite a lot of people's attitudes towards the police and authorities have changed over the last year. A lot of people who used to be fluffy, who now have seen violence from police and security at various marches, demos and evictions now think its time to be spikey and fight back. Those who have been on various campaigns and lived on the road are often fed up with all the shit the authorities throw at them all the time, its time for action not for talking about how to lay on the floor. According to certain fluffy papers this is the best way to defend certain parts of your body when getting a beating off the Old Bill. More people getting spikey is a good sign as far as I'm concerned, if attacked we should defend ourselves by any human means we have.

Future

ORGANISE! - How do you see the future of the Anti-Roads movement?

EA - I think that as long as there as they keep on building roads there will be a movement, the hardcore protesters are right in there, the tree people and that, they all know each other, and anywhere they are trying to chop down a tree for a road, these people are going to go. Its no joke, the authorities have chopped down half of Britain's ancient woodland, just since the Second World War, 10% of Britain's landmass is covered in tarmac; 75,000 new cars hit the streets of the world every 24 hours, so its got to come to a stop at some point, or its going to be goodbye world. We've just got to get the point over to the masses, the ozone (layer) is knackered, the icecaps are melting, we have got to do something drastic. Anything that causes poisonous fumes or toxic gases to be put in the atmosphere has got to be stopped; car culture, industry, lots of things, we've got to put ourselves back a few hundred years, go back to horses and carts, electric trains, trams around the city instead of buses, pushbikes instead of cars. Viva the anti-road movement, long live anarchist communism.



RAVE NEW WORLD?

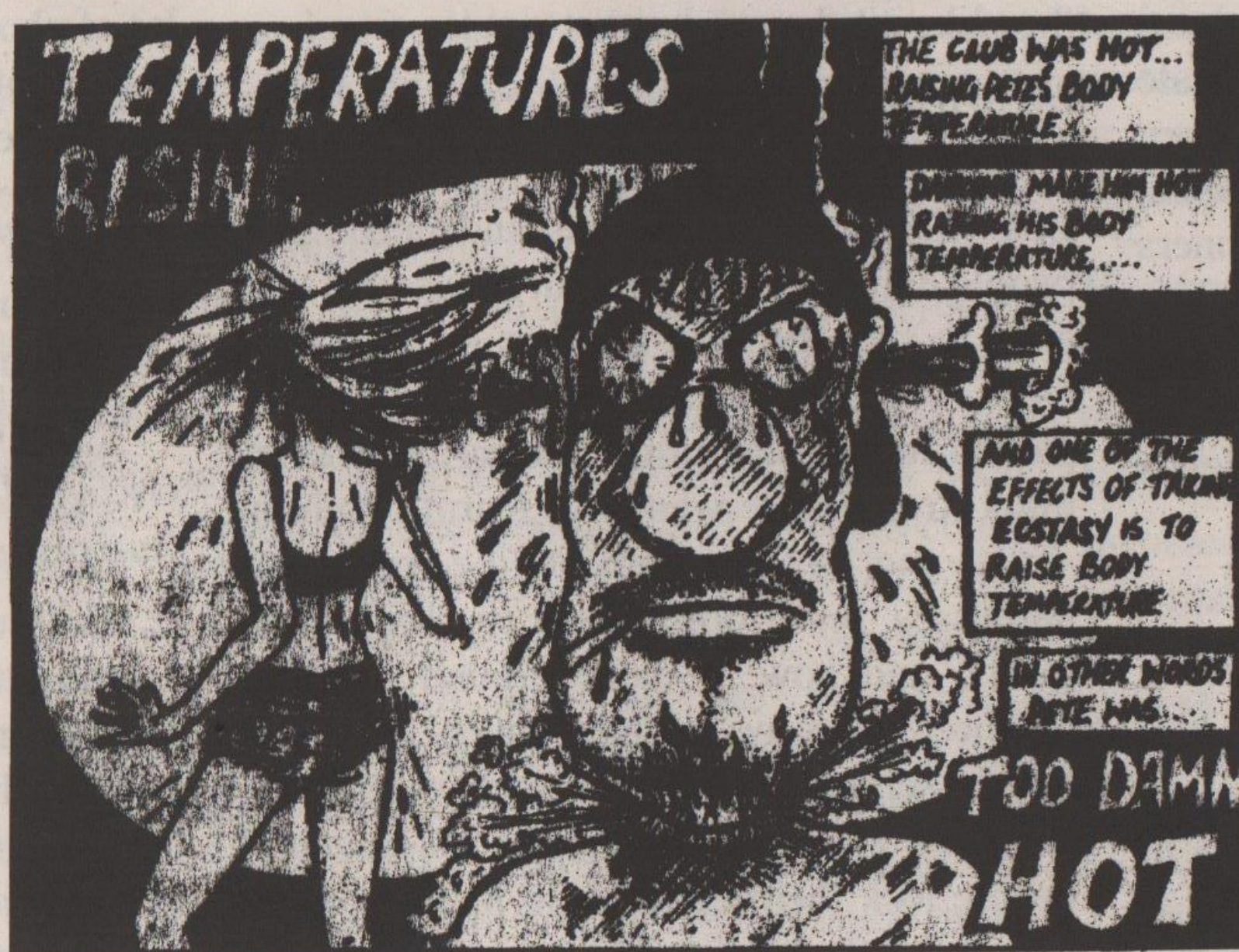
AS THE ECSTASY debate continues with the recent sensationalised Daily Mirror anti-Ecstasy campaign, and the 'All about E' Guardian discussion, the general emphasis as always, and not surprisingly, has been on the negative aspects of E - the consequences and the oft quoted statistics of between 50 and 60 casualties from E since 1988; (incidentally drink causes an estimated 28,000 fatalities in Britain per year [Melody Maker 8/6/96]). Even the so called progressive attitudes of the various drug information agencies and experts concentrate on possible harm and side effects.

But what about the positives? Are there any? Can millions of people each week be wrong? Does raving /Ecstasy have any place within revolutionary politics? Is it anti-revolutionary? How has it affected the social environment of Britain?

Social Environment

"...The turn of the decade and the pop clock begins to bring politics into fashion as organised raves and warehouse parties are busted, banned and trashed by cops throughout Britain. Just south of Leeds, the biggest mass arrest ever seen in this country...during one large outdoor rave.. the authorities are putting the scare on pop, dance music, new (different) drugs, people organising outside the established clubs.. the threatening, sexist, macho atmosphere connected to night-clubs is swamped by something new, exciting and even joyous..." (Chumbawamba - Showbusiness!)

As Chumbawamba suggest, the advent of raving and the accompanying use of Ecstasy has positively changed the social life of many; especially women. Nicholas Saunders, in his second work about Ecstasy, *Ecstasy and The Dance Culture* puts forward two possible reasons for this positive transformation. The first, a purely biological point, proposes the idea that as Ecstasy is a sexual suppressant, women are able to enjoy themselves free from sexual advances and hassle from men, "...Traditional alcohol-based events always had an undertone of trying to score sexually through flirting and small talk..."[Saunders - *Ecstasy and The Dance Culture*] The second, offers the idea that traditional cultural values are being rejected, "...Although many young people in the dance scene now drink and do not take



ecstasy, the normal way to behave is still without small talk or sexual aggression..."

It is quite probable that both of these points are true; as a sexual suppressant, especially for men, Ecstasy focuses the users attention on other things- namely the music and dancing. The result, more often than not, is a more relaxed and friendlier atmosphere; especially for women. This atmosphere perpetrates the desire for more of the same, and this is where the rejection of traditional cultural values could be seen to come into play.

Breaking Down Barriers.

Another case in point, illustrating this combination, is that of the rave scene in northern Ireland. As the scene developed and became popular around 1994, many young people (between the ages of 14 and 20), both Protestants and Catholics, became involved. The difference between this social scene and the pre-rave culture was that they became involved together. Saunders explains further;

"...I heard rumours that the effect of young people taking Ecstasy at raves in Northern Ireland was to break down sectarian barriers. In the summer of 1994, just before the IRA ceasefire, I spent 3 days in Northern Ireland... I interviewed teenage kids at a rave event in the Catholic club with a home video camera...lots of them were keen to tell me about the friendships they had made with members of the opposite sect who, they assured me, they would never have met otherwise..."

Without wanting to suggest that years of political conflict could be solved by dance music and E, Saunders' Northern Ireland experience does illustrate the existence of the two points mentioned which could account for the change in the participants social behaviour. Aggression is gone,

leading to the breaking down of barriers hence the rejection of traditional cultural values i.e. catholic only and Protestant only clubs, "...We've never known anything but hatred...It's always the same: them over on one side, you on the other, except at raves..."

Raving is not the only recreational activity where the participants have experienced behaviour changes, due to the use of Ecstasy. Although also involved in the dance/E scene, football supporters, from the 1991/92 season, showed a massive reduction in the amount of involvement they had in incidences of football violence and associated arrests. (The Independent 8/92 - a study.) Saunders cites a particular example of Manchester United and Manchester City fans, notorious for their violent clashes. He describes his experience of earlier Derby games (1989 & 1990) as being predictably violent and nothing out of the ordinary. Then he relates the first Derby game in the 1991/92 season;

"...By this time something quite remarkable had happened. Many of the hardcore lads from both United and City had spent most of the summer dancing the weekends away to the sounds of house music at raves fuelled by the drug Ecstasy. They had done this together! They had got into a routine of meeting up at rave clubs and taking Ecstasy in groups comprising both United and City lads...United's fans moved off, there were, as usual, several hundred of them. But from the vantage point of the same bridge I had stood on two seasons earlier, I could hardly believe that this group was largely made up of those same young men who had looked like they were going to war. This time they looked more like they were going to Glastonbury festival!...The match went off with hardly any trouble and afterwards United and City's lads once again danced the night away... it could never have happened before E..."

Addiction

Some critics of ecstasy have argued that although E is non-addictive, in terms of physical withdrawal symptoms, it is probable that it is psychologically addictive. This view can be given some credence as Saunders explains, "...Many European users do take Ecstasy every weekend and are psychologically dependent..."

However, he also states that, "...MDMA (Ecstasy) becomes less attractive with increased use...it's debatable whether it is the scene or the drug that they are addicted to ...". In the short time that I have been involved in the scene (approx. 14 months), I have never come across a person who I have considered to be addicted to Ecstasy. On the contrary, I have met many people who have gone weeks, months and even years without taking E. I myself have gone months at a time without taking, or feeling the need to take it.

Brave New World.

Another criticism bandied about, regarding E, is its potentiality to create a 'Brave New World'; in which people accept their lot, and all desire to fight for a better world is 'drugged' out of them. As every remotely awake and sane person will realise, we already have plenty of devices about which attempt to coerce us into such a position: cars, dis. washers, videos, CD's, houses, carpets, wallpaper, etc. the list is endless. And lets not forget all about the perfectly

legal drugs which could be said to do a much better job of numbing the mind than E, such as Benzodiazepines or anti-depressants such as Prozac.

Revolutionary?

So, can raving/Ecstasy unite enemies and bring peace where there is war? Of course not. Violence and wars still exist and will always prevail, until capitalism is eradicated. Raving/E, football, drinking, rock climbing, horse racing, etc. are all temporary releases from the mundanity of our existence under capitalism. None of these activities or any other leisure pursuit is revolutionary or, for that matter, anti-revolutionary. Ravers and the rave scene are as much targets for exploitation within Capitalism as every other consumer, as Arch Stanton points out,

"...The real threat of exploitation comes once again from the proliferation of would-be shamans amongst the state-funded cohorts of drug workers and their academic hangers-on. The former can barely contain their excitement..." [What Future For The

Real Raver'-Arch Stanton - *Here and Now* no. 14. 1993].

So once the experience is over its back to the real world of wage slavery, poverty and desperation; and either fighting to end these afflictions of capitalism, (and hence capitalism itself) or not.

In conclusion then, to be under any illusion that E/rave culture has any revolutionary power is to be living in a world of make believe. It is one experience out of many (although one of the best experiences I have ever had) which helps us to endure our existence as best we can. It will not do away with football violence on a large scale, or work where the Northern Ireland peace talks have not; but something which gives its participants (especially women) a break from "...the threatening, sexist, macho atmosphere connected to night clubs...", and indeed most other forms of 'normalised' social interaction, is, I believe, a progression, and, as much of a liberation of the social environment as is possible in a capitalist world.

War Artists of the Class War

WE CONCLUDE OUR 3-part series on Art and Anarchism. Due to lack of space we were unable to publish this in the last issue of *Organise!* as promised. Upcoming articles will include the involvement of Surrealists with the revolutionary Anarchist movement.

The role of the revolutionary artist is to reveal the real nature of capitalist society, to attack the system that causes poverty, hunger and death; to rip aside the mask that conceals systematic corruption, heartless bureaucracy and biased laws; to remind people that they are not alone, that their individual acts of resistance can be more effective as collective action taken with other people.

One such artist is 69 year-old Carlos Cortez. His lino-cut posters attack the evils and hypocrisy of capitalism. They are fly-posted around the Chicago streets at night and provide illustrations to accompany articles in the revolutionary press. Taking the heroes of revolutionary anarchism and the quiet daily heroism of the oppressed as his themes, his art is popular and populist.

The son of a Mexican Indian, who was an organiser for the Industrial Workers of the World (the I.W.W. also known as "wobblies"), and a German socialist mother, Cortez has been a "harvest hand, construction worker, loafer, jailbird... vagabond factory stiff". He joined the I.W.W. after World War 2 and his articles, poems and illustrations have appeared in its paper, 'Industrial Worker' ever since.

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'La Lucha Continua'

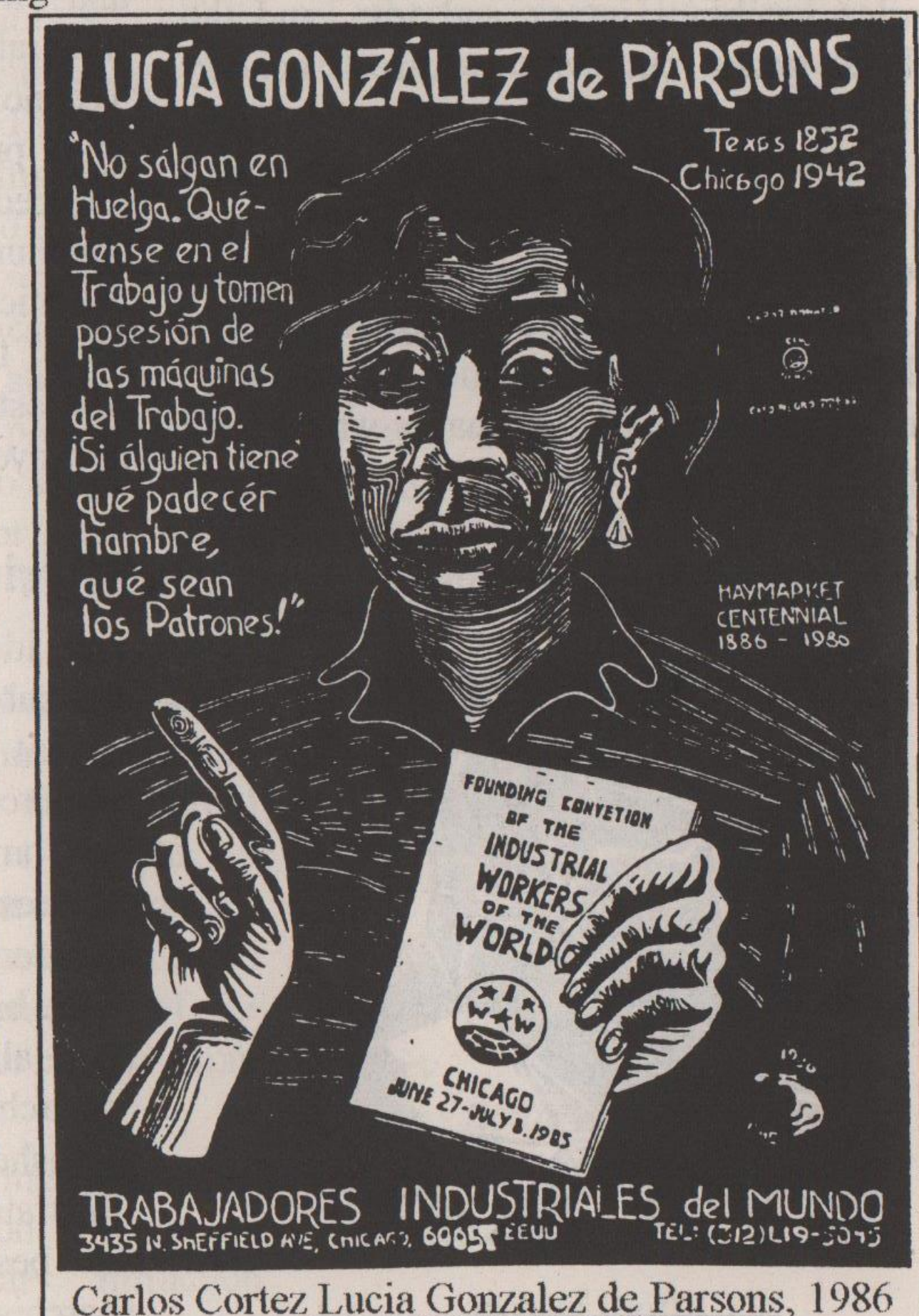
Cortez draws on his Mexican Indian origins and his involvement with the wobblies for his visual images. Typically these ideas came together in a woodcut entitled 'La lucha continua' ('the struggle continues'). Based on photographs of a peasant demonstration in Bolivia, Carlos added two skeletons and a pregnant woman, indicating that the struggle is something that takes in the past, present and future.

One striking woodblock poster depicts a Meztizo family, standing in front of a pyramid at the side of a stalk of maize, with the wording "Somos de la Tierra - No somos ilegales" ("we are of the land - we are not illegal"). Produced to protect against the harassment of undocumented immigrants from Mexico by the U.S. immigration authorities.

"Imagine those whose ancestors came from another continent telling the natives of this continent that they do not have the right to move around in their own land. Migrating to better their economic conditions is precisely what brought the Europeans over to this hemisphere", Carlos explains. A similar point was made on a small card advertising an exhibition celebrating "500 years of Resistance" which portrays a group of American Indians laughing at a portrait of Christopher Columbus.

Central America

American imperialism in Central and South America has been a favourite target for Cortez. One poster depicts a nursing mother and child, holding the slogan: "Mirucomo trabajan tus impuestos, CABRON!" ("look how your taxes work, cuckold"). Behind the mother and child tower skeletons in helmets



Carlos Cortez, Lucia Gonzalez de Parsons, 1986

marked "Policia". This poster was designed to draw attention to the way the taxes of U.S. workers are used against workers in Central America, in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. A smaller poster depicts parents grieving over a flag-draped coffin and lists the number of U.S. soldiers killed in wars of intervention. Printed down the side is the slogan: "Draftees of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your Generals!"

One woodcut has been based on the collective experience of Guatemalan women whose husbands had 'disappeared', after being taken from their houses by armed gangs. Cortez gathered their stories together, and synthesised it into the depiction of a family house invaded by a death squad, a masked informer points the woman's husband out to the killers.

Living in Chicago, Carlos is active with the Movimiento Artístico Chicano (MARCH). One poster printed for MARCH is of the 19th century Mexican engraver Jose Guadalupe Posada, embraced by one of the calaveras (animated skeletons) for which he was famous. Mexican artistic influences shape Cortez's work and the striking black and white images recall those of the revolutionary Mexican artists grouped around the paper El Machete.

Resistance and Community

The depiction of Posada is one of many portrait posters, which include the legendary song-writer and wobbly agitator Joe Hill, the Mexican anarchist-communist, Ricardo Flores Magon, and Lucy Parsons, a former slave, who dedicated her whole life to revolutionary action. In all these portraits Cortez combines image and text, and the subject gazes out with a direct honesty which confronts the viewer.

In Britain the artist most closely identified with anarchism is Clifford Harper. An illustrator whose work frequently appears in the national press, Harper's graphics have celebrated resistance and community, providing a critique of all that is wrong with capitalism, attacking all forms of authoritarianism and projecting a utopian vision of possible alternatives.



Clifford Harper



Clifford Harper

Born into a west London working-class family, his schoolboy rebelliousness - truancy, expulsion and petty crime - grew into involvement with the sixties counter-culture and increasing political awareness. This included a period of living in a commune which provided glimpses of life's potential - a potential described in one of his first major works 'Class War Comix' and a frequently reprinted series of illustrations commissioned for 'Radical Technology', which presented utopian ideas in a practical early obtainable manner - terraced houses with collectivised gardens, community workshops and medical centres in which the sexual division of labour had been transformed. These visions were contrasted with the reality of capitalism portrayed in Patriarch Street Scene.

Stirring Depiction

The idea that anarchism is realistic, is attainable, that its many strands make a vibrant alternative to capitalism was reinforced by the cover of a 1976 catalogue for Compendium Bookshop, which featured pictures of windmills, waterfalls working and demonstrating women alongside some of the historical figures of anarchism.

It is also the theme which runs through 'Anarchy, a Graphic Guide', which was published in 1987. This was written and illustrated by Harper, and provides one of the best introductions to the ideas of anarchism. All the variants of anarchism are

explored, and represented as valid alternatives to capitalism. The illustrations draw on the various styles and artists connected with anarchism in the past, Farns Masereel being one obvious example. He also uses the traditional iconography of anarchism: Light, chains, hammers, prison bars, flags, crowds and barricades all reinforce the ideas explained in the text. In chapter 4 an explanation of the Paris Commune is accompanied by a stirring depiction of women in assertive and revolutionary roles.

Much of Harper's graphic work celebrates resistance. On of his most effective works was the black and white cartoon-strip tribute to Jim Heather-Hayes, the young anarchist poet who committed suicide in Ashford prison after serving four months in solitary confinement for fire-bombing a London police station in 1982. The cartoon-strip is a format he frequently uses,



Clifford Harper

sometimes to illustrate poems, such as Siegfried Sassoon's anti-war poem 'Fight to a Finish', in which the returning soldiers turn on the press before driving the "butchers out of Parliament".

Rebellious Spirit

Harper's recent work includes the illustration and design of 'Visions of Poetry' an anthology of 20th century anarchist poetry, which he also helped edit. This and a slimmer volume published at the same time, the 'Prolegomena to a study of the Return of the Repressed in History' are skilfully designed and crafted, with text and

illustration working together in harmony. The illustrations of the 'Prolegomena' stand in the edge of abstraction, yet provide the perfect foil for the bitter denunciations of authority found in the text.

In stark contrast to this move towards the semi-abstract are his series of picture-card portraits of 36 anarchists, men and women who have dreamed of a different way of life, including Emiliano Zapata, the Chinese writer Ba Jin and John Cage, the musician. Harper's work has been diverse, and he has illustrated book jackets, LP covers, magazine articles, but his best work has often been that which has related to a particular struggle, such as the poll-tax

rebellion. His image of angry peasants captured the rebellious spirit of the mass of ordinary people, and linked it to similar revolts of the past. Little wonder that his particular image was reprinted again and again.

Cortez and Harper live on separate continents, yet both are united in their opposition to capitalism by a determination to document the class war as it happens - in doing so they have created art with greater meaning, relevance and engagement than all the arid portraits and landscapes that fill the gallery walls.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS



Insumisos

Since 1989 hundreds of people have been imprisoned annually in Spain for insumision, total resistance to military and alternative service. The normal sentence is 2 years, 4 months, 1 day. The policy of resisting all service was meant as a direct challenge against the state's military machine. It has been particularly strongly supported in Euskadi (the Basque country).

However, in 1996, all this will change. Insumision will no longer be a personable offence. Spain's 'socialist' government, clearly embarrassed at having its prisons stuffed full of insumisos (total resisters), have changed the law. The new punishment for insumision is to be 'disqualification', for between eight and fourteen years. This means that anyone found guilty of insumision will be deprived of the right to receive aid from public funds.

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This includes financial help for housing, to study, or to cope with unemployment. They will also not be allowed to get jobs that are in any way connected to public administration, such as health, education, transport and so on.

Insumisos may well be faced with extreme hardship under this new law. It will also have the effect of reducing the visibility of the resistance to the military, so making it easier to carry out repression and break the spirits of those that would resist the state.

It remains to be seen how the insumisos respond. One possibility is to join the armed forces and then refuse, as this means imprisonment under military law. What is obvious though, is that such a repressive law must be resisted through mass direct action and the support of those found guilty under the new law.

Anti-Fascist Jailed

Pavel Kroupa, a Czech anti-fascist activist has been charged with murder, and jailed. In March, he was on a bus in Prague when he was attacked by five Nazi skinheads. Pavel defended himself and consequently one Nazi died. Czech comrades are appealing for financial support and benefits to help pay for Pavel's defence. If found guilty he could

face life in prison. Support should be sent to:-

Ivana Vranova, Bohunicka 19, 60 000 Brno, Czech republic. Tel 09425-339895 (ask for Borck). Alternatively, any donations sent to the ACF (see address below) will be passed on.

Harold H. Thompson

Harold is an anarchist imprisoned in the USA. In 1979 he was arrested in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for allegedly shooting to death a police informant / killer convicted of murdering the mother of Harold's son, who then threatened his son while out on appeal bond. He was also charged with expropriating money for political activities, from a jewellery store. He was sentenced to life plus 50 years. He was then given an additional 21-75 years for a second shooting incident in Cleveland, Ohio.

Following a failed armed escape from an East Tennessee prison, from November 1986 Harold spent 5 years, 4 months in maximum security / solitary confinement. He also received an additional sentence of 32 years as a result of charges from this incident.

In July 1993, having been out of solitary for 15 months without a single disciplinary infraction report, he was framed for "in all

likelihood having possible escape plans" based on "outside confidential information". He was returned to maximum security / solitary confinement where he remained until march 1995. In June 1995, Harold was again reclassified to a lower security, but had to wait 8 months before being transferred to the Turney Centre Industrial Prison, where he is now.

As well as being an anarchist, Harold is also a jailhouse lawyer. This involves him drafting legal briefs for submission to courts for appellate documents, or filing civil rights complaints on behalf of other prisoners. His activities have earned him recurrent harassment, but he remains resolute and continues to work for what he believes in.

We would urge people to write to Harold or sent messages of support, and also add his name to the mailing list of any publications you are involved with.

For further information, leaflets, etc. write to:

Harold Thompson support Campaign, Huddersfield ABC, c/o 17-21 Chapel Street, BRADFORD, BD1 5DT

Write to

Harold H. Thompson #93992, Turney Centre Industrial Prison, Route 1, Unit 4-a-25, ONLY, TN37140-9709, USA

Frame-up

Oliver Campbell is currently serving a life sentence for the murder of a shopkeeper which occurred during an armed robbery of an off licence and supermarket. He has continually protested his innocence.

The evidence centred around a black 'British Knights' baseball cap which witnesses said the gunman was wearing (two people were involved in the robbery). A sports shop worker told police that Oliver had recently bought such a hat, and he was arrested on this basis. The hat had, however, been stolen some weeks earlier outside a night-club. An identical hat was found in the vicinity of the robbery by police, but hair found on it did not match that of Oliver's. In fact there was no forensic evidence against Oliver whatsoever.

In addition to this Oliver was questioned by police on numerous occasions without his lawyer being present, despite police having agreed to call his solicitor if any questioning was to take place. A psychologist at his appeal stated that she thought that the police had put undue pressure on Oliver to force a confession out of him, as he is considered to have severe learning difficulties and confessed merely to stop his harassment.

Added to all this, his co-defendant pleaded guilty to

conspiracy to rob (for which he received a 5 year sentence) and named another person who he said was involved in the robbery. Police however, did not even bother to pursue this line of enquiry, presumably, because it did not fit into their theory! Oliver is significantly taller than any of the witnesses stated the attacker was. He is also, much younger. He was totally unable to explain the history of the gun used, or where he had disposed of it. In the end, the only evidence against him is a confession which was given while under severe mental stress! Incredibly (or not, if you know anything of British justice!) his appeal, which took three and an half years even to happen, was rejected despite the total lack of evidence.

For more information on this case contact:-
Justice for Oliver

Campbell Campaign PO Box 6580, LONDON, E6 3TL.

Send messages of support to :-
Oliver Campbell MV3344, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, LONDON W12 0EA

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other practical information by writing to any ABC group, or drop us a line preferably with an SAE, and we will pass them onto you.

ACF PO Box 5754, Elgin, IV30 2ZD

Green Politics

Continued from back page

green current claiming to be anarchist, that is the anarcho-primitivists. The anarcho-primitivist position basically holds that a non-hierarchical society is impossible whilst any form of industrial civilisation remains and that, therefore, talk of a liberatory technology is nonsense. Whilst many writings from the anarcho-primitivist 'movement' (it is a far from homogenous entity) are an excellent counter-balance to technophile arguments coming from various sources (including 'revolutionary') their overall perspective lacks any

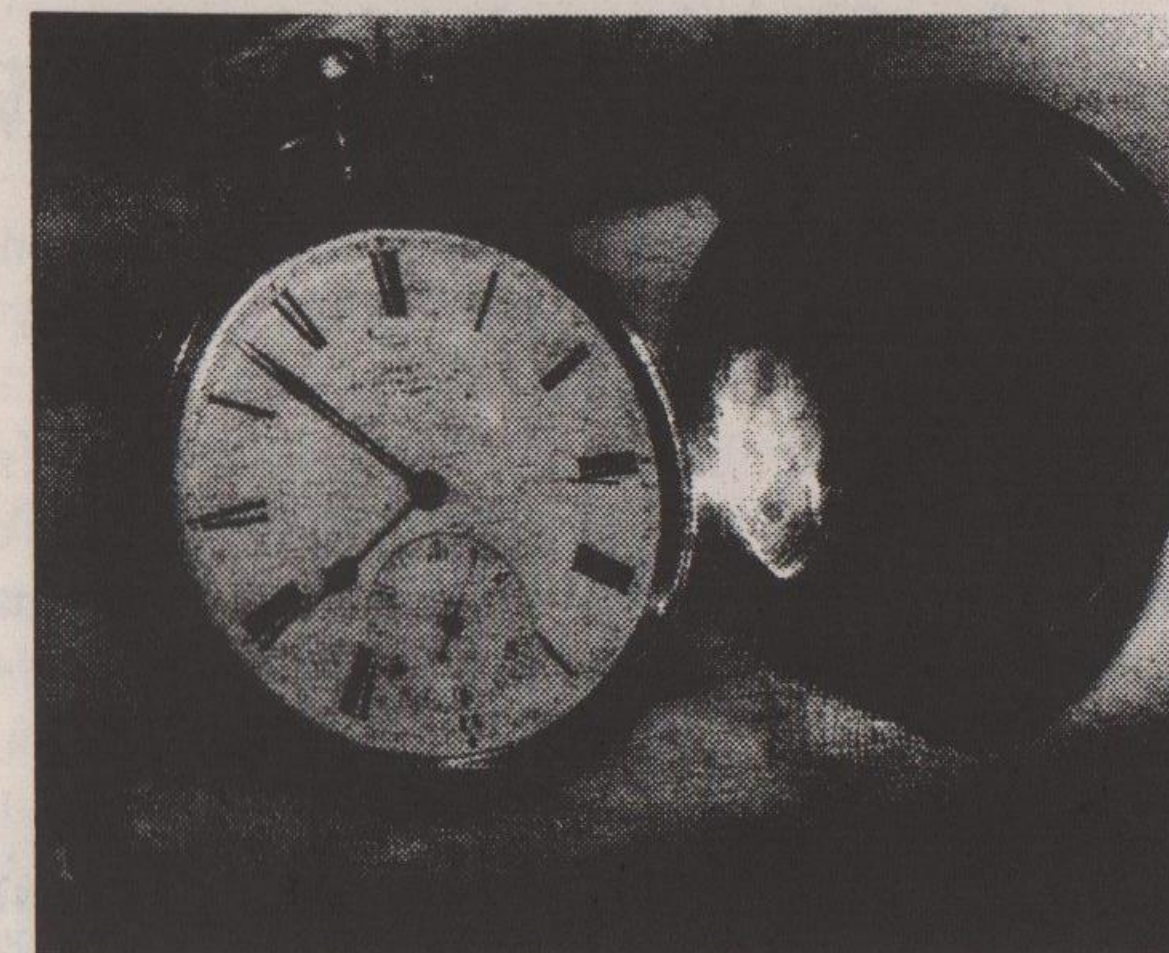
revolutionary dynamic and often betrays a confused misanthropic idealist fanaticism at odds with authentic anarchism.

Towards a Green Libertarian Communism

Any would-be revolutionary movement today cannot ignore the necessity of developing a 'green' perspective. But this does not mean simply tagging on a few eco-friendly ideas to an otherwise concrete grey politics. It entails an active engagement with specifically anti-capitalist

forces within the green movement. It means presenting a class struggle anarchist analysis of the present struggles against environmental destruction to those involved, to those effected. The struggles against the roads, for just one example, are implicitly class struggles as they challenge not merely present government policy but capitalist logic itself, the logic (and necessity!) for expansion. Likewise, when the greens talk about 'zero growth' anarchist and libertarian communists must point out the explicitly

communist nature of this idea. Equally, the latter must attempt to understand the implications of their politics for the environment (in the broadest sense). Already a dynamic is appearing as the limitations of traditional politics are becoming increasingly exposed as the world and its inhabitants face the choice of a new society or slow annihilation. If the historical choice has been between socialism or barbarism it is now between green libertarian communism and a barbaric death in clouds of toxic fumes.



FINDING TIME: ONE STEP BEYOND THE TYRANNY OF WORK. Norman Jope. 16pp. £1. Memes Press. Available from 38 Molesworth Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4NT.

This pamphlet comes at a time when the struggle against the Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) is beginning to hot up. Indeed, this piece of legislation, the compulsive nature of which is written into its very name, symbolises the question around which Finding time revolves: how our time is spent (or rather, squandered) in the service of the market.

Workhouse

Jope begins by noting how 70s talk of the Leisure Society has been abandoned. On one hand, there are many now who work excessively long hours and/or do unpaid overtime: in 1992, 15% of British workers toiled for 48 hours or more per week. On the other, for the millions unemployed, their rights to any kind of income or to go into a job of their choosing have been increasingly eroded and restricted. The JSA exemplifies this. In 1979, leaving a job "without just cause" meant that benefit would be suspended for 6 weeks. The JSA provides for such suspension lasting up to 6 months.

The contrast with the 60s and 70s, or even those still relatively liberal countries like Denmark, is blamed squarely on deliberate policy rather than untameable market forces. Unsurprisingly, the aim of this policy has been to boost profits. It has had three facets: the creation of mass unemployment, for example through

privatisation of State-owned industries, the weakening of union rights and power, aided by the first factor; and an increasingly stringent benefits regime.

These changes have had profound effects on the psychological climate as well. Indeed, changing attitudes, such as that of expecting to have "a job for life", has been an avowed aim of free market ideologists like the Tories. What this has actually meant is the creation of an atmosphere of insecurity and stress running through the lives of the working class, whether in "permanent" or temporary employment, or struggling on the dole. thus the basis for resistance is undercut by the fear of falling through each successive level.

Beyond Leisure

Jope goes on to ask fundamental but often neglected questions as to what kinds of work (and how much of it) we actually need done, and what could be eliminated. As he points out, most people want to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activity. Even the "leisure Society" would be a misnomer for one in which the work/leisure divide had thus been abolished as a result of the overthrow of the capitalist economy. But whether "work" or "leisure", the common denominator is time: our present lack of control over it and our need to gain such control in order to have a free, humane society.

As things stand, those who demonstrate a certain freedom in their lives, like New Age Travellers for example, tend to be reviled. It's suggested that

this is partly through envy of the contrast they present to lives of "working and shopping". However, the travellers' importance in this context is only a symbol of escape from the global market and the State-much more is needed for the transformation of a society which, as Jope shows, demoralises and exhausts the majority.

It is in his examination of the means by which changes might be brought about that anarchists will find most to question. Though the pamphlet has strong libertarian and egalitarian elements (e.g. advocating the active unity of the employed and unemployed) there is a tendency towards reformism in this last part of the discussion. For example, making the Jobseekers Allowance payable at its full rate in any period of unemployment, and creating a legal offence of "industrial coercion" with the aim of "constraining exploitative employers". But as well as recognising the improbability of the current Opposition pursuing these aims, Jope stresses that they are not advocated as end in themselves. Rather, they would be to excite the desire for more freedom and shift the consensus of today's unquestionably diminished hopes, which regard the market and the State as eternal. What anarchists deny is the idea that this system can be infinitely reformed, to the point where true freedom and justice exist. but reforms are useful insofar as they show that change is possible, and employ methods that build general confidence and this, I think, is the intended message.

In the end, the chief value of Finding Time is the attempt to tackle some basic questions of human purpose, rather than its tentative solutions. This is done very successfully, in a clear, informative and thoughtful style. Find the time to read it.

To document further developments with the JSA, and to assist the resistance to it, a newsletter called the Clock Stops Here is also available. Send an SAE to the same address as for Finding Time.

SOCIAL ANARCHISM OR LIFESTYLISM ANARCHISM. AN UNBRIDGEABLE CHASM. Murray Bookchin. 86 pages. AK Press. £5.95

As Bookchin himself says "Stated bluntly: Between the socialist pedigree of anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho communism...and the basically liberal, individualistic pedigree of lifestyle anarchism... there exists a divide that cannot be bridged unless we completely disregard the profoundly different goals, methods, and underlying philosophy that distinguish them." In this blistering attack on lifestylism, individualism and primitivism, this veteran of the libertarian movement pulls out all the stops. His constant affirmation of the revolutionary, social and collective core of Anarchism throughout this booklet warms the cockles of the heart of any Anarchist Communist worth their salt. Bookchin seems concerned that this revolutionary core is being eroded to the point where the word anarchy will become part of the chic bourgeois vocabulary of the coming century naughty, rebellious, insouciant but deliciously safe. This pessimism is not borne out by a look at the facts. Bookchin appears to be referring to the Anglo-Saxon Anarchist scene, although he seems to believe this process is also going on in for, example, the Latin countries. Now admittedly the so-called Anarchist movement in the United States and Canada is diabolical. This reviewer remembers well the American and Canadian "Anarchists" who turned up to the Trieste International Anarchist conference who sickened many East and West European comrades there, not to mention those who turned up for the Class War International event. But even so there do exist groups and individuals on the other side of the Atlantic who do profess some kind of class-struggle anarchism. Shouldn't Bookchin bear this in mind and make reference to them as a counter-weight to the individualists and lifestylists he

describes? Similarly, Bookchin seems remarkably ignorant of the Anarchist movement in Ireland and Britain. Is he not aware that the majority of Irish Anarchists hold class struggle views, as does the Scottish Anarchist Federation. Is he not conscious of the fact that the number of class struggle anarchists in England and Wales have increased dramatically in the last 2 decades? Why no reference to any of the organisations and papers that espouse such views? And what about the movement in the rest of Europe? It would be preposterous to regard it as predominantly lifestyle!

Alternative

Nevertheless this pamphlet is a welcome addition to the arguments in favour of what Bookchin defines as social anarchism and against the latter day individualism which he believes started taking hold with the defeat of the 60s counter-culture. He notes: "No less than Marxism and other socialisms, anarchism can be profoundly influenced by the bourgeois environment it professes to oppose, with the result that the growing 'inwardness' and narcissism of the yuppie generation have left their mark upon many avowed radicals. Ad hoc adventurism, personal bravura, an aversion to theory oddly akin to the antirational biases of postmodernism, celebrations of theoretical incoherence (pluralism), a basically apolitical and anti-organisational commitment to imagination, desire, and ecstasy, and an intensely self-oriented enchantment of everyday life, reflect the toll that social reaction has taken on Euro-American anarchism over the past two decades".

Now, Bookchin was involved in various attempts at radicalising the counter-culture in the 60s, to his credit. But perhaps his involvement has made him a mite indulgent. Whilst admitting the counter-culture's "shortcomings" he fails to say what they are. Certainly individualism and self-centred pursuit of pleasure can be

discovered to a lesser or greater extent in the sayings of counter-cultural figureheads like Timothy Leary, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. The impact of decades of reaction since then should not obscure the fact that these tendencies were already there and that little attempt was made to counterpose a class struggle perspective.

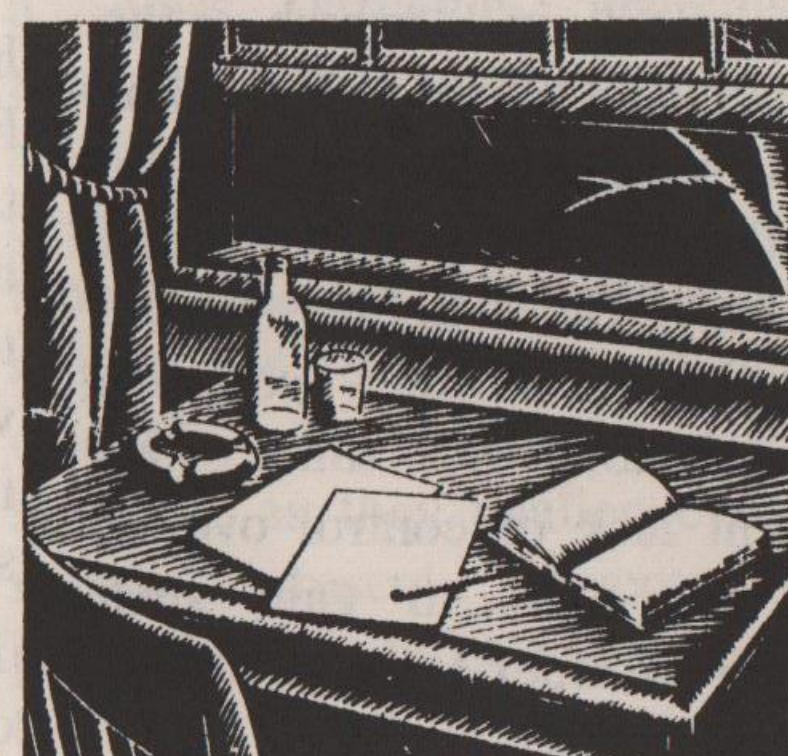
Bookchin, in his often brilliant diatribes against the Primitivists, fails to emphasise the other side of the coin. Productivism, production for production's sake, one of the chief maxims of capitalism, is one of the mechanisms that the Primitivists, no matter how wrong-headedly and in such a mistaken way, are rebelling against. In castigating the anti-technology and anti-civilisation stances of Primitivism, one feels that Bookchin errs too much in the other direction. Certainly he fails to sufficiently address himself to the problem of unbridled Production. Similarly, whilst agreeing with his denunciation of the anti-civilisation poses- and indeed poses are what they often are- of the primitivists, Bookchin fails to emphasise what this reviewer feels is of utmost importance. The primitivists have substituted the Civilisation of the last few thousand years with a call for the destruction of Civilisation. Well, I go along with them on this. Except that I want to substitute a new Civilisation, based on values nurtured in the libertarian movement and starting to develop now with a culture of resistance, not the end of civilisation per se. Bookchin fails to explain that a future society would mean a new Civilisation, transcending, and indeed destroying this one.

Democracy

Bookchin vaunts democracy as "not antithetical to anarchism". But we in the ACF feel that this ambiguous term, so often used to mobilise the masses to go to war for capitalism and the State and to counter the Western Powers' struggle with the Soviet bloc, cannot be used without confusion. Some of Bookchin's "disciples" have used his call for "libertarian municipalism" to

run as candidates for City Council elections. Indeed in Canada, some of these "disciples" have run on "libertarian" tickets for Quebec nationalism. Now, Bookchin, has vigorously denounced nationalism and support for "National liberation" in this book, and the views of his "disciples" should not be mistaken for his own. But he really needs to clarify just what he means by his slogan "Democratise the republic, radicalise the democracy". Is he in favour of "libertarian municipalism" of the sort where "libertarians" capture the local State (and end up being captured by it)? As he states, he has lost the view that the working class is the revolutionary subject of history, that is, that it is destined to bring about the radical overthrow of capitalism. In doing so, he appears to have dug himself into the hole of libertarian municipalism, out of which it seems difficult for him to get out.

Despite these criticisms, this booklet is well worth reading for arguments against the erroneous ideas of Stirner and Nietzsche. Indeed, Bookchin quite correctly points out that Emma Goldman, despite avowing an anarcho communist ideology, was a Nietzschean "cheek to jowl in spirit with individualists". His brisk attacks on the likes of L. Susan Brown, Hakim Bey, George Bradford and John Zerzan should be read by all serious Anarchists who are looking for a coherent revolutionary answer to the confusion of these thinkers.



Letters

Dear *Organise!*

Mayday was extra special in Sheffield this year, because it

also marked the opening of the brand new "Red and Black Centre" here.

It was only a couple of months ago that we decided to look for premises to set up a place for meetings, bookstall and infoshop, creche, cafe etc. Things moved fast. We all made monthly pledges of what we felt we each could afford. We found a space that we could afford to rent, and moved in just after Easter. Since that time, various members of the Sheffield Anarchist Group, Sheffield Solidarity Federation and others, have been working hard to get the place ready for a 1st May opening (the place was a bit of a tip to start with).

Well, we did it, and the centre had its grand opening On May 1st 1996. It was a big success. The centre looked great, after all the efforts of the group, with anarchist banners and posters from Sheffield and all over the world. About 60 people came, including members of the Leeds Anarchist group and some from Bradford. We heard talks on the origins of Mayday, on What is Anarchism, and on the centre itself. There was also an bookstall, an exhibition about the Spanish Revolution and a bar. We drank, ate and socialised until late.

This was only the first of a series of events to mark the opening of the centre. On Thursday we showed some videos, including the famous Poll Tax Riot, featuring the Sheffield Anarchists among many others! On Friday, there was Anarchist Bingo and an Anarchist Quiz, courtesy of the Leeds Anarchist Group. On Saturday, we held an anarchist bookfair in the afternoon followed by an evening of music, and socialising. Finally, on Sunday, we all met for a picnic in Endcliffe park.

We are planning more events for the future. We will keep you informed!

THE SHEFFIELD RED AND BLACK CENTRE
Wharfedale Works
Green Lane
Sheffield

For more information, contact:
Sheffield Anarchist Group
PO Box 446
Sheffield S1 1NY

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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. Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them.. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all). Deadlines for next issue are 14th September for features/reviews, and 21st September for letters/news. All contributions for the next issue should be sent to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Press Fund

Press Appeal. £100 from Nottingham; £20 from S.London; Keep up the good work and lets make sure *Organise!* is still fighting strong in ten years from now. You can send cheques, Pos, IMOs (made out to ACF) stamps etc. You can even send us a standing order to our account (write to London address for details). All donations to London address.

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