

# Class Consciousness

THE AIM OF anarchism is to obtain a free and equal society. For anarchists now the biggest problem is how to achieve the transformation from the present capitalist world to an anarchist one. anarchists are a tiny minority throughout the globe but we believe that an anarchist society will be to the benefit of all humanity. Since we think that anarchism is objectively in the interest of all, many people question the emphasis on class struggle to achieve a revolution. Here we will try to explain the Anarchist Communist analysis of class and the need for class consciousness amongst the working class if anarchist ideas are to triumph.

Much confusion is caused by the concept of class. This is not the place to examine the myriad economic, sociological and psychological definitions, all of which have important insights to offer in the analysis of present society. Instead we will concentrate on the Anarchist Communist political definition which holds that the Working Class for, want of a better term, includes the vast majority of the world's population who are oppressed and exploited by a tiny minority of rulers, the Boss Class, who order them about and live off the produce of their labour. These are not precise terms and it is not to label individuals as belonging to one class or the other, nor should it be. Class is a collective entity and can only exist in the context of a social whole. We identify the working class as the prime agent in changing society because of its numerical and productive collective strength and the obvious fact that those poorer and more oppressed have more to gain and less to lose in overthrowing capitalism and are therefore more likely to do so. However to gain that result what we describe as the working class must recognise themselves for what they are and how they stand in relation to the bosses. As Marx correctly said -only the class, conscious of itself, can achieve the revolution.

## Well meaning

For anarchists the implication of this is that



the revolution cannot be carried out on behalf of the working class by an "enlightened" majority acting in its name. This does not imply as many well meaning anarchist "educationalists" proclaim that the vast majority of individuals must become convinced of anarchist politics before we can act to implement anarchism. Class Consciousness is not a product of individual commitment but an ideological transformation effecting every aspect of social interaction. It will be reached not when everyone can quote Bakunin and Malatesta ad infinitum but when the working class recognises itself as such and libertarian forms of organisation are seen as both possible and the natural way to run our lives.

To bring this sense of Class Consciousness into being, anarchists must simultaneously work to break down the ideological domination of capitalist ideas, and struggle as part of our class against capitalism in practice. The first of these we do by spreading anarchist ideas and by exposing the false values of liberalism, democracy, labourism etc. or what they are, excuses to justify the rule and privilege of a small elite. Anarchism in turn gains from this by learning from the experience of the working

class from which all anarchist theory ultimately derives- the concept of anarchists advocating workers councils is a good example of this. Participation in the class struggle comes naturally to anarchists as we are not only struggling against our own oppression but recognise that as one aspect of a whole oppressive system which generates solidarity with others in the same position. This natural desire to fight back has the added good of showing the rest of our class what anarchism is really about rather than the lies and myths spread by the media. These two strands of anarchist activity are entwined as better ideas make us more effective in action and involvement in struggle leads to better ideas.

## Reinventing

It is important to realise that continuous anarchist activity will not lead inexorably to the growth of class consciousness. Capitalism is continually reinventing itself to ensure its own survival. Not only does it rubbish libertarian communist ideas and reinforce its own ideological stance through the education system, the media etc. but it always aims to co-opt movements of resistance into its own system. The trade unions, Marxist-Leninism even the Labour Party all started out to challenge capitalism, even if only in a tame way, and all have ended up as part of its structure or an alternative form of capitalism. The Class Consciousness we wish to create must be such that it not only stands opposed to the present system but must be capable of controlling those who will use the class struggle to achieve power for themselves. To this end an emerging Class Consciousness must manifest itself as more than an vague feeling amongst our class but express itself in organisation on libertarian principles not least in a coherent and united anarchist movement. The ideas and practice of the Anarchist Communist Federation are one step on this road.

## New! Added 66% Increase

As from this issue of *Organise!* we are being forced to charge £1 per issue. This is because of increased costs of printing, postage, stationary etc. We have not done this lightly. For several years we have kept the price as low as possible, producing at a loss. However, we feel that *Organise!* is still very good value (if you think in capitalist terms) in terms of content. We hope you stay with us, dear reader, and read the exciting issues of *Organise!* that we're lining up. More and more people are realising that Subscriptions are at the old price for this issue only!. As it's Xmas treat yourself, your friends (or your Auntie!) to a sub.

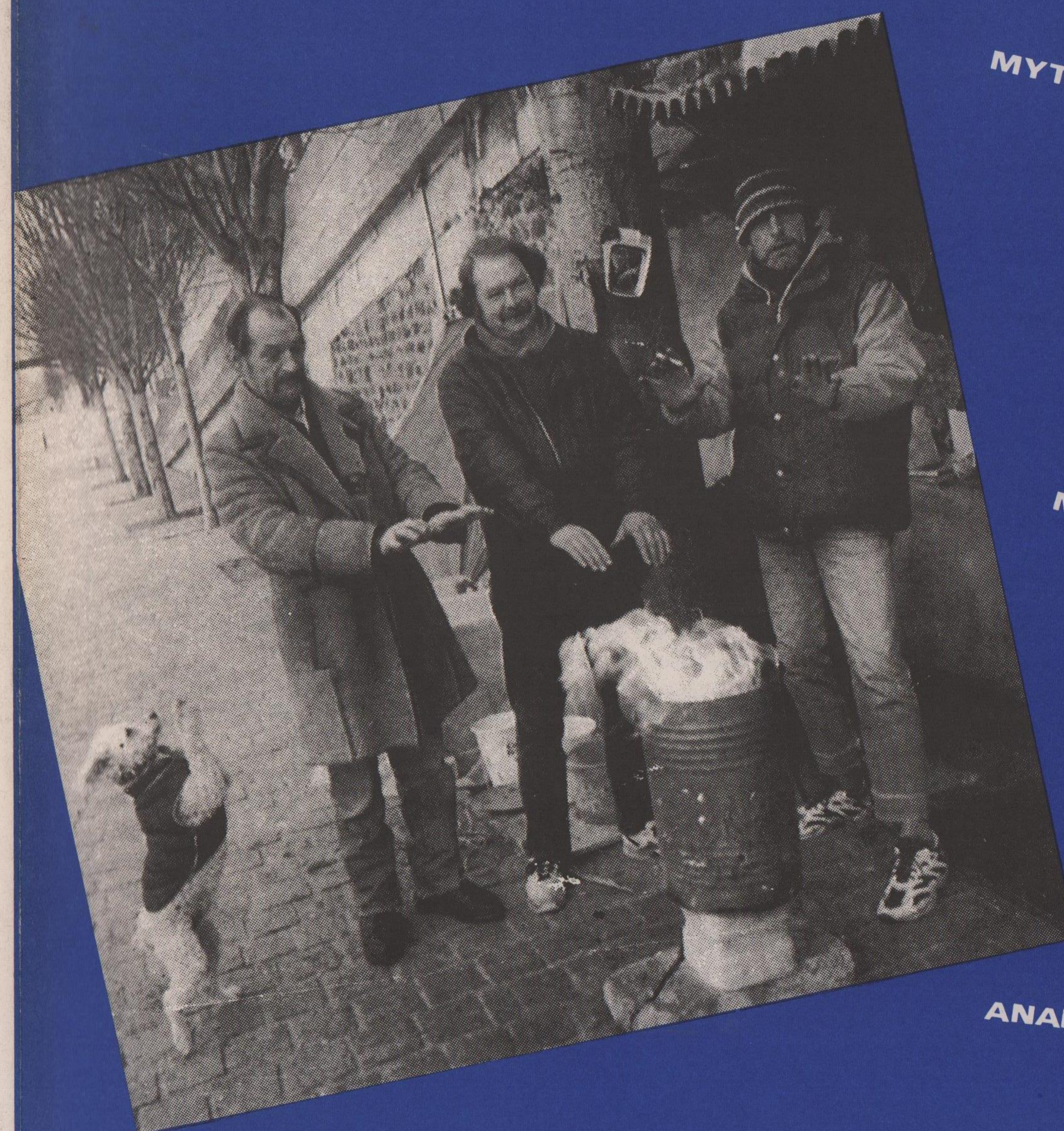
# ORGANISE!

FOR CLASS STRUGGLE ANARCHISM

ISSUE NO 44 AUTUMN/WINTER 1996

£1.00(FREE TO PRISONERS)

## WORKING CLASS



MYTH OF THE UNDERCLASS

JSA - LATEST NEWS

MURRAY BOOKCHIN LETTER

ECO-FASCISM

ANARCHISM AND SURREALISM

AND LOADS MORE...

# NOT UNDERCLASS

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.

Whoever is in government after the next election, greater repression and State violence will be used to push through the further dismantling of welfare benefits, and to smash unrest in the workplace and on the streets.

What can we make of people who come over as shining knights of "morality", the same people who are attacking the health service and forcing many to wait long periods for operations, condemning them to pain, possible death, who have thrown hundreds of thousands out of work and into poverty, who supply arms to the militarists all around the world so they can carry out genocide like the Rwanda massacres? These are the same people who take bribes in Parliament, the same people who regularly carry out Stock Exchange scams.

All of this is hypocrisy- but hypocrisy in order to prepare for tough law and order measures as social unrest threatens to ignite.

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# No Dole Slavery! No Wage Slavery!

**OCTOBER 7TH, IMAGINATIVELY named 'A-day' by the employment services, has now passed and the Job Seekers Allowance has replaced Income Support and Unemployment Benefit.**

Unlike previous benefit changes, it is clear that the new JSA is less to do with cuts and much more about an direct attack on conditions, pay and security for workers and unemployed as a whole. While it is true that many people (especially those under 25 years of age) will lose money now unemployment benefit has become 'contributory JSA' and in forth-coming changes to housing benefit rules, the JSA is predominantly a means to force us into low-paid work by the threat of having no money to live on.

Perhaps the nastiest effect of the JSA is due to the combination of the Job Seekers Agreement and the new Labour Market System computer database. This Agreement will eventually be signed by all claimants, with new claimants being affected straight away, and existing claimants to be dealt with at 'advisory' Restart interviews when they next attend. The Agreement states, amongst other things, exactly what you will do to find work, the lowest wage you will accept and how far you are prepared to travel to a job, which will apply for up to 13 weeks after the agreement is signed. After this, you can be forced to take any available job or face loss of all benefits. New Job Seekers Directives can make you take steps to improve appearance or attitude, again with the threat of 100% benefit cut for failure to comply. All training schemes which may have been voluntary before October 7th have become compulsory under JSA. The

LMS database contains both job details and personal information so you can be linked to 'suitable' jobs every time you sign-on, called Active Signing. It also maintains a signing-on record, including information as detailed as an excuse given for signing on late. Sending a claim for adjudication, that is, referring you for a possible benefit cut, can be done literally at the press of a button on the LMS screen. These new powers and procedures are obviously bad news for all claimants.

The last Groundswell network meeting, attended by anti-JSA groups across the country, highlighted the need to see the JSA as only one part of the attack on benefits which is happening in Britain, and in many cases the JSA has a knock-on effect on other benefits. Incapacity benefit is already much harder to get due to the 'all work' test, where you virtually have to prove you are incapable of doing any job to get your money. Many people who fail this despicable test will have a hard task fulfilling the strict criteria for work availability under JSA, meaning

many ill or disabled people may not get any benefits at all. Housing benefit is also under attack with a capping of weekly rates to a maximum of £39 and in most cases to much lower amounts as money is taken off for shared facilities or rooms etc. In Sheffield, for instance, it's nearer £28 tops for a room in a shared house. Child Support is also under threat, and single parents are increasingly under pressure to work for benefits.

### Peanuts

The JSA is not the only way we are being forced to work for peanuts. The weapon of USA-style 'workfare' schemes has already been piloted in the Hull and Medway areas, under the name of Project Work, which is compulsory work-for-dole plus £10. In Hull, where the scheme was dubbed the chain-gang (with some people actually breaking rocks to build stone walls), around 1000 of the 5000 participants have been forced off the dole register in one way or another. 40% of these are said to have found 'jobs' via the Job Centre. As for the other

60% who signed off, the government is claiming a victory against 'working-on-the-side'. The state sees the 1000 ex-claimants as a triumph for its ideology and budget-reducing strategy because they have been made 'independent of welfare', some having been pushed into shit jobs and the rest victimised into signing off. The government has just announced plans to extend Project Work pilot schemes to 29 other cities which will affect around 300,000 claimants. The Labour Party has similar plans if their Manifesto promise to get 100,000's of claimants into 'work' is anything to go by. For this reason, we should be very wary of the idea of 'Jobs not JSA' being pushed by the TUC and some leftist groups like Militant. Instead the Groundswell network has endorsed the alternative slogan "No Wage Slavery! No Dole Slavery!". The idea that there is no such a thing as a fair job under capitalism is rarely put forward by the left.

If all this were not bad enough an extended anti-fraud campaign began at the start of November. 12 cities have been selected for the snooper hot-line treatment, and people will be encouraged yet again to grass up benefit 'cheats'. The fraud campaign has also identified various groups for special attention, such as single parents cohabiting, market traders, fast-food and part-time workers claiming dole, or any parent

## Editorial

Major, Blair and Ashdown stand united in their place at the head of the new Moral Crusade. They have used a number of violent incidents-Dunblane, the murder of Philip Lawrence-as pretexts for a campaign of hysteria designed to strengthen the State and police powers and to bolster a climate of opinion which condones the scapegoating of the poor and further attacks on any little freedom in this society.

Social conditions are in sharp decline, and the decline of British capitalism is further aggravated by problems within capitalist society world-wide. This means that previous welfare reforms are being dismantled. As welfarism collapses, the Labour Party is quick to abandon all talk of social reform and welfare rights and indeed to lead attacks on any idea that economic hardship leads to deteriorating social conditions and rising levels of crime. Increasing polarisation is leading to a situation where unrest is simmering.

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who has not responded to a Child Support Agency questionnaire. In these cases the sole aim is to get as many claimants as possible off the dole register.

### Angry

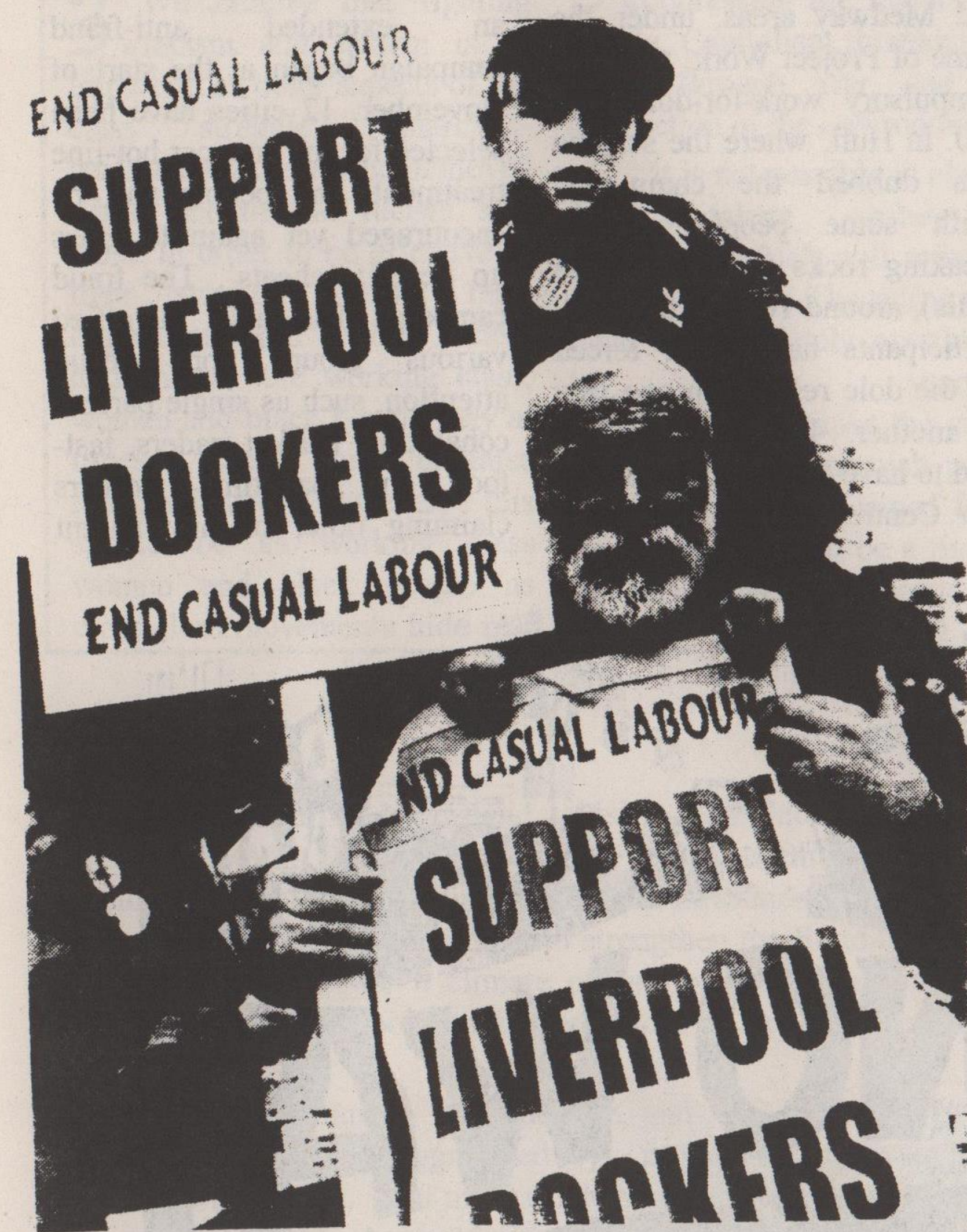
As far as the effect on pay is concerned, if claimants are forced into taking any old job the employer can think of at whatever wage, as will be the case under JSA and perhaps even worse under Project Work, this can only force down wages across the board. It is to the credit of Groundswell that we are now linking all benefits cuts and the reality of shitty low-paid jobs. No credit is due to unions like the CPSA who have consistently whined on about their need for security screens in Job Centres to protect workers from angry claimants, and have, along with others in the TUC and the left, condemned the '3-Strikes' initiative aimed at

exposing workers and management who are using the JSA to harass claimants. The unions have been a real obstacle in attempts to get workers and claimants together. Some dole workers have been able to show solidarity by walking out during Job Centre occupations, but this needs to be extended much further if we are to try and make the JSA and other benefit attacks unworkable. The need for claimants to take action together when individuals are singled out for sanctions will also be an important strategy in the future. We are now in a good position to bring in workers affected by sacking and redundancies as many will be facing the horrors of JSA. Links with dockers and postal workers already exist and are being strengthened. There are many other good ideas coming out of the anti-JSA campaign, mainly from an anarchist perspective. Another exciting development is

the linking of workers struggles with anti-roads and anti-Criminal Justice Act issues at events like Reclaim the Future in Liverpool. Finally, it is useful to take a look at what is going on outside of Britain. States throughout Europe have similarly attacked benefits and pensions to get ready for Monetary Union in 1999, which capitalist analysts say will 'cure' unemployment because of its stable conditions for economic growth, including low interest rates and inflation. The Maastricht agreement requires a budget deficit of 3% of Gross Domestic Product to qualify for EMU, and before membership is allowed participating states must also have low public debts and a stable exchange rate. At the end of 1995, it was believed that many states (e.g. Spain, Italy and Belgium) would be unlikely to fulfil the Maastricht conditions by the 1999 deadline and even

the richer states were getting worried, so at the end of 1995 France attempted to move in this direction, with the support of Germany, by introducing a set of welfare reforms. Prime Minister Alain Juppé announced his Plan to cut back on welfare spending and public sector pensions, and to cut 'non-urgent' medical expenditure in the national health service, which was greeted with widespread strikes and riots by workers and claimants. The Tory government is too tied up with internal ideological disagreements over Europe to openly link the JSA with EMU, but it has certainly made it clear that they will keep Britain's options open by making sure the Maastricht Conditions will be met. We need to recognise the additional threat of the proposed European unity for a fuller understanding of why these changes are taking place.

## Unity At The Waterfront



IT BEGAN ON Saturday from afar including Turkey, U.S. and Australia. Once the march got under way between 8,000 and 10,000 class warriors chanted, sang and

danced their way through Liverpool City centre down to the pier head situated at the top of the river Mersey which the sacked Liverpool dockers and their forefathers before them had serviced.

Anarchist groups from all over the U.K. hoisted banners high and proud into the wind, amongst them prominent London ACF, Leeds Anarchist Group, Tyneside Anarchist Group, Sheffield Red and Black Anarchists and the indigenous Merseyside ACF Group and Merseyside Solidarity Federation. Members of Class War London were also represented and all in all the anarchist presence was magnificent. Heart-warming even.

At the climax of the march a platform was given over to some inspirational speakers: a comrade printer out in dispute for over a year in Chicago; partners of the Liverpool struggle with the dockers Women of the Waterfront; staff from the Hillingdon Hospital strike; a worker suffering at the hands of the repressive Turkish

regime; and last but not least a young docker's son of twelve years old who spoke every bit as movingly and eloquently on the penury of working class struggle in a dispute as did old lefty war-horse Arthur Scargill a few moments after him.

On Saturday evening a squat was established from which a grand rave party ensued. Sunday was a mellowing out process and many groups held workshops for people representing the various cultures of this gathering.

Monday's picket of the main dock gates was the pivot of the entire weekend. Many comrades, again anarchists in the forefront alongside Reclaim the Streets people were up and out at the crack of dawn, well awake before the dozy cops, to sneak into the dockyards occupying dockshed rooftops and high gantry cranes. The bravery and agility of the R.T.S. people was an inspiration to the other six hundred or so of us on the picket at the dock entrance. They waved banners and flags all day long at the

heavy handed, lobotomised cops who were pushing and shoving with unnecessary force into the massed picket. Cops provoked 36 arrests by the end of the day including dockers' shop stewards, but mainly nicking Reclaim the Streets people, who as a group gave overwhelming support and life to the huge protest throughout the day and weekend. Maybe the cops took a dislike to the free and flowing unrestraint of R.T.S. style of clothing and dress mode, as against their own bound-up, clone like black and yellow drone dopey appearance. Whatever, they were unnecessarily vicious towards the entire picket assembly culminating late in the afternoon with the Psycho Squad, the O.S.U., lifting a young R.T.S. male off the ground where he was sitting paring an apple with a fruit

knife. Can you believe the excuse they needed to unleash their pent up, macho frustrations and beat the hell out of this innocent young man? There is more integrity in just one of the colourful pieces of string that R.T.S. people wear than in all the burnished brass, braid and button buffoonery adorning her majesty's repressives. On a day that cop thugs not only tried to silence our colour, gaiety and home-made music but our humour and laughter too, one of the copper's helmets was knocked off in a scuffle, captured by the R.T.S. and unceremoniously dumped in the brazier ablaze at the roadside. Christ it stunk as the flames consumed it, whether from the brylcream its owner had plastered over his hair, or even maybe some of whatever brains he had being left inside it, it burned bloody well and

### ACF Foreign Language Pamphlets

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, French, Italian and Spanish translation of our *Aims and Principles* is also available for 20p plus postage.

gave us the best laugh of the day!

The dockers may still be out of work, the streets unclaimed to our satisfaction, but after a weekend of solidarity action

like this there can be no doubt that community and class fightback is on the agenda.

## DO KURDISH PEOPLE LACK A STATE?

ORIGINALLY, THIS WRITING was written, by Kurdish Anarchists for a festival on the 1st of September 1996 which was called "Peace in Kurdistan Festival." It is our task to highlight briefly the situation in Kurdistan and refute the crocodile tears by capitalists and their media over Kurdistan.

Kurdistan is a land where Kurdish people live in an organised feudal and capitalist system, where working people (especially women and children) are suffering from poverty, ill treatment and oppression from the authorities, who are represented by the Kurdish parties (Kurdish Democratic Party, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and the PKK of Northern Kurdistan. They are for the freedom of Kurdistan as much as Yasser Arafat (the hero(?) of national liberation for the past two decades) is for the freedom of the poor Palestinian people.

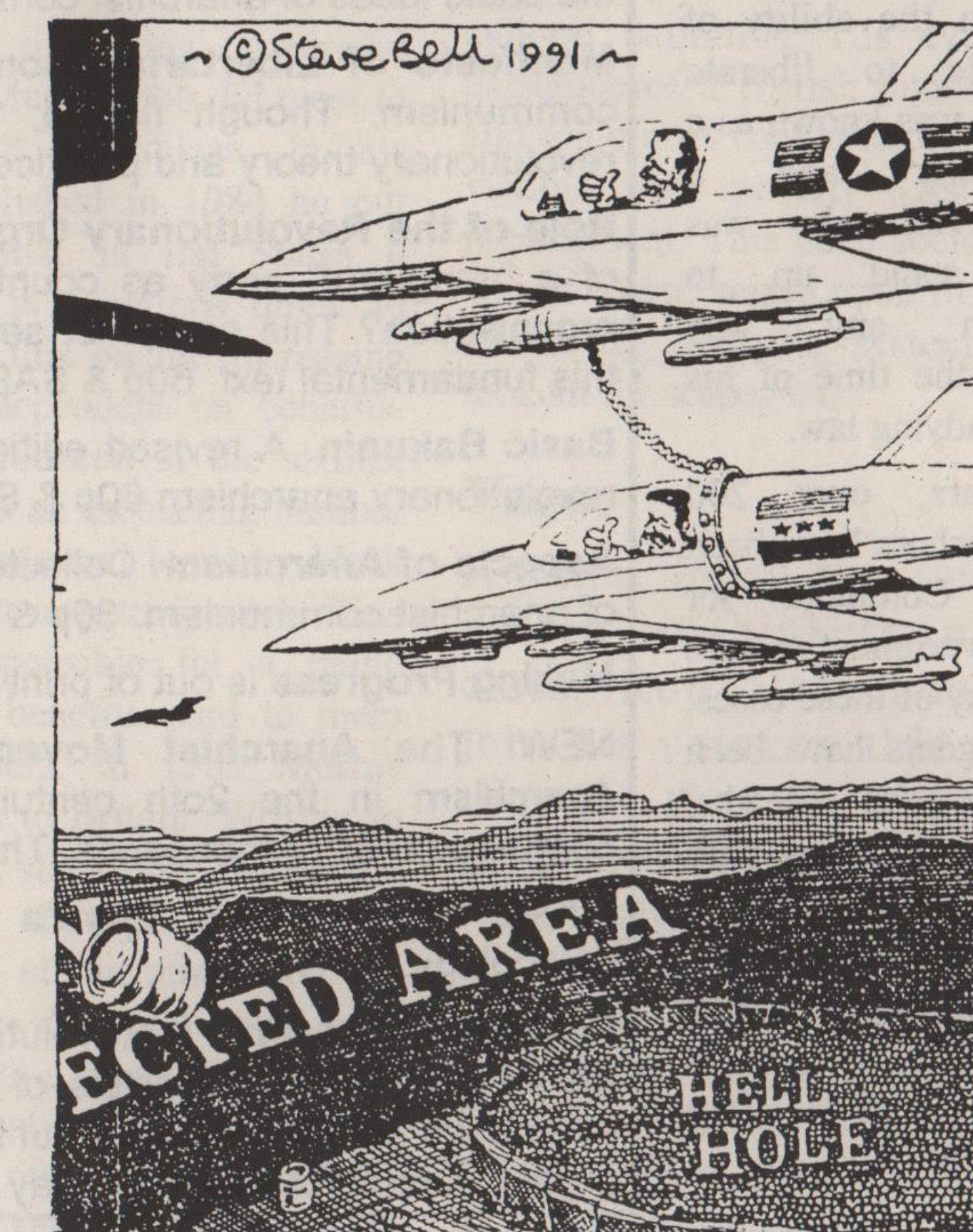
After the Iraqi authorities were forced to leave south of Kurdistan in March 1991 by the sheer force of uprisings by soldiers and poor people of the

South and Kurdistan of Iraq, for that short period, the poor people, in their unity against the government, felt their strength and showed to themselves and the world what kind of storm will come when the bottom of society is on fire and in revolt. To crush and strangle the uprisings as quickly as possible, Iraqi government thugs, with the help of allied troops in the area, united in an unholy-alliance against the revolt to bring back law and order to the south of Iraq, massacred unarmed slaves of people. The same happened to our comrades in the Paris Commune at the hands of the French government and at the hands of Bismarck's troops 125 years ago.

Then in Kurdistan, Kurdish Parties (PUK & KDP) in the name of free Kurdistan and supported by landowners, merchants, and a large number of shop owners who control the movement in the market, established themselves as new bosses of Kurdistan, crushing with an iron fist any discontent and challenge to their power and their properties like any other authority in the world.

Of course, this doesn't surprise us Anarchists. Clearly we see where there are classes there will be clashes, we see any government means violence, murder and robbery against poor working people of this rotten world. Usually, surprise surprise, Leftists in Kurdistan and in other places (for example communist parties, Socialist Workers Party in Britain) seek

power of government in the name of the working class as the Bolshevik regime did for the workers of Russia, Ukraine. They started to shoot the spirit of Russian revolution as soon as they became new bosses of Russia. The slaughter of thousands of sailors of Kronstadt by the Red Army, on the order of Lenin and Trotsky in March 1921, is a vivid





reminder to us what the Leninist and Stalinist ideology means in practice.

The Leftists (some of them are fools and others confused by their leaders) with minds so saturated with crappy Leninist ideology, usually criticise and blame one section of the government which is not doing good works for the workers.

Logically it is true that a dog cannot talk and sing. Just barking like a dog, that is how we compare (and what we expect from) any state in history of the wide world in its oppressive behaviour.

That is why we say it is a big lie, and is an unforgivable lie, to tell the world through their massive media that a majority of Kurdish people are suffering in life because all they lack is a powerful Kurdish state. The

truth is that the poor population of Kurdistan are suffering, like the working class population of the rest of the world in many ways, from the brutal forces of the capitalist system and their own authorities.

Our task as Anarchists, is to tell the workers, teachers, students in Kurdistan on farms, in schools, at work places, not to be fooled into struggling for a change of bosses from Turkish to Kurdish, from Persian to Kurdish. They should understand and take the lessons from their own history and working class history as a whole, that the solution is a Communist-Anarchist revolution. It is an enormous and a bloody task, the preparation for that aim must be organised and linked on an international

scale, otherwise we waste our energy without it.

Light with the flame of revolt, the hearts and consciousness of Turkish, Persian and Arab workers, students, soldiers to end the power of warmongers, the power of poverty and the power of money.

Your mission is to destroy authorities forever, not to create a mini new one in the name of Kurdistan. Kurdistan and the rest of the world could be a garden of life without states.

Long live Kurdish language and music.

Long live the spirit of Communist-Anarchist revolution



in the Middle-East and in the rest of the world.

Our aim is to wipe out religion, state, racism and money.

By Kurdish Anarchists.

## Humberto Peña Taylor

IN MAY 1995, Humberto Peña Taylor was murdered in the campus of the Universidad Nacional (the National University) in Bogota, Colombia.

Humberto was a member of a libertarian collective, which has been engaged in the struggle against the authorities, and particularly against the privatisation of education and the establishment of neo-liberalism. He was a staunch advocate of direct action, and put his faith in the ability of ordinary people to liberate themselves. He was known as a forceful speaker and a committed activist who was prepared to stand up to oppression in any way necessary. At the time of his death he was studying law.

In recent years, over 200 students and teachers have been murdered in Colombia for opposing the government and its policies. In many of these cases, state security agents have been implicated in the deaths. Nobody has been charged with the killing of Humberto, and there is varying speculation as to who could have been responsible. What is clear is that these assassins are operating with impunity.

There are currently many forces of oppression operating in Colombia, from the government, to the drug cartels, and including the likes of the USA's Drug Enforcement Administration. In the face of the widespread repression being perpetrated by these people it is

to the immense credit of libertarians, people like Humberto, that they keep struggling for freedom, and fighting repression.

The ACF would like to send a message of support to our comrades in Colombia and wish them ultimate victory in our

struggle. We would also like to send our sympathies to the friends and family of Humberto Peña Taylor, and to all those who have suffered similar losses in Colombia. We know the struggle will continue!

### A.C.E.

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# The Myth of the Under-class

AN IMPORTANT PART of the boss class's attacks on the mass of the population has been on the ideological level, hand in glove with privatisation, casualisation, unemployment, cuts in services, welfare and housing, and increasing authoritarianism and surveillance.

So we were treated to claptrap about the 'end of history', with the idea that now 'communism' was dead, liberal democracy, read unfettered market capitalism, would rule triumphant with an end to class struggle. Another part of this ideological assault was to point to the conditions in the 'under-developed' countries and in Eastern Europe to highlight how well off we were in the West and how grateful we should be.

Yet another part of the ideological assault was the appearance of the term 'underclass' which is being used more and more in the media. The term first emerged in the United States in the early 70s where it was used by sociologists heavily influenced by the ideas of Weber to refer to a part of the population that was permanently in unemployment and poverty. There was a strong racial content in this analysis as the underclass was often identified by these sociologists (Glasgow, Tabb, Weis) with the urban ghettos, where many blacks and Hispanics live in unemployment or low-status, casual employment. Later Rex and Tomlinson in 1979 used the term to mean "a disadvantaged group which does not share the same experience of privileges as the white working class". They argued in their study of Handworth in Birmingham that it does not make sense to describe ethnic minorities as part of the working class in spite of their characteristic working class employment profile(!) In their view



underclass did not necessarily imply unemployment, although they thought that ethnic minorities did have greater unemployment levels. They felt that the underclass was defined by racial discrimination, and their exclusion from 'traditional working class organisations' like the Labour Party and the unions (eh? surely some mistake?) and that where there was employment it tended to be in low paid, casual jobs.

But it was the right-wing American sociologist Charles Murray who did most to popularise the term underclass. In his *Losing Ground* published in 1984 he put forward the idea that in the States a growing underclass is a serious threat to society. He blamed this on the increasing number of people dependent on benefits. Welfare reforms introduced in the sixties, he argued, had led to an increasing number of black single parents and to many black youths losing interest in getting work. This underclass was responsible for a rising crime rate and the benefits paid to them were hitting taxpayers. In 1989 Murray imported these ideas to Britain. Writing in the *Sunday Times* he stated that Britain too had an underclass, although it was not composed mainly of ethnic minorities. He feels that underclass does not refer to a level of poverty but to a type of poverty, in other words those that were untidy, workshy and shiftless, often drunk and ill-schooled and ill-behaved. He felt that three

'phenomena' were danger signals for the development of an underclass-illegitimacy, violent crime and drop-out from the labour force. As one critic was to comment the British underclass to him were 'criminally violent bastards who refuse to work'. Of course, this type of irrational and emotive 'analysis' goes right back to the Victorian ideas of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. Murray makes no effort to define the 'underclass' economically, everything is a cultural definition. His evidence for the existence of a British underclass is slight and sometimes contradictory. He blames the victims of poverty for their own predicament. This deep social analysis (not) was of course seized upon by those eager to attack the benefits system and on the lookout for scapegoats.

### Vague

Another lousy specimen of what passes for thinkers in the ruling class, Rolf Dahrendorf, was to join his voice to this chorus. He thought that an underclass existed in both America and Britain with 'undesirable' characteristics that included a "lifestyle of laid-back sloppiness, association in changing groups of gangs, congregation around discos or the like, hostility to middle class society, peculiar habits of dress, of hairstyle, often drugs or at least alcohol - a style in other words



THE TRICKLEDOWN EFFECT



which has little in common with the values of the work society around." Dahrendorf differed with Murray on the causes of this underclass, blaming it on the restructuring of capitalism, which now required fewer workers. He defined members of this underclass as immigrants and young people who have had no chance to become full members of society, the unemployed, the low-paid, as well as some of the elderly and "those who have suffered mishaps of one kind or another". This vague definition fails to explain what all these groups have in common, apart from the fact that they lack 'citizenship rights' which are themselves not defined. His confusion is apparent in the original article on the underclass where he says 'One may wonder whether the word class is as yet appropriate'. In a later article he says that 'it is precisely not a class'.

Another sociologist, Anthony Giddens, was to assert a bit more strongly that the underclass was actually a class. He talked about a dual labour market, where jobs in the primary labour market were well paid, secure with some chance of career mobility, whilst jobs in the secondary labour market were badly-paid, with little security, and 'dead end'. It is these secondary labour workers who make up the underclass. He argued that women and ethnic minorities were particularly likely to be found in this underclass. Unlike Dahrendorf and Murray, he thought that the underclass was radicalised by its experiences. It had a basic difference of interest with the working class who with good pay and secure jobs, felt little sympathy for radical change. But, as has been pointed out, there is no clear division between a primary and secondary labour market. Some jobs may be well-paid but lack security, whilst quite a few low-paid jobs have job security. Even those in (relatively) well-paid jobs are increasingly on part-time or short-term contracts. As for the unemployed, and even the long-term unemployed, many are from the employed working class and still have close connections with those still in jobs.

There was some dissent among sociologists about the whole idea of an underclass. Dean

and Gooby-Taylor noted that "Underclass is a symbolic term with no single meaning, but a great many applications". It has become a symbol of 'socially constituted definitions of failure. In society in general it is used to scapegoat the poor and disadvantaged for the social problems of which they are the victims'.

The New Rabble

Once the concept of underclass and with it a suitable scapegoat was established, the boss class began to refer to it with greater frequency. It is now an essential ingredient in the moral panics that are regularly manufactured, not least in the 'law and order' moral panics. Murray himself has come to the fore in leading this ideological assault. Again writing in the *Sunday Times* in 1994 he gloated about how the term had come into common usage. He drooled over the fact that John Redwood, then Secretary of State for Wales had launched an attack on single parents, whilst the BBC's Breakfast News had carried an 'unsympathetic portrait of single mothers'.

Murray defends the 'traditional monogamous marriage' and regards the Bible as one of the foundation texts for morality. He says: "The Britain in which the family has effectively collapsed does not consist of blacks or inner-city neighbourhoods, but of lower working-class neighbourhoods everywhere". He predicts that the 'upper middle class' will return to Victorian values (what he calls the new Victorianism)- and that "Large sections of what used to be the British working class" will degenerate into what he calls the New Rabble. To bolster the traditional family under threat, he advocates the abolition of benefits for single women.

Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, saluted this reactionary crap. Soon



papers were full of vicious attacks on the poor, on single parents, on what used to be called the 'dangerous classes' in Victorian Britain. Indeed Murray had just written a book with Richard Herrnstein, another extreme right and racist sociologist, called

*The Bell Curve* (Fortunately in the meantime Herrnstein has dropped dead). In it they advance the idea that low IQ plays a significant role in chronic unemployment, single motherhood, welfare dependency and crime. Some of the pseudo facts they come up with are that the average IQ of mothers of illegitimate children is 88, of 'chronic welfare recipients' 85, of 'recidivist criminals' 80, and of long term unemployed 77. Collectively these groups constitute the underclass. Here are some of the choice items that pass for thought and analysis in the book. "Going on welfare really is a dumb idea, and that is why women who are low in cognitive ability end up there". "The people who are left behind are likely to be disproportionately those who suffer not only bad luck but also a lack of energy, thrift, farsightedness, determination-and brains".

Trash

Murray refers to poor whites throughout as "white trash", whilst he and Herrnstein cite the work of racist eugenicists like Arthur Jensen who claimed that blacks were genetically intellectually inferior to whites. The two authors carried out no original research for the book, their most frequently used references being from the *Mankind Quarterly*, founded by Robert Gayre, a supporter of apartheid in South Africa and of white supremacy in Rhodesia, and who has said in public that blacks are "worthless". A whole nest of extreme right 'intellectuals' gathered around this rag, including Ottmar von Verschner, who taught the Nazi Doctor Mengele, and Corrado Gini, prominent in the eugenics movement in Fascist Italy. The editor of *MQ*, Roger Pearson, was booted out of the rabid World Anti-Communist League because he was too right wing! The writer cited most frequently in *The Bell Curve* is Richard Lynn, an associate editor of *MQ* who claimed that the Holocaust may have improved the Jewish gene pool by killing those not intelligent enough to get away in time! Another pseudo-scientist cited by the dynamic duo is J. Philippe Rushton who has stated that blacks are genetically disposed to "sexual excess" summed up in the statement: "It's a trade-off: more brain or more penis".

But none of this is suprising considering Murray's past. As a youth in Newton, Iowa, he engineered a burning of a massive cross which terrified the only two black families in town. He served as a counter-insurgency expert in Thailand during the Vietnam War. So it's quite easy for him to come out with the following statements: "The most efficient way to raise the IQ of a society is for smarter women to have higher birth rates than duller women...The United States already has

policies that inadvertently social-engineer who has babies, and it is encouraging the wrong women".

Murray's ideas were taken up enthusiastically in Britain by their counterparts. One Professor of Psychology at the University of Ulster writing in *The Times* ranted that "with an average IQ of 77, the chronic unemployed are not much above the level of mental retardation and many of them are below this level. The brutal truth is that many of the chronic unemployed are mentally incapable of learning the skills increasingly required in advanced industrial economies". He then went on to repeat the shit about the average IQ of blacks being "15 points below that of whites, and 16 per cent of blacks have an IQ of below 70, and are mentally retarded". Another lecturer in psychology at Edinburgh University, Chris Brand, brought out a book *The G Factor* which also made this claim and urged low IQ single mothers to "breed" with intelligent men to escape the poverty trap (the book was later withdrawn by the publishers).

The last 2 years have seen a succession of attacks on the so-called underclass-Jack Straw's famous speech on aggressive beggars and squeegee merchants and his calls for curfews for children, the theatre director Trevor Nunn castigating the homeless living in doorways in the West End, and the right wing journalist Bruce Anderson writing in *The Spectator* in July 1996. The latter frothed at the mouth about: "expensively constructed slums full of layabouts and sluts whose progeny are two-legged beasts...we cannot cure this by family, religion and self-help. So we will have to rely on repression".

None of this chorus of hatred is accidental. It is all very much part of a campaign to justify attacks on welfare benefits, and on alternative lifestyles and relationships that fall outside the desired model of the nuclear family, to justify increased surveillance, repression and police powers, and the building of more prisons, proposals for new detention centres and threats of workfare. The myth of the underclass itself is used to undermine unity within the working class itself, as its less well-paid and unemployed

sections are divided off from those who may have better wages and job security. Indeed, the idea of an underclass has sometimes emerged in the pages of the anarchist/libertarian press. This is indicative of the strength of the campaign. It is an idea that must be fought. There is no underclass- even if it is argued that it is a revolutionary class. There is one class-the working class. Even if at this moment there are real differences within it, in terms of status, sex, and race, real differences that should not be denied or avoided, the goal of revolutionaries must be to develop class unity and class consciousness. The dangerous myth of the underclass is being used in the States, France and Germany against the less well-off sections of the working class, where they are often ethnic minorities and/or recent immigrants. This will lead to further growth in racism and the growth of far right parties. In Britain the myth of the underclass appears to be directed against a much wider section of the working class, whether black or white.

# Anarchism and Surrealism

Nous sommes  
à la veille  
d'une  
RÉVOLUTION

Vous pouvez y  
prendre part.

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CENTRAL  
DE RECHERCHES  
SURREALISTES

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PARIS-7<sup>e</sup>

est ouvert tous les jours de 4 h. 1/2 à 6 h. 1/2

Title page for *La Révolution surréaliste*, December 1, 1924

IN THE FOLLOWING article, as part of our regular ongoing series on culture we look at the links between Surrealism and Anarchism. It's noticeable how bourgeois writers writing about Surrealism play down the politics. For example in the massive book on Breton, *Revolution and the Mind: The Life of Andre Breton* the author Mark Polizzotti passes over the links between Surrealism and Anarchism in a couple of sentences. This despite the exemplary devotion of Breton in showing solidarity, as one of a few intellectuals to support the libertarian movement in a period of repression, and despite the fact that the Surrealists wrote a weekly column for *Le Libertaire*, a paper with not an inconsiderable readership.

"It was in the black mirror of anarchism that surrealism first recognised itself." Thus wrote unequivocally the "Pope of Surrealism" Andre Breton in 1952. Breton had returned to France in 1947 and in April of that year Andre Julien welcomed his return in the pages of *Le Libertaire* the weekly paper of the Federation Anarchiste.

But why had not the Surrealists associated themselves before 1947 with the ideas of



revolutionary anarchism? This radical art movement which had a fierce hatred of authority and religion was a natural ally. Indeed the art movement of Dada, in many ways a precursor and influence on Surrealism, had emerged in Zurich in 1916 as a reaction to the savagery and slaughter of the World War. Breton himself was influenced by the poet Jacques Vache whom he met in 1919. Breton was to note in the same 1952 article that: "At that time, the surrealist refusal was total, and absolutely incapable of allowing itself to be channelled at a political level. All the institutions upon which the modern world rested, and which had just shown their worth in the first World War, were considered aberrant and scandalous to us. To begin with, it was the entire defence apparatus of society that we were attacking: the army, "justice", the police, religion, psychiatric and legal medicine, and schooling". He went on to demand: "Why was an organic fusion not operated at this moment between Anarchist and Surrealist elements?" and explained "It was undoubtedly the idea of efficiency, which was the delusion of that period, that decided otherwise. What we took to be the triumph of the Russian Revolution and the advent of a workers' state led to a great change in our outlook. The only dark spot in the picture- which became an indelible stain- was the crushing of the Kronstadt insurrection of 18 March 1921".

### Solidarity

The surrealists had not hesitated in 1923 in showing solidarity with the young Anarchist woman Germaine Berton who had killed an activist of the extreme right nationalist party L'Action Francaise and who was acquitted in a jury trial! Another member of the



Andre Breton sketch by Max Ernst

surrealist group, Robert Desnos, had associated with the individualist anarchist circles of Victor Serge and Rirette Maitrejean, whilst according to a police record, the surrealist poet Benjamin Peret had been active in an anarchist group in the Paris region and had contributed to the anarchist paper *Le Libertaire*. All the surrealists attentively read the anarchist press in this period. However, they were put off by the incoherence of the French movement and remembered how some had supported the Allied effort in the World War. When Breton took over as editor of the review *La Revolution Surrealiste* from Antonin Artaud he wrote most of the collective texts like the revolutionary *Open the Prisons! Disband the Armies!* The Surrealists also leapt to the defence of the young woman Violette Noziere who had

poisoned her father. Violette accused her father of having systematically raped her from the age of 12. The Surrealists used the trial to denounce the bourgeois family and bourgeois hypocrisy.

In January 1927 five members of the Surrealist group joined the Communist Party: Breton, Aragon, Eluard, Unik and Peret. Others, like Desnos and Miro refused to join. Even with Breton, Party membership was with qualifications. He saw the Communist programme as only a minimum programme, and criticised the Party paper as: "Puerile, uselessly declamatory, cretinous, unreadable; completely unworthy of the role of proletarian education that it tries to assume". Whilst Aragon transformed from the "most libertarian spirit of the Surrealist group" into a horrific Stalinist hack who wrote poems honouring the Russian secret police the NKVD, others who had joined the Party began to feel distinctly uncomfortable about the Moscow show trials. It was a stormy period for the Surrealists as they tried to participate as they saw it in the workers' revolution, whilst at the same time safeguarding their own specific preoccupations, and fighting against the Party leadership's attempts to keep them on a tight rein. Breton was expelled in 1933, and at a Party-controlled International Congress for the Defence of Culture the Surrealists were denounced and were only allowed to speak on the last day at 2 in the morning!

### Trotsky

By now some of the Surrealists were allying with Trotskyism and oppositional Bolshevism. Peret made contact in France and Brazil with the Communist Union and the Internationalist Workers Party. Breton made contact in Mexico with Trotsky when he was put in charge of a series of conferences at Mexico University on Poetry and Painting in Europe in 1938. Together with Trotsky and the Mexican painter Diego Rivera he drafted *For an Independent Revolutionary Art* which announced that "The revolution is obliged to erect a socialist regime with central planning; for intellectual creation it must, even from the start, establish an anarchist regime of intellectual liberty. No constraint, not the least trace of command". This contradictory and bizarre document seems to have been written by Breton and amazingly Trotsky, with Rivera substituting for Trotsky's signature when he got cold feet. It is not clear when Trotsky helped write this document what he thought he was doing, as it went against everything he had ever done or said.

### Durruti

Peret for his part had gone as delegate of the Internationalist Workers Party to Spain. Here he worked as a radio broadcaster for the POUM, but left this post when he criticised this organisation for participating in the Catalan government. He joined the anarchist Durruti Column on the Aragon front. "All collaboration with the POUM was impossible, they wanted very much to accept people to their right, but not to their left. I have decided to enter into an anarchist militia, and here I am at the front, at Pino de Ebro", he wrote to Breton. Two years later he paid tribute to Durruti: "I have always seen in Durruti the most revolutionary anarchist leader, whose attitude was most violently opposed to the capitulations of the anarchists who had entered the government and his killing moved me very much. I think that the lesson that was the life of Durruti should not be lost." Returning to France, he was called up at the start of the war. He was arrested for distribution of leaflets of "an anarchist character" and after a prison term managed to escape to Mexico. Here he undertook a thoroughgoing critique of Trotskyism and distanced himself from its organisations. Writing later in a letter to Georges Fontenis, the French libertarian communist militant, he remarked: "If the disappearance of the State can not be envisaged in the immediate, it is no less true that the proletarian insurrection must mark the first day of the death agony of the State".

### Arrogance

After the War the surrealists began to collaborate with the Federation Anarchiste. Fontenis and another militant of the FA, Serge Ninn, maintained good contacts with the surrealists, the former becoming a friend of Breton. In 1951, the surrealist started to write a regular weekly column *Le Billet Surrealiste* in *Le Libertaire*. A series of articles by Peret were also published in *Le Libertaire* which characterised the unions as counter-revolutionary organisms and put forward workers councils as an alternative. The FA were in disagreement with him on this and published a reply in the paper. Peret was certainly in advance of French anarchists on this question. The controversy here was fraternal, but in a later *Billet* the surrealist Jean Schuster insisted that the surrealists should take charge of the intellectual struggle, whilst the anarchists got on with the economic and social struggle. This elitist arrogance stirred up a lot of trouble, and the relationship between the surrealists and the anarchists began to cool and the last *Billet* appeared in *Le Libertaire* in January 1953.

The article *Poet, that is to say revolutionary* written by Peret, the most politicised and revolutionary of the

surrealists, that appeared in the paper in 1951 said the essential. He showed up to what point poetry is revolutionary but he added: "It does not follow that he (the poet) puts poetry at the service of political action, even if it is revolutionary." (Which was certainly never the wish of the anarchist militants of the period). "But his quality of poet makes him a revolutionary who must struggle on every terrain: that of poetry by his own means and on the terrain of social action, without ever confusing the two fields of action".

### Synthesis

Apart from Breton and Peret the other surrealists were never seen on the field of social action. Breton was consistent in his support for the Federation Anarchiste and he continued to offer his solidarity after the Platformists around Fontenis transformed the FA into the Federation Communiste Libertaire. He was one of the few intellectuals who continued to offer his support to the FCL during the Algerian war when the FCL suffered severe repression and was forced underground. He sheltered Fontenis whilst he was in hiding. He refused to take sides on the splits in the French anarchist movement and both he and Peret expressed solidarity as well with the new FA set up by the synthesist anarchists and worked in the AntiFascist Committees of the 60s alongside the FA.

Some were able to synthesise anarchism and surrealism on an individual level even if it had not happened on a collective level. The poet Jehan Mayoux, great friend of Peret, the son of anarchists and anti-militarists, joined the surrealists at the end of the 20s. Called up at the start of the war, he went AWOL and was imprisoned. Escaping, he was captured by the Germans and sent to a concentration camp from which he was liberated in 1945. He continued to take part in libertarian activity up to his death. Jean-Claude Tertrais participated in surrealist activities in the 50s whilst Breton was still alive. Called up during the Algerian war, he went AWOL and was sent to the hellish "Disciplinary Battalions". He joined the FA on his release, contributing articles on surrealism to the FA paper *Le Monde Libertaire*.

However, as Fontenis was to remark: "It is true that, too often, poets are just poets, without being really revolutionary, no insult to B. Peret intended, and if sometimes they attach themselves to the movement of the masses they often fixate on individual high deeds, on spectacular subversion, on illegalist deeds, rather than on the hard daily struggles....As much as it is preferable that the libertarian movement stays intimately linked to the spirit of revolt of the poets, as much it is prejudicial to

subject its revolutionary views to the fantasies of men of letters. Yes to implacable revolt, yes to insurrection, yes to the libertarian spirit....but is this a reason to leave on the side the anarchist thought and the class action that nourishes it and that it inspires?"

### Class Action

(Other criticisms can be made of



Surrealism-the individual intolerance and authoritarianism of Breton, the sexism and homophobia, the cod Freudianism, the dubious celebration of sexual violence-but that would require an article in itself).

Whatever you do read Breton's *Claire Tour* - his enthusiastic ode to anarchism. It's been translated into English as *The Lighthouse in The Drunken Boat*, an anthology of writings on anarchism and Art available from Freedom and AK.

### Friends and Neighbours

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

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

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

## New Pamphlet!

London ACF are proud to announce the appearance of a new pamphlet in the Stormy Petrel series:

**A Brief Flowering of Freedom: The Hungarian Revolution 1956.** An exciting account of one of the first post-war uprisings against the Stalinist monolith. Also includes a history of the Hungarian Anarchist movement. 60p plus post.

**Malatesta's Anarchism and Violence.** Complete with a new introduction by an ACF member this important document in the history of anarchist theory refutes the common misrepresentation of anarchism as mindless destruction while restating the need for revolution to create a free and equal society. 50p plus post.

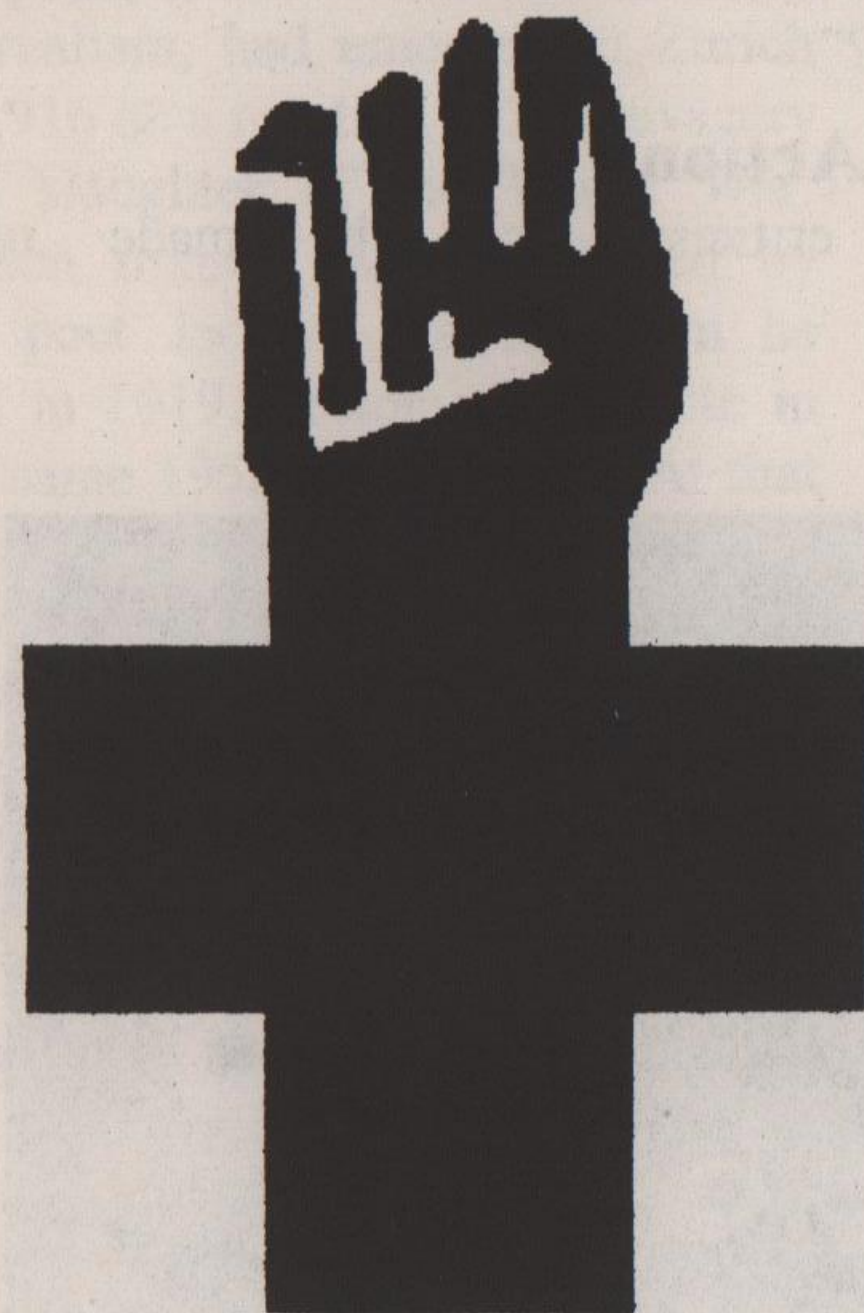
**The Friends of Durruti-** The Friends of Durruti were a much misunderstood group who attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Included are an historical introduction from an ACF member and two political statements from the Friends themselves.

Copies of these pamphlets are available from ACF(London) c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1 at 75p including postage.

Next from Stormy Petrel: **The Italian Factory Councils 1920-21.**



# Prisoners



## Lorenzo L. Stone-Bey

LORENZO HAS BEEN in prison since 1976, when he was framed for a double murder during an alleged armed robbery. He was the only one convicted of the murders despite four people standing trial. A fifth person pleaded guilty by agreement and was used as a state witness against Lorenzo. Witnesses stated that it was this man who had announced a robbery when another state witness had refused to sell him a bottle of wine.

Under cross-examination the fifth man admitted he pleaded guilty to save his own neck and to avoid a life sentence. He also admitted that the police department and the prosecutor's office falsified his statements to implicate Lorenzo and his three co-defendants.

The Attorney General for the State of Indiana admitted in the State's appeal brief in 1991: "...that Stone's arrest was without probable cause. The arresting officer essentially admitted the same". Despite this, the appeal was denied!

Other abuses against him during his arrest included being held incommunicado for several days, being placed in a highly suggestive and illegal line-up, and his juvenile rights being denied him (he was 17 at the time).

The building that was robbed was next door to one of a number of places in the area owned by the state senator and his brother, who was also the alleged victim. This led to considerable pressure to get convictions of local activists who had been resisting police control in their neighbourhoods.

In July 1996, Lorenzo was found not guilty at a disciplinary hearing. By law he should have been released from segregation to his previous housing in D-Cell House at the Indiana State Prison, instead he was transferred to the Indiana State Reformatory as an act of reprisal.

Lorenzo also has a continuing parole hearing at present and would appreciate letters of support being sent to the parole board calling for his release.

*Write to: Lorenzo L. Stone-Bey #10006, Indiana Reformatory, PO Box 30, Pendleton, IN 46064, USA.*

*Letters of support: Indiana Parole Board, E321 Indiana government center South, 302 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204, USA.*

*To protest his transfer: Mr. Jack Duckworth, Superintendent - Indiana Reformatory,*

*(address as above).*

## M25 Three

ON THE 15-16 DECEMBER 1988, Peter Hurburgh was murdered and his friend Alan Ely was robbed. Subsequently, the Napier household in Oxted and the Spicer/Almond premises in Fetcham were also attacked and robbed. The three crimes were linked by the M25 motorway and became known as the M25 case.

In March 1990, three men, Michael Davis, Raphael Rowe and Randolph Johnson were sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and robbery. They have consistently claimed to be innocent.

At the time of the attacks witnesses claimed that at least 2 of the attackers were white, including some of the victims, and the police issued statements saying they were looking for 2 white and 1 black man. Yet all three men convicted are black!



Davis and Rowe had an alibi for the time that the incidents took place, supported by several people. Johnson had no alibi (this is not particularly surprising when the incidents took place at around midnight), but he was not picked out of an identity parade.

Three white men who shared their house with Davis and Rowe admitted to stealing a green Spitfire car which was used in the first attack and was abandoned by the body of Peter Hurburgh. They were also seen by a witness trying to burn a red Cavalier and a white Renault which were stolen from the Spicer/Almond premises. The air pistol used by the gang was found in their possession, and goods from the robberies were found at the home of one of their girlfriends. These 3 men all turned prosecution witnesses and no charges were ever brought against any of them.

In addition to all of this, witness statements were changed so as to implicate the three defendants. Evidence which supported their innocence in the statements was ignored as unreliable. Evidence was withheld from the defence. Reward money totalling £25,000 was paid out, though the prosecution wouldn't admit to whom, despite the obvious implications this would have as to their impartiality. And, there was no forensic evidence against any of the three men.

In July 1993 they had an appeal against their convictions rejected, despite the defence demolishing the prosecutions case against them. Since then they have appealed to the Home Secretary to have the case referred back to the Court of Appeal due to the inconsistencies of the previous judgement. He has instructed the police to investigate the new evidence before any decision is made. Also the European Court of Human Rights is seeking comment from the government as to the conduct of their trial.

These three men have clearly been the victims of a blatant miscarriage of justice. They deserve our support.

*Write to: Michael Davis MP3661, HMP Swaleside, Brabazon Rd., Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4DZ.*

*Raphael Rowe MP3660, HMP Maidstone, County Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1UZ.*

*Randolph Johnson MP3903, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ.*

## Ben Alterman

ON THE 30TH OF August 1996, Ben began an indefinite hunger strike at Loddon Prison in Australia. He has undertaken this because of increased harassment by the prison authorities, in particular, the withholding and confiscation of political literature which has been sent in to him.

Ben has written articles for various radical publications exposing various abuses within the prison system. This has no doubt caused him to receive special attention from the authorities, in the form of increased harassment.

As he thinks it unlikely that he will get parole, he felt it absolutely necessary to stand up to this harassment and challenge it before all his outside contact was cut off, which would obviously make the remainder of his sentence much harder.

*Letters of support: Ben Alterman, Loddon Prison, Locked Bag 3, Castlemaine, Vic 3450, Australia.*

*Letters of Protest: The Governor, Loddon Prison, (address as above).*

*Or: State Ombudsman, 12th Floor, 303 Collins Street, Vic 3000, Australia..*

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER OF URGENCY!

## Cornton Vale

CORNTON VALE is Scotland's only prison for women. In the last 15 months, 5 women have committed suicide there. As a result the governor Robert Glen resigned, to be replaced by Kathleen Donegan, who of course promised action.

This problem is particularly acute in women's prisons. Most women who are imprisoned are convicted of petty offences, such as falling into debt, not paying fines (for other petty offences), or even not

paying their TV licence (several hundred people are imprisoned for this 'crime' every year, nearly all are women!). This can only heighten the sense of injustice they feel. Also, these so called crimes do not happen in a vacuum, poverty is often involved, as all too often is a history of having suffered various kinds of abuse and violence. Add to this the fact that many imprisoned women are separated from their families, which can often result in children being taken into care, it can be little wonder that when they get dumped into a harsh uncaring environment, they become depressed and even suicidal.

This is however not just a problem for Cornton Vale or women's prisons, it is a reality in all prisons. It is an inevitable result of the system that created them and runs them. They may in the short term manage to prevent any more suicides from occurring at Cornton Vale, if for no other reason than that they will have to be extremely vigilant now, as they are being watched and they will be keen to avoid scandal. What is also absolutely definite is that within the system as a whole suicides will continue to occur, here and there throwing the spotlight onto certain prisons where they happen too regularly. For example, in 1994, four people killed themselves in Exeter prison in the space of a little over 6 months, and at around the same time Leicester prison recorded a similar number of suicides, yet once the spotlight had moved from them they were soon forgotten and nothing had changed. Every year dozens of people commit suicide within British prisons, a pattern repeated around the world. Many hundreds more attempt suicide, figures here can only be guessed at as they are often covered up, or never heard about (a suicide attempt is not considered to be newsworthy by our 'fearless' press!). For the authorities suicide

is an acceptable part of the prison system. The death penalty is alive and thriving in Britain today!

## Birmingham

### Solidarity Group

BIRMINGHAM PRISONERS SOLIDARITY Group is a newly formed group with the aims of focussing on prisoners in local prisons, helping set up other campaigns, making printing, design and layout resources available, supporting and liaising with other campaigns, organising protests, writing to prisoners, and working with Haven Distribution to provide revolutionary literature to help the political development of prisoners.

*Contact BPSG, PO Box 3241 Saltley, Birmingham B8 3DP. Haven Distribution can be contacted at BM Haven, London WC1N 3XX.*

## Writing to Prisoners



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

ACF PO Box 5754, Elgin, IV30 2ZD Scotland.

# OBITUARIES

## Maximilien Rubel

Maximilien Rubel died in Paris at the age of 82 in late February. He had originally arrived in Paris in 1931 to finish his studies in philosophy, sociology and law that he had started in his home town of Czerlowitz, which had been first ruled by the Austro-Hungarians, then by the Romanians, and is now in the Ukraine. He began to frequent radical circles and to express solidarity with the struggle for social emancipation., particularly from 1936 when he

gave support to the efforts of the Spanish Anarchists. This activity put him in contact with unorthodox Marxists, Anarchists and revolutionary syndicalists. His militant activity began in earnest during the Second World War when he wrote a number of leaflets in German (his mother tongue) distributed among the German forces of occupation by the tiny Revolutionary Proletarian Group in which he was active alongside Roger Bossiere, still a militant today! The leaflets

denounced both Nazism and the Western imperialist powers. He took the double risk in this very dangerous work of being both a Jew and a revolutionary.

### False Socialism

A supporter of council communism, he participated in the late forties and the fifties in the activities and the debates of that current, scattered to the four corners of the world by Stalinism, in particular his published correspondence with Anton Pannekoek. He began a critical examination of the work

of Marx, and indeed began to produce a *Complete Works of Marx*. He ferociously denounced both capitalism and what he saw as the false socialism of Leninism. His essay *Marx-Theoretician of Anarchism* horrified both orthodox Marxists and anarchists. His critique of the Soviet Union and its satellites directed the fire of the Stalinists of the French Communist Party upon him. Unlike others who started out as anti-authoritarian critics of Stalinism, he did not



change into a defender of capitalism and Cold War 'anticommunism'. He had contacts with the libertarian socialists of Socialisme ou Barbarie (who in their turn had a great influence on the British group

Solidarity) and the anarchist communists of the excellent magazine *Noir et Rouge*. He was closely allied to Rene Lefeuve whose Spartacus publishing house brought out a vast series of anarchist, council communist

### Albert Meltzer

Albert Meltzer who died on 7th May this year aged 76, had been a class struggle anarchist from the age of 16. He took part in work around the Spanish Revolution and was a member of the editorial board of *War Commentary*, (which changed its name to *Freedom* at the end of the war). This anarchist fortnightly maintained a consistent revolutionary anti-war stand, and an outstanding quality and level of writing. During the fifties Meltzer retired from the movement, returning to edit a number of pamphlets produced by his Coptic Press and to work with the group producing *Cuddon's Cosmopolitan Review* which addressed itself to cultural as well as directly political issues. Together with Stuart Christie he began producing the monthly *Bulletin of the Anarchist Black Cross* in 1968 which later became *Black Flag* in 1970. This journal gave coverage to news of the international anarchist movement, in particular details of repression and info and support for class war prisoners. Indeed Meltzer's work in establishing the ABC has led to a legacy of a number of local ABCs throughout Britain and ABCs in other countries. Their support for class war prisoners is invaluable and their efforts should be supported. One of Meltzer's other achievements was his sizeable contribution to the Kate Sharpley Library, a valuable resource and archive of the British anarchist movement, as well as of course his publishing of many pamphlets.

### Attacks

Albert's commitment to class struggle Anarchism was an influence on several generations (indeed, it contributed to this writer's development of class struggle

ideas). His loathing of the liberals in the anarchist movement, as he called them, particularly the likes of George Woodcock, were understandable, but his verbal opposition to them was sometimes vitriolic in the extreme, to the extent of calling them fascists. Now, they may be many things, but the misnomer of fascist was not one of them. His heartfelt disgust at the way that the revolutionary core of anarchism was distorted by those who talked about pacifism, denied the existence of class or class struggle, and espoused gradualism in opposition to revolutionism, sometimes led him to write in terms guided more by his heart than his head. This vituperative style of writing sometimes spilled over into attacks on those who did espouse revolutionary ideas. Albert was no friend of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists or the Anarchist Workers Association in the seventies and there were attacks on these groups in the pages of *Black Flag*. At a time when the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, then inside the Anarchist Federation of Britain, was developing ideas about the need for a revolutionary organisation Albert Meltzer was seen as a natural ally. He had recently written on the need for organisation in *Black Flag*. The ORA comrades were then told by Albert that he did not mean a specific revolutionary organisation but a vague "workers' organisation" based on non-existent workers' clubs. The ORA saw this as a brush-off, and that Albert had back-tracked on his previous pronouncements. Some ORA comrades engaged in some stupid name-calling with things like "Pope Albert" being thrown

and critical Marxist books and pamphlets. He remained a convinced anti-capitalist and anti-statist right up to his death.

around.. He quite understandably bore a grudge, when a search for possible areas of co-operation and convergence might have been more useful (true for both sides). Albert did not readily identify specifically with anarcho-syndicalism in the sixties and seventies, perhaps influenced by his friendship with Ted Kavanagh with whom he had collaborated with on *Cuddon's*, and who had profound criticisms of anarcho-syndicalism. His later identification with anarcho-syndicalism translated into membership of the Solidarity Federation where latterly his ideas on "workers' organisation" have appeared to have been remarkably influential.

These criticisms should be weighed against Albert's important contributions to British revolutionary anarchism and to his lifelong devotion to the vision of a stateless and classless society.



### Robert (Bobby) Lynn

The Glasgow anarchist Bobby Lynn has died aged 74. As a engineering apprentice in the shipyards, he came in contact with the anarchists who were organising open-air public meetings and factory gate meetings many of which attracted audiences of up to a thousand. The anti-war stance of the anarchists and their support of workers struggles at a time when the Communist Party dominated the Glasgow workplaces through the unions and the shop stewards' committees and actively sabotaged strike action in line with their support for the war effort, attracted Bobby to libertarian ideas. Just after the war, his agitation in the

workplace attracted the attention of both bosses and Communist union officials. As a result he was blacklisted and took a job in the Merchant Navy and spent some years at sea.

### Summer Schools

Returning to Glasgow in the early fifties, he joined the Glasgow Anarchist Group. He was active in reviving the group in the seventies and initiated many activities as well as writing a number of pamphlets like *Vote: What For?* In the nineties it was he who started the Glasgow Anarchist Summer Schools which continue to this day. He was

determined to attend the one this year but was cheated by death by a few days.

His anarchism was heavily influenced by two speakers who had come into the Glasgow movement, Jimmy Raeside and Eddie Shaw, who bizarrely twinned the individualist ideas of Stirner with those of anarcho-syndicalism. So as Conscious Egoists they were able to explain anarcho-syndicalism as "applied egoism" and anarcho-syndicalist organisation as "unions of egoists". Bobby Lynn remained true to this strange fusion right up to his death.

### Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience, by Janet Biehl & Peter Staudenmaier (AK Press, 76pp £5)

THIS EXCELLENT PAMPHLET consists of two essays. The first looks at the pivotal role of ecology in the ultra-Right and the Nazi Party; the second at how green ideas are helping contemporary fascism modernise.

Ecological science originated in nineteenth century Germany. Earnest Haeckel coined the term in 1867, synthesising the naturalism and nationalism under the influence of anti-Enlightenment irrationalism (mysticism, occultism) of the romantic tradition. As a Social Darwinist he projected existing social structures such as hierarchy onto nature, where as 'natural laws'/'natural order' they dictated how society must be organised. Thus 'nature' supported his promotion of Nordic racial superiority, opposition to mixing of races and advocacy of racial eugenics. Similarly another founding father of ecology, Ernst Arndt, whose stress on the inter-relatedness and hence equal importance of all life was enmeshed with rabid nationalism and racism: German soil, German people and Teutonic racial purity were paramount. Wilhelm Riehl opposed industrialism and urbanisation, and glorified rural peasant values in openly anti-Semitic terms. Other Haekelian disciples such as Hentschel, Bolsche and Wille ensured that much ecological thinking, then and since, was embedded in reactionary social themes. The Volkisch movement of the late nineteenth century was a powerful cultural and social tendency uniting ethnocentric populism and nature mysticism. It was a response to the great social dislocation caused by industrial capitalism and national unification: the answer was a return to the land and the simplicity and wholeness of the 'natural' life. Alienation, rootlessness and environmental

No 44. Autumn 1996



Which Way Forward for Ecology

destruction were caused by rationalism, cosmopolitanism and urbanism, otherwise known as the Jewish conspiracy. The Wandervogel (wandering free spirits) youth movement of the early twentieth century brought this already respectable ideology to prominence. Right wing hippies, they mixed counter-cultures, eastern philosophies, neo-romanticism, nature mysticism and opposition to reason. They sought a return to the land and authentic, direct social relations. Like many greens and fluffies of today they defined themselves as non-political: the changes they wanted would come about through individual improvement. This lack of a social critique, which substituted romance for revolution, led to thousands of the Wandervogel joining the Nazis; a minority gravitated to libertarian politics. The Nazis made a religion of nature, mixing mysticism, 'scientific' ecology, anti-humanism and ideas of racial salvation through a return to the land - 'blood and soil'. Their main themes were natural order, organicist holism and the denigration of humanity. Organicism meant the co-ordination of all parts and organs for the benefit of the one and superior task of life. It

was used to justify Lebensraum: the conquering of 'living space' in Eastern Europe for Germans, and provided the link between environmental and racial purity. Until 1941 the green wing of the Nazis was very influential, including Hitler, Himmler, Hess, Rosenberg, Darre, Todt and Siefert. The green Nazis introduced large scale organic farming (in the teeth of much resistance from some in the hierarchy, especially Backe and Goring), and passed wide ranging protectionist legislation in 1933 and 1935. Even the Nazi's rapid modernisation of a technocratic industrial state, which obviously contradicted this current, had a significant green component. The green wing's influence in the Party was suppressed after Hess's flight to Britain in 1941. Ecology can be seen to have played a major role in the Nazi's success; it refurbished their anti-Semitism, and ideas of racial inviolability and revenge fuelled their anti-humanism. Mystical ecology's displacement of any social analysis of the causes of environmental destruction was very important.

The New Right in Germany, and elsewhere, appeals to similar themes as the Volkisch movement. They maintain that

the destruction of the environment and repression of nationalities have a common root in monotheism and universalism. Rather than the 'mongrel' egalitarian culture of the US, they seek 'European civilisation', a 'Europe of the Fatherlands'. Fascists and the ultra-Right seek an ecologised heimat against US imperialism, immigration and foreigners. Opposition to the black population of the 'third world' is disguised under arguments against overpopulation, using the word culture rather than races. As in the 1920s and 1930s, mystical ecology may justify mystical nationalism; fascist and neo fascist ideas are influential in spiritual, mystical and pagan circles.

The authors correctly conclude that ecological themes require an explicit social context to have political relevance; the failure to provide this is the hallmark of reactionary ecology, under banners such as 'beyond politics' or 'apolitical'. This leads to ideas of natural law/natural order with all their regressive consequences. It is vital that there is an ecological left that is libertarian, anti-capitalist and internationalist, however without the libertarian municipalism they seem to advocate.



## Letters



Dear *Organise!*

THE TRAGEDY OF Dunblane raises two basic yet connected questions. Handling guns and the role of adults in attending to the needs of children. Both these functions fell into the hands of an unstable man. Bearing arms and herding children are basic functions of the state under capitalism, totalitarian socialism and fascism. Thomas Hamilton sought to emulate those whose kow-towing to the system gives them the right to carry arms and train children.

Both these functions are abusive in themselves and the typical consequence of the need of power structures to produce factory, office and cannon fodder. The fact that institutions that care for the young and old are frequently found to be inadequate should not surprise us. Indifference to humanity is a vital factor in instilling the imperialist mentality.

Capitalism/imperialism thrives on division as in Ulster and in the massacre of Highlanders by Sassanachs in the aftermath of Culloden. Hatred breeds atrocity and imperialism is hatred per se., the thing that Rwanda has in common with Dunblane, where a lone maniac typified the ability of the so-called humane being to kill,

A.A. Edinburgh.

**Eds. Reply:** This letter raises a number of important points. The worship of profit, particularly in this period when the Golden Calf of the Market, untrammelled and unbridled, is one of the main idols, leads to a cheapening and brutalisation of relations between human beings. The tough businessperson with no emotion is seen as a model.

The atomisation of society, the collapse of community and the ever-increasing isolation of individuals, coupled with poverty and unemployment lead to increasingly barbaric behaviour. Alongside this are the examples of mass murder carried out by capitalism (Falklands, Gulf War, the war in ex-Yugoslavia, the massacres in Rwanda) and individual murder and brutalisation carried out by the forces of the State, whether they be cops or soldiers.

Another point is that the increasing privatisation and deregularisation led to a situation where Hamilton, known for his possession of arms and his unstable behaviour, was able to set himself up as an organiser of boys' clubs. Look at other examples of this social decay in the number of mentally ill thrown out on the streets, in the beating of old people in homes, in the cases of sexual abuse in children's homes.

Dunblane, Hungerford and the Wests, all are paraded as proof that Evil is the explanation for irrational and homicidal acts. Evil, the Original Sin of the Christians, these are trotted out as excuses for the Strong State and Law and Order. Such arguments can be used to counter any idea that we can reach a just and free society.

We say that an irrational world system that permits famines and homelessness produces irrational acts.



Militant or Revolutionary?

Dear *Organise!*

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ACF on reaching your tenth birthday! Doesn't time fly when you're trying to subvert the system?

I enjoyed issue 42, particularly the Anarchist Communism in Britain supplement which was very interesting as it showed that there is some historical and political continuity between the revolutionaries of the last

century and those of the inter-war years right up to the present. In the history of the ACF, however, I was disappointed not to see any mention of the short-lived Anarchist Workers Group, if only because libertarians can learn lessons from even the most disastrous experiences!

I would like to comment on a couple of articles in issue 42. It's good to see the ACF open up the pages of *Organise!* to other groups and the Militant Eco-Action article was very welcome. However, whilst I agree with the author that the fight against environmental destruction is important to the working class (as we always suffer the worst from it after all!), I feel that the struggles against Roadbuilding etc., however militant, can only be defensive struggles and rear-guard actions at that. Without a revolutionary perspective that actually sees things in terms of a fight between two classes and talks about the need for the working class to smash the power of the ruling class and to create a free, communist society, the environmental movement is condemned to constantly having to respond to the assaults of capitalism rather than go on the offensive and actually take control of the planet out of the hands of its present owners. This tends to make the debate around violence vs. non-violence a bit irrelevant as an ultra-violent reformism is still reformism!

Also, concerning the article on the Independent Working Class Association, just a few thoughts. Although the IWCA is a product of the crisis of the 'Left', the same one which has brought forth the Scargill Labour Party, the Socialist Alliances and on a different (and perhaps more positive?) level, the Revolutionary Socialist Network, it is a little harder to fathom. Without doubt Red Action are politically the prime movers and the early statements issuing from the IWCA seem to reflect their ultra-critical attitude towards the Leninist left and traditional lefty politics (ie. Trade Unionist, Labourist etc.). But there appears to be a

contradiction. Whatever disagreements libertarians have with Red Action, they cannot be dismissed as a just another 'vanguardist tendency', akin to those others which constitute the IWCA, when they have for years been critiquing vanguardism, Leninism and Trotskyism, often with great clarity. So why have they jumped into bed with the biggest gang of unrepentant Stalinists this side of North Korea, thereby giving these Leninists credibility? Unless you are willing to believe that Red Action's anti-Leninism is totally superficial (and I don't think it is) it must mean that they believe they can carry the directionless Stalinist flotsam and jetsam behind in their wake. Why not let the bastards drown?

Anyway, that's yer lot. Keep up the good work.

Yours for libertarian communism,  
D.McC

East London

Dear *Organise!*

I wish to take issue with the two items concerning anarcho-primitivism in the Summer 1996 edition, namely the review of Bookchin's *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* and the essay entitled *Green Politics*. I'm afraid to say that if these two pieces are representative of the ACF's understanding of anarcho-primitivism, then they show either wilful ignorance or a desire to distort.

To address points made in *Green Politics* first. I take great exception to the assertion that anarcho-primitivism is a "green current claiming to be anarchist" (16). Would you agree, then, that anarcho-communism is a libertarian current claiming to be anarchist? The prefix 'anarcho-' is not just an afterthought in either case but an integral part of the descriptive label. Personally, I would deny that anarcho-primitivism is a 'green current' at all. Certainly, there is a pronounced ecological dimension to anarcho-primitivism but this is one

strand amongst many. Why privilege that one at the expense of others (e.g. its feminist, Situationist or zero-work dimensions)? The fact is that anarcho-primitivism did not emerge from a green context, but from a radical anti-authoritarian context, and is thus first and foremost an anarchist current. Anarcho-primitivism does not 'claim' to be anarchist, any more than the ACF 'claim' to be anarchist. Both tendencies are anarchist. There's no room for debate there.

The debate comes in when you attempt to define what you mean by 'anarchist'. I would argue that we can discern two phases in anarchist history. The first, commonly known as classical anarchism, began in the early 19th century with figures such as Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin etc., and reached a climactic finale in the Spanish Revolution in the late 1930s. Woodcock and even Bookchin would agree with me so far. After that, and particularly from the 1960s onwards, anarchism has undergone a transformation which renders it largely unrecognisable (and certainly unpalatable) to adherents of moribund classical anarchism. In short, I would argue that just as feminist historians acknowledge a periodization which sees first wave feminism (c. 1840-1920) succeeded by a second wave from the 1960s onwards, so anarchists should recognise a first wave (or classical) anarchism succeeded by a second wave which as yet has no label, but which is

characterised, not by the narrow focus on class, the State and capitalism, but by a project which questions the totality, which seeks the abolition of all forms of control, the context of which can (for short-hand purpose) be called civilisation. In this sense, I would characterise second-wave anarchism (with anarcho-primitivism as a case in point) as typified by a quantum leap beyond the limited concerns of classical anarchism. And from such a perspective, I think you would be hard pressed to deny that anarcho-primitivism falls squarely within this definition of 'anarchism'.

Bookchin misnames "social anarchism". On the other hand, there are (among a few dead-weights heaved in to smear the others) representatives of second-wave anarchism- what Bookchin mistakenly calls "lifestyle anarchism". The ACF, with its commitment to class struggle anarchism, places itself in the former camp (despite the fact that you acknowledge that Bookchin "has lost the view that the working class is the revolutionary subject of history", a point reiterated in *Green Politics*, and yet surely this view is the key plank in your position?!). It's a pity that your reviewer didn't mention that Bookchin's text also includes an essay entitled *The Left That Was: A Personal Reflection*, in which he gets all nostalgic about the historical Left, of which he sees (classical) anarchism as a component. Don't we all now recognise that the left is just, in

## Bookchin Replies

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your review of my pamphlet, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*. This was a courtesy I seldom encounter on the so-called 'Left' in the U.S. and U.K. You have my sincere respect for your probity and for the comradely way in which you examine my work.

You may be right that I am "ignorant of the Anarchist movement in Ireland and Britain". I do not receive any periodicals from either country,

and alas, my limited income at the age of seventy-five does not allow me to subscribe to overseas periodicals. Hence my failure to deal with the situations in your countries. If comrades in Britain, Ireland, Scotland and Wales would care to send me their periodicals, I would read them eagerly and send in exchange the periodical I occasionally produce, *Green Perspectives*.

But to keep the record straight, I did not mean to argue that the movement abroad is entirely given over to lifestyle

that quaint phrase used in this country, 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition', loyal to the principles of power and authority, if not to any particular socio-economic system?

I was heartened by the comments in both the review and *Green Politics* which indicate a certain engagement and even agreement with anarcho-primitive perspectives. However, comrades, beware being caught on the wrong side of the battlefield when the shit hits the fan. I hear on the grapevine that Bookchin will shortly come under attack from all kinds of angles. I wouldn't hitch myself to his star, if I were you.

In resistance,  
J.M. (Herts.)

**Eds. Reply:** To say that our focus on class, the state and capitalism is narrow is to show little comprehension of this society. All the old oppressions of hierarchy, militarism, sexism and racism are reinforced and aggravated by capitalism and the state. Of course we're against all forms of control, but these forms are all defined by a statist, capitalist society. Yes, we did say that Bookchin no longer believed that the working class was the revolutionary subject of history. That's not to say that we think that the working class is the messiah class. We don't. We've stated this very clearly in our new *Manifesto Beyond Resistance: a Revolutionary Manifesto for the Millennium*. The working class is not historically destined to carry out a revolution. What we say is that

anarchism. I do know, however, that it is a problem in Germany and the Netherlands, and comrades from Britain have complained to me that it exists there as well.

My pamphlet, as well as my book, *Re-Enchanting Humanity* (a harsh critique of postmodernism, primitivism, deep ecology, socio-biology, and technophilia that has just been published by Cassell), are concerned with a massive trend in contemporary society: an ideological counterrevolution against the entire revolutionary

the working class, which includes the vast majority of the world population, by the nature of its oppression and circumstances, must be the class to carry out a revolution if it is to be successful. That's a big difference.

No, "classical" anarchism has not been superseded by "second wave" anarchism. For a while, in particular in places like Britain, pacifists and gradualists, with no conception of class struggle or revolution, took over the 'movement'. People like Woodcock were able to crow about the end of "classical anarchism" (although even he had to revise his opinions). Now, as circumstances within capitalist society change, class struggle anarchism is reasserting itself. You are very much mistaken if you think that what you call "classical" anarchism has given up the ghost. As to Bookchin, we don't "hitch" ourselves to anyone's "star". We recognise what is valid in Bookchin's thought, with no loss of critical faculties, and without giving in to hero worship. It seems that the attacks on Bookchin from the anarcho-primitivist camp are personalised and vitriolic (e.g. the substitution of "BookWorm" for "Bookchin" in the pages of *Green Anarchist*). We're not intimidated by your warnings. We will continue to look at libertarian thinkers in a detached fashion, giving praise where praise is due and criticising where necessary.

tradition and the best elements of the Enlightenment. Antirationalism, mysticism, and hatred of civilisation as such are so widespread that, not unlike Heidegger's desire for 'authenticity', they reflect and even articulate the bourgeoisie's success in fragmenting social life and directing millions inward toward privatism and egoism.

It is all too facile, I think, to blame this trend entirely on a consumerist culture and what is called productivism. Now that capitalism has disintegrated



most community ties – and every workers' movement was also, often unknowingly, a civic movement – the oppressed and exploited are now "on their own," as it were. Capitalist society is the most masked society to have appeared in history. Its sources of exploitation have traditionally been concealed by the "three factors of production" and similar notions. But not since economists abandoned the labour theory of value for the myth that profit consists of the 'wages' of the capitalist have the masks that conceal the true nature of capitalist social relationships been so numerous and varied. In the U.S., astrology, religion, Asian mysticism, and a multitude of supernaturalisms, including rituals in the name of ecology or earth goddesses, make it impossible to see the sources of economic exploitation and hierarchical domination. If 93 per cent of the American people believe in a supreme being; if more than 80 per cent believe in immortality; and if more than 60 per cent believe in the existence of angels, then people of rational and humanistic thought have their work cut out for themselves. I would ask whether comparable figures exist in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

Not only have these ideologies impeded class consciousness in the U.S.; they have become substitutes for social action of almost any kind. Thus a short time ago, when Clinton literally rolled back social welfare to the pre-New Deal era by dumping single mothers and their children from the welfare rolls, there was not a single protest demonstration of note in American cities. Any cheap religious fundamentalist can rally tens and hundreds of thousands of people, but not one political organisation can bring a few thousand people into the streets to protest the withdrawal of guaranteed assistance (which has existed here since 1935) to improvident women and their children.

## Chomsky

So we are much in need of a movement that operates against the system as a whole; that shows the connections between single-issues and roots them in capitalist social relations. Yet some of our leading 'Left' intellectuals are hindering rather than helping the development of radical movement. Chomsky has recently called for strengthening the centralised state and has joined some of our local social democratic organisations – Democratic Socialists of America and The New Party. At the beginning of this summer he reportedly declared that he would vote for Clinton while "holding his nose." Yet he still avows a belief in Anarchism – "as a vision". Probably many Labourites in Britain also believe in socialism – as a "vision" – but will hold their noses and support Tony Blair.

As to the American counter-culture – and you can include here much of the ecology 'movement' as well as the new left of the sixties – the potentiality of which I was concerned has not been realised. I do not fault myself for trying to expand the horizon of anarchism in the sixties along cultural and ecological lines. I regret only that I failed, not that I saw the wrong possibilities for profoundly changing our society. Tragically, many self-professed anarchists didn't even try to do much back then and have since abandoned their convictions for private life and academic careers. Surely failure doesn't mean that one shouldn't try. Every meaningful opportunity, including working class organising, must be explored, enlarged, and deepened if anarchist communists (among who I have always counted myself) want to build a viable movement.

As to the state of civilisation today: granted, it's a mess. I never claimed it was otherwise. But argue that together with the horrors that have existed from time immemorial, it has also been marked by real progress. Unlike me, the primitivists really attack civilisation as such. Should anarchist communists go

along with this mentality, which once again masks capitalist social relations with the virtues of primitive 'innocence' and 'authenticity'? True, I have always insisted that "production for the sake of production" is undermining our planet. But this phrase, taken from Marx, is not only an ideology, like the notion of endless growth, it stems very real grow-or-die imperative of capitalist accumulation – unrelenting market competition. Concepts like civilisation and growth must not only be defined in ideological terms – and they certainly have become ideologies. They must be related to the market system, which grimly reflects their meaning in society.

Given the masked nature of capitalism, the naive could accept the characteristically bourgeois thesis that declines in employment are due exclusively to technological advances, rather than to market imperatives to utilise new technologies to make profit. I certainly agree that we need a new civilisation, indeed that we must become civilised enough to build a rational society; but I would vigorously oppose any ideology that enjoins us to drop to all fours and bay at the moon.

## Municipalism

My views on libertarian municipalism are entirely orientated toward creating a dual power composed of directly democratic assemblies of the people in revolutionary opposition to the state. The idea that "libertarian municipalists" should try to "capture the local State" and operate within a statist framework is totally alien here. Quite to the contrary, my hope is that a movement can be created that builds on whatever local democracy still remains in a community – and tries to enlarge it into a direct face-to-face democracy, with the intention of throwing it *against* the state on all levels, up to the central government.

In short, I treasure the historical appeal for a "Commune of communes" that surfaced in French revolutions and to some degree in Spain in 1936. If this

perspective is not understood – and I have developed it at book length in my *From Urbanisation to Cities* (also available from Cassell) – none of my views on democracy or politics will be understood. In any event, a truly libertarian municipalist movement will always be a minority movement even within neighbourhood, town, and village assemblies, until the masses are prepared to finally dissolve state power and replace it with communalist federations. When erstwhile "libertarian municipalists" deny this project and try to qualify its demands with social democratic compromises and pacifist approaches, I always vehemently object. Similarly you can be assured that any "disciple" who favours nationalism in any form is not, in my eyes, a libertarian municipalist.

These remarks cannot convey the full scope of my views. At least three of my books have recently been published by Cassell and are generally available in your area. Others are published by Black Rose Books and AK Press. I would ask any reader of *Organise!* to consult these writings to learn what my views are and not take the words of my critics – be they lifestyle and liberal anarchists, orthodox, neo- and post-Marxists, new agers, or deep ecologists. You might care to know the critical literature on me – often quite *ad hominem* in character – has become fairly sizeable. Much of it is directed against my revolutionism, denouncing it, in typical social democratic fashion, as "sectarianism," "dogmatism," and (in conjunction with Bakunin!) "anarcho-Leninism." But I suspect such charges have been levelled against you yourselves – precisely because you are committed to revolutionary change. Nothing rankles the walking dead of the sixties who have been co-opted by the existing society more than pricks of their post revolutionary conscience.

With comradely best wishes,

Murray Bookchin

## 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 1st February for features and reviews, and 8th February for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## Press Fund

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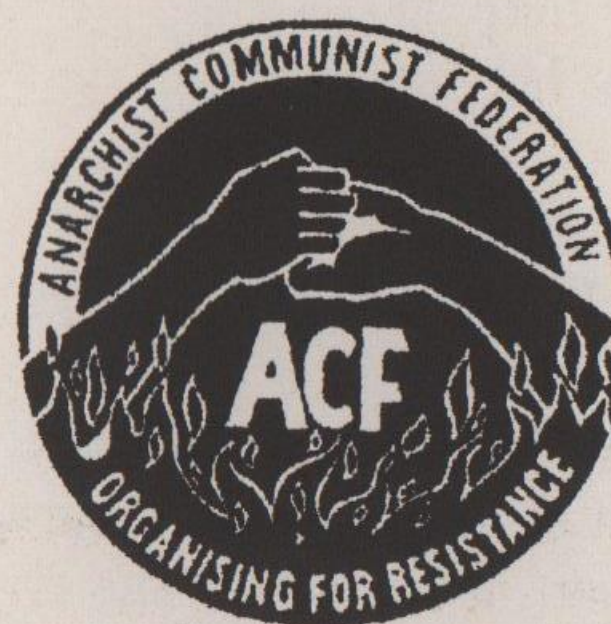
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## Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle Anarchists. For contacts:

Scotland: PO BOX 5754 (don't mention ACF) Elgin, Scotland, IV 30 2ZD

Merseyside: Merseyside ACF, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 8DP

Brighton: Brighton ACF, c/o Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, East Sussex.

Wales: P.O. Box 10, Pontypool. NP4 8YH

Newcastle: PO Box 1TA, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE99 1TA

London and all other areas: ACF c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street London E1 7QX

If you want contact with a group close to the ACF in

New Zealand, write to PO Box 298 Whangataroa, New Zealand.

Holland, write to Postbus 93515, 1090 EA. Amsterdam. Netherlands.

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Address: <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acf/>

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## Want to Join the ACF? Want To Find Out More?

- ☐ I agree with the ACF's Aims and Principles and I would like to join the organisation.  
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