

# REVOLUTIONARY PORTRAITS

## GUEORGUI CHEITANOV

*We continue our series Revolutionary Portraits, devoted to revolutionaries, some well known, some obscure, who have contributed so much to our movement over the last 120 years. Organise! salutes these Bulgarian anarchists who gave their lives for anarchist communism.*



Acratia

Born at Yambol in Bulgaria in 1896, Gueorgui Cheitanov was to prove to be one of the most outstanding figures (and there were many) of Bulgarian anarchism, and of its specific organisation, the Anarchist Communist Federation. A brilliant pupil at high school, from an early age he possessed a rebellious nature. He gravitated very early on in life towards the anarchist movement. At the age of 17 he burnt the archives of the local court and was forced to flee into exile after escaping from prison, arriving in Paris at the age of 18. Here he met up with many other Bulgarian anarchists like Varban Kilifarski, who taught at La Ruche, the free school and cultural centre set up by the French anarchist Sebastien Faure.

### Return to Bulgaria

He returned secretly to Bulgaria in 1914, continuing his revolutionary propaganda. Arrested and tortured by the police, he escaped again and between 1917 and 1918 was the only Bulgarian revolutionary to go to Moscow at the start of the Russian revolution, crossing the Danube, Romania, the Russian trenches, Ukraine and Russia disguised as a soldier. In Moscow he made the acquaintance of the old Marxist Plekhanov and many other well known Marxists and Bolsheviks, who asked him to take charge of a Bulgarian language edition of a revolutionary journal. He became friends with many Russian anarchists and soon realised the real counter-revolutionary role of the Bolsheviks. He decided to return to Bulgaria with the favourable revolutionary circumstances after the collapse of the

Bulgarian front and the soldiers' revolt. Crossing the Ukraine, he fell into the hands of the white Army of reactionary Russians, but managed to escape from the firing squad! Arriving back in Bulgaria, he contacted the anarchist movement, most of whom were forced to operate underground. He issued his famous open letter *Appeal to the Anarchists* as well as a *Manifesto to Revolutionaries* where he developed a clear anarchist position in favour of the Russian Revolution.

He participated in many armed actions against the State, escaping from prison twice in spectacular circumstances. At the age of 26 he took a look at the guerrilla tactics of the movement and offered a self-criticism in describing them as inadequate to the social struggles developing in Bulgaria. What was needed, he felt, was mass organisation and action, not just in the workplace but in all areas of life.

A very talented propagandist, orator and poet, he exercised a great and charismatic influence over many. As an orator he avoided the usual tricks, communicating in a clear and concise way.

### Liberating Prisoners

He participated in the liberation of the notable anarchist Petar Maznev from prison, and lectured the policemen captured in this incident, on anarchism and the social situation. These cops were freed after promising that they would resign

from the force- they kept their promise! Maznev subsequently died of TB due to his imprisonment and underground existence. Buried at his native village, his funeral was the occasion for a massive demonstration in which the anarchists of the region participated. Cheitanov delivered a passionate speech which was much remarked upon and helped in the rapid development of the anarchist movement in the area.

Cheitanov contributed to *Free Society*, the theoretical review of the Anarchist Communist Federation., as well as to the literary review *Plamak* (Flame) which influenced many intellectuals. He also edited the underground newspaper *Acratia* between 1924-1925 which came out 3 times.

### Military Coup

In 1923 a military coup led to the butchery of 35,000 workers and peasants. The armed resistance that followed ended with the bomb attack by the Communist Party on Sofia cathedral which was aimed at the country's elite. A massive campaign of repression was then unleashed by the fascists and military against the revolutionary movement. Special police detachments were set up to hunt Cheitanov down. All the guerrillas united into a single detachment, being forced to disperse towards the end of May. Cheitanov and his companion in love and struggle, Mariola Sirakova, were caught in an ambush and arrested. They were taken to Belovo railway station and shot with 12 other prisoners on 2nd June 1925. Cheitanov was officially recognised by the post-war Communist regime which named streets after him and erected a statue in his

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confusion over Kosovo



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ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Federation(AF). Organise! is a twice yearly 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 AF members unless signed. Some reflect AF 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.) Deadline for articles: February 14th 2000, letters: March 14th 2000.

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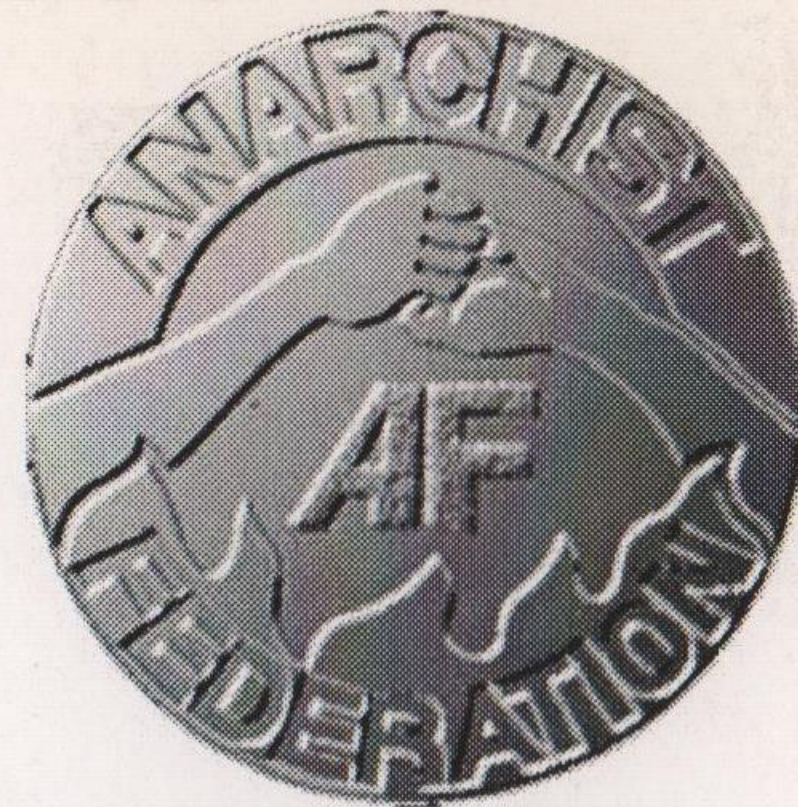
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# TERROR IN EAST TIMOR

*As the massacres continue, it's "business as usual" with the butchers of the Indonesian regime.*

Ever since the Indonesian military invaded East Timor in 1975, there has been a wall of silence around the horrific repression there. The major powers in the region- Australia for example, chose to ignore the plight of the East Timorese. With the exception of the libertarian socialist Noam Chomsky and rare journalists like John Pilger, the world press chose to ignore East Timor. A recent cartoon sums up the situation- a map of the world with only East Timor named, and 'Amnesia' placed on every other state.

At least 200,000 people have been but-chered in East Timor in the last 25 years and the total is mounting. In the meantime Indonesia has been supplied with arms and other materials and no pressure has been put on them to leave East Timor. Even in the midst of the violence the Blair government defended the sale of Hawk jets to Indonesia, even when they were taking intimidating flights over East Timor and defending the invitation of the Indonesian regime to the arms fair in Britain.

The present Indo-nesian regime was founded on the military coup that overthrew Sukarno and the massacre of half a million people in 1965. This was connived at by America's Central Intelligence Agency and US administration.

But is it a good thing that The United Nations is now intervening in East Timor? No. The whole history of the UN exposes it as a tool of American interests. In East Timor it is a cover for the Australian armed forces to increase their influence in the region. The express aim of the UN forces is to disarm not just the murderous militias armed and paid for by Indonesia, but any militias set up to protect the local population. Already the idea of partition of East Timor has been raised by some of the pro-Indonesian militias. Indeed, the UN might connive at this, using its armed forces to help this come about. For their part, the French government has been the most gung-ho in calling for armed intervention in East Timor. This is done not out of humanitarianism but because France has interests in the region and wants to upstage Australia.

### Intervention

Indeed, the "four year transition period" put forward by the United Nations will mean that the secession of East Timor from Indonesia will be supervised by Australian military might. Australia will be that closer to Indonesia's borders, useful if friction between the two regional superpowers spirals into hostilities. If the Indonesian masses succeed in overthrowing the regime, then Australia and its Western allies will find it that much easier to intervene to put down revolution.

It might be easy to call for UN intervention in East Timor in the face of the horrific slaughter there. But any UN involvement is only to ensure a swift transition to democracy. This is what the US, Australia and the other Western powers want. Democracy is in their eyes a much better system for increasing the influence of the market in the whole of the Pacific basin, sending out messages to China and Burma.

The only real solution lies in the hands of the working class on an international level. In Indonesia itself it

means increasing mass mobilisations to overthrow the genocidal regime. In East Timor it means the development of workers armed groups independent of the local nationalist forces. The East Timorese masses cannot place their trust in the nationalist forces organised in Fretilin. Round the world it means the boycott by dockers and transport workers of arms and military materiel to Indonesia and the development of mass movements to stop arms sales and political support to Indonesia. In Australia this has already started with the occupation by workers of Garuda- the Indonesian national airline.

### Indonesia

In Indonesia itself, many struggles continue to remain ignored by the world media. Whilst East Timor is now in the media spotlight- after 25 years- the situation in Aceh and West Papua go unnoticed. In Aceh, the local people have a long history of struggle against both the Dutch colonialists and the Jakarta regime. The dire poverty of the mass of the population is highlighted by the exploitation of the large gas and oil reserves by the regime which is making a handsome- shouldn't that read ugly-profit. Terrible massacres carried out by the military have taken place with the connivance of the big oil companies like Mobil. This has been underlined by the discovery of many mass graves just after Suharto was toppled. Since then, a new wave of massacres has taken place. At the end of July 70 villagers were slaughtered, unleashing a 2-day general strike right through Aceh. Other struggles are taking place against the regime in West Papua, Ambon and other parts of Indonesia despite brutal repression.

When Suharto was overthrown by mass action on the streets, the old dictator was dumped for his sidekick Habibie. Various cosmetic reforms were promised, but these were only to ride out the economic crisis that had helped trigger the movement. The International Monetary Fund came riding to the help of the regime, not wanting instability in the region. The leaders of the opposition did a



deal with Habibie to defuse the movement. The students, who had been heavily involved in the move to overthrow Suharto, again mobilised in November last year. Again the opposition groups headed off this movement.

This opposition is made of ruling class forces who want a share of the action in the regime, some of the power and wealth. They are organised in Islamist and secular nationalist groupings, sometimes in alliance. They have no intention of making any real change and will continue to back the military.

The mobilisations in recent weeks have shown that opposition on the streets is stronger than the regime expected. They can still go for a complete military takeover, but would probably prefer that the party of Megawati Sukarnoputri, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle come to power, in alliance with elements of the old regime. This, it is hoped, will finally defuse the resistance of both students and workers of town and countryside. Megawati has no intention of making any radical changes and is already making soothing noises to the IMF, supporting its suggested restructuring package and the by now usual round of further privatisations that we have seen around the world.

Either the military will maintain power, keeping Habibie as a puppet, or Megawati will take over. Either way, the masses of the population may well come out on the streets in increasing numbers. The possibility of revolution hangs in the air. Equally so does the chance of a complete military clampdown and massacres to rival those in 1965.

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# CONFUSION OVER KOSOVO

## AFTERMATH IN YUGOSLAVIA

The bombing has stopped, but the fighting in Kosovo is far from over. The whole region is under the military control of NATO-dominated K-For troops whilst the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UN Mission in Kosovo, UNMIK) takes over in the civil arena. Kosovan Liberation Army forces are terrorising the 20% non-Albanian minority as UNMIK struggles to set up a new police force and impose their version of so-called multi-ethnic democracy. 90% of the 850,000 refugees and 'internally displaced persons' have now been returned but this is to an uncertain future in an occupied area ravaged by the war - facing burnt-out houses, mines and unexploded bombs, and uranium shells which could cause deaths from cancers and birth defects over years to come.

Serbs and gypsies have left the region in fear of further KLA killings, including those who are refugees from the Krajina in Bosnia. In August, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 170,000 Serbs out of around 200,000 had left Kosovo since K-For arrived and said that only 2,000 of the 40,000 Serbs in the capital Pristina remained, those people being subject to a kind of 'three strikes' activity - first a letter telling them to leave, then a visit, then assault. Meanwhile, the European Commission, together with the World Bank and IMF are working out their economic rebuilding program, with \$2b promised for this purpose at a 'donor' conference which took place at the end of July in Brussels, to be finalised in October. Free market principles are enshrined in these agreements.

### Confusion

So what does all this say for anarchist politics and our response to the war,

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when the result is a class solidarity and internationalism at such an all-time low amongst the working classes in Yugoslavia, and between them and the working classes of the Western countries.

If this war has proved one thing, it is the bankruptcy of the politics of self-determination which in some cases have resulted in total confusion within our movement.

Whilst members of the International of Anarchist Federations like the

Anarchist Federations in France and Italy took an encouraging 'no war but the class war' position like ourselves, the French group Alternative Libertaire found itself split over the war and the intervention of NATO. Initially the group issued a statement opposing Milosevic, ethnic cleansing, Serbian expansionism and supporting the refugees, but then went on to support self-determination for Kosova and for the intervention of United Nations armed forces! Worse still it developed a schism with one faction calling for the arming of the Kosovars and some even going as far as critical support for the NATO intervention - no to aerial bombardment but in favour of ground intervention.

In Britain, whilst Solidarity Federation and ourselves have maintained class based principles (and Class War have remained silent, at least in their Summer edition), other anarchists seem to have fallen into the same trap as Alternative Libertaire.

### Taking sides

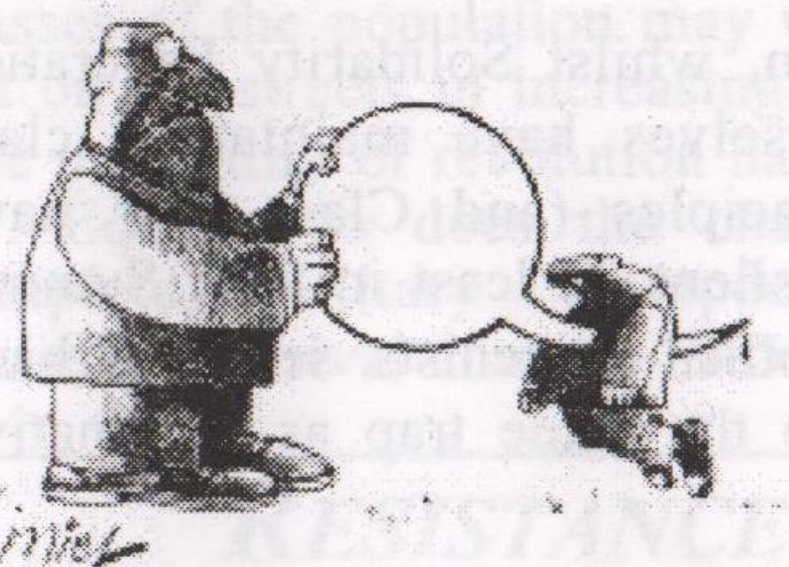
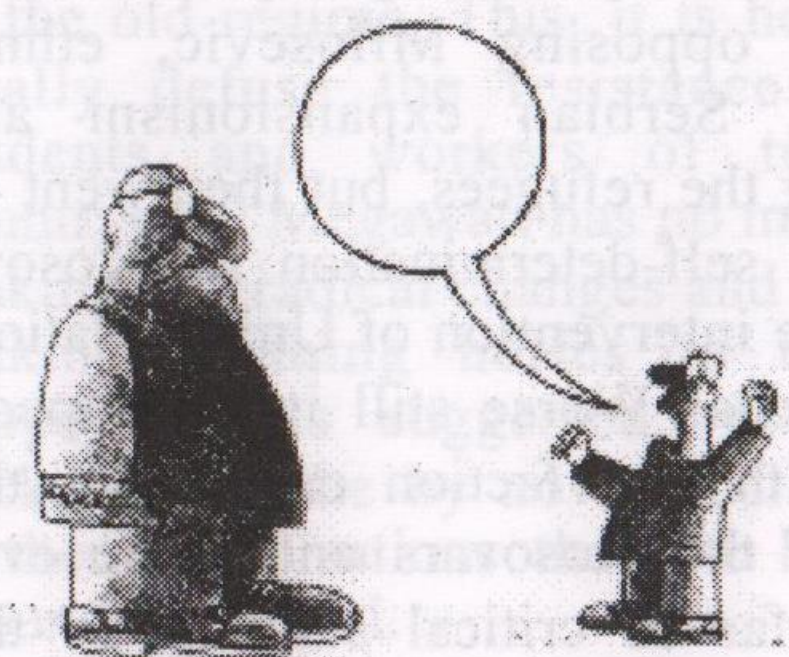
In issue 217 of Black Flag a section entitled "No Easy Answers - Looking at the Balkans War" had as its core article a piece by a member of Workers Aid which stated that "The Kosova Albanians have the right to call for NATO action". What sort of message can this give to our comrades in Yugoslavia opposing the war?

Workers Aid, in both their Workers Aid for Bosnia and subsequent Workers Aid for Kosova guises have always been clear about "taking sides", with a twisted notion of class solidarity which in practice only means calling for workers in Britain to support the Kosovar Albanians, whilst Serbian workers for the most part are lumped in with their "fascist" government.



Industrial Worker, paper of the anarchist Influenced union Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in the USA, suggested in May that as they were not opposed to all war (having opposed World War One, but supported the united front against Franco), this was why they could not justify producing a statement against NATO airstrikes, unless they could also "act based on the needs of those most directly effected" or "first demonstrate that we are also opposing the atrocities that are being perpetrated by the Serb army".

This bizarre position completely ignores the fact there was a revolution going in 30's Spain worthy of support by other revolutionaries, whilst there is not even a sniff of socialism, never mind anarchism, in present day Kosovo. The IWW seems to have been taken in by the crude anti-fascist



ideology which has been used so effectively to justify the fighting by all sides.

Why all this confusion? Self-determination seems to be a problem for some anarchists because we are for autonomy, against all states and authority. This appears to lead them to support, even if critically, national liberation struggles, especially when it's a clear case of British or Western imperialism. The problem with the Balkans situation, if you use the anti-imperialist logic, is its two-tiered imperialism. NATO member states against a weaker 'European' state, then the Serbian government against the region of Kosovo. Who can you support in this case when you are against both NATO and Serbia, yet NATO is against Serbia? Of

course, support the weakest, support the Kosovan Albanians against the imperialism of both, for the self-determination of the Kosovars. Then blame NATO for denying self-determination, even though the reality is now, and always looked like it would be, a nationalist purge by the proponents of a 'greater Albania'. Class analysis is thrown out the window.

The demonstrations in Britain were important and necessary, but we were weakened by the confusions of the proponents of self-determination. Had we been larger we could have completely drowned out the reactionary voice of pro-Serbian bigotry that led so many people to avoid demonstrations altogether. We could have had the strength for some serious direct action at air bases.

As has been said in No War But The Class War circles, libertarians should never take sides in capitalist war, only make sides in the class war. Making sides means keeping to our principles, showing in our publications to the working classes at home and abroad what we stand for, giving strength to our comrades in the war-torn regions (like those Kosovan revolutionaries who might dare to question the might of the KLA, and those opposing any kind of Serbian patriotism), creating doubt in the minds of the 'must do something' public in Britain who supported NATO, creating a climate where soldiers will refuse to fight for their governments now and in the future. Perhaps even convince them what we know, that capitalism needs war to survive, and there will be no end to it until we have a social revolution. We have tried to do this, and we have mostly failed, but this is no excuse to abandon anarchism in favour of liberalism.

Our comrades in Yugoslavia, small in numbers as we are here, did not need to see anarchist principles crumble as they have in this war. The position of 'no war but the class war' is not a cop-out, it is a long term and short term principle which denies the false choice between 'evils'. To make it a reality we need to be even more active in encouraging internationalism in the working class to the extent that

ordinary people feel confident, organised and supported enough to resist their war-mongering governments and national liberation movements.

## REVOLUTIONARY PORTRAITS

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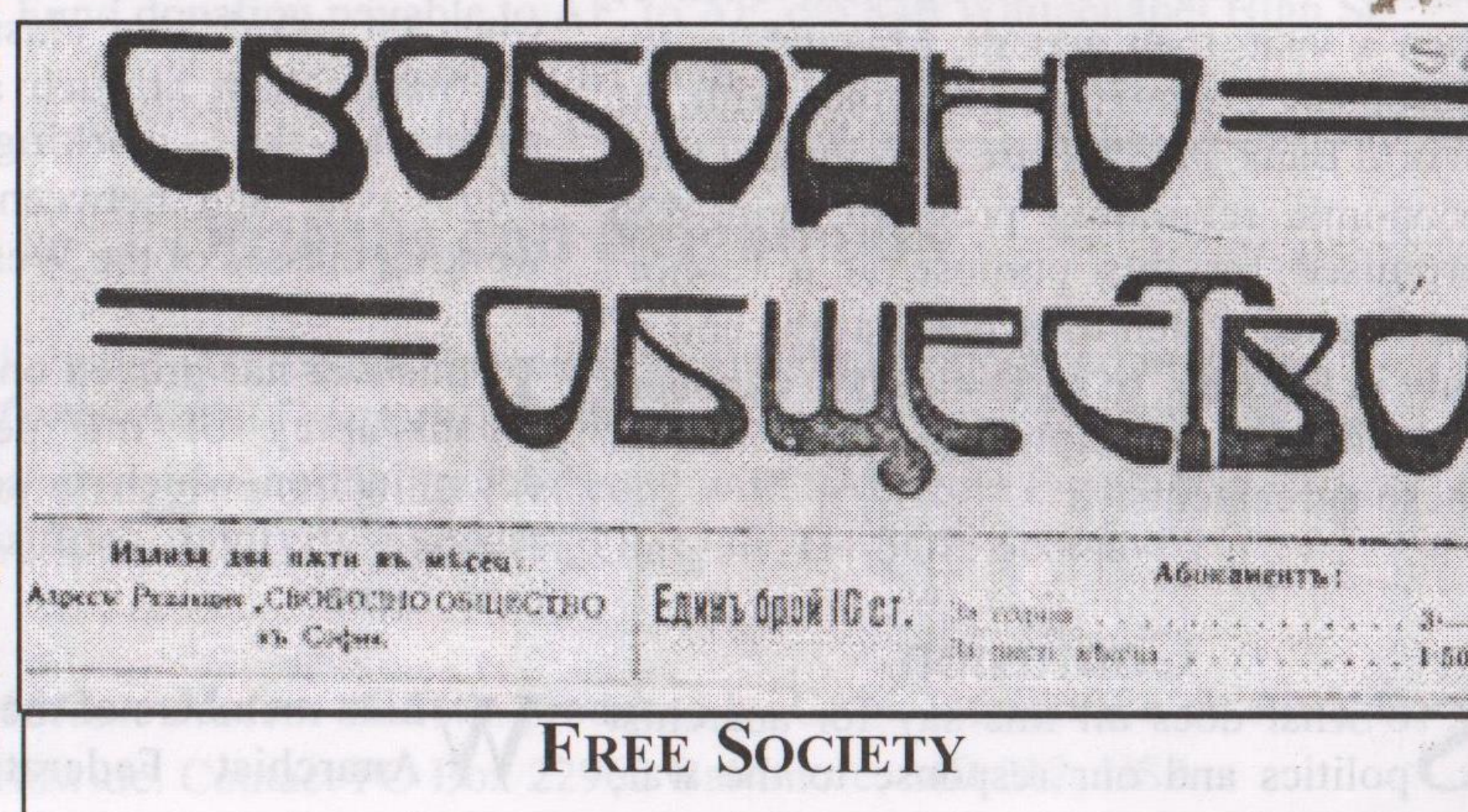
home town of Yambol. This did not stop them from persecuting Cheitanov's comrades still alive, sending many to prisons and concentration camps!

### Mariola Sirakova

Born in Kilifarevo in 1904, the student-actress Mariola Sirakova belonged to a well-off family. She revolted from an early age against her social background and joined the anarchist movement at a young age. After her martyr's death, her younger brother Georgu carried on the struggle for anarchism and was imprisoned by the Communists in the concentration camp of Belene.

### Ivan Nicolov

One of the most popular speakers and polemicists of the Anarchist Communist Federation, Ivan Nicolov was born in 1900 in Radomir. He worked as a teacher, and as an orator took part in many public meetings organised by the anarchists throughout Bulgaria. Poor and modest, he always wore an old soldier's cap. He had the endearing habit of keeping newspaper cuttings up his sleeves, which he used to back up his polemics with political opponents, in particular the Communist Party. He was very popular among peasants and workers. After the Sofia cathedral bombing, he was arrested and burnt alive in the furnace of the National Security (equivalent of CID) in April 1925.



FREE SOCIETY

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# CLASS WAR IN MEXICO

Mexico is a society of intense class conflict. Partly this is the result of historical factors and partly this is because of the country's vulnerability to the forces of world capitalism. The contradictions in Mexican society are highly visible even to the most casual observer.

Part from class exploitation and oppression which will be discussed later, Mexico is a country of long established racism, reflecting the consequences of the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century. The ruling class, television personalities, political bosses and anyone who wields any real power is almost by definition white. The great mass of the population of the working class, middle class business people and functionaries are of mixed racial descent and are obvious by their dark skins. At the very bottom of society are the indigenous people, mainly peasants, who generally speaking are living at just about subsistence level. The descendants of the Aztecs, Mayas, Zapotecs etc. are paying the enduring price of their historic defeat.

Sexual oppression in all its forms is rife and manifests itself in countless ways. Mexican machismo is not funny. At an everyday street-level it means wolf-whistles, the interference with women's social space and exclusion from bars. More seriously it is expressed in terms of widespread sexual assault and rape.

Crime, often very violent, is an everyday part of Mexican life. Robberies of all sorts are endemic, especially in Mexico City and all banks are guarded by sub-machine gun toting security guards. Undoubtedly, the very high crime rate is caused by widespread and often desperate poverty combined with a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Though formally a democracy, like all liberal democracies, the system of hustings, elections, party bickering and individual posturings is actually a process of social control. The dominant political party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, though less obviously corrupt than

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in the past still uses its power to maintain control over the system. They have swallowed Thatcherite-style economics and have embarked upon a programme of privatisation of state industries. President Zedillo's policies are compounded by a \$67 billion bailout of private banks that many see as benefiting bankers with government ties at the expense of the poor. In August, a huge workers demonstration marched upon Mexico City's main square, with contingents from all parts of the country their opposition to an obvious attack on their living standards. Although the demonstration was peaceful, the fact that several hundred thousands of workers were out on the streets signalled a determined effort to fight.

### Paralysed

Mexico's largest university has been paralysed for months by a student strike against the imposition of tuition fees. Unlike in Britain where there was no effective opposition to the abolition of student maintenance grants and the introduction of fees, Mexican students acted swiftly, militantly and with imagination. The students have their own radio station and use electronic mail and mass propaganda to get their message across. The strike has achieved its main objective, the removal of fees, but the students want more. Being strongly influenced by anarchists (known as "ultras" in Mexico) the students' actions became the dominant issue in Mexican political life. Incidentally class struggle anarchism seems to be very influential in a society with a long anarchist tradition.

The oppression of the indigenous groups in Mexico has previously been mentioned. The most well known militant response, that of the Zapatistas in Chiapas has brought about considerable state repression. The lesser known and less effective revolt in Oaxaca has led to the disappearance and probable murder of scores of militants.

Meanwhile in Chiapas where the Zapatistas have mass support which the government cannot destroy by standard



counter-insurgency measures, the state has embarked upon a long-term strategy of low intensity operations combined with military occupation. The military is going to build a road cutting the state of Chiapas in two in order to be able to launch attacks upon the local peasants who support and provide personnel to the Zapatista revolutionary army.

The level of class war in Mexico is probably unparalleled anywhere else in the world. There are many revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary organisations in the country and an as yet unbroken labour movement. However, the revolutionary groups are not united and there is no national organisation which commands support across the divergent ethnic and regional populations.

Against this there is an obvious tension within Mexican society and it is a potential powder keg. Perhaps all that is needed is a spark and a wholesale popular uprising is definitely not an impossibility.

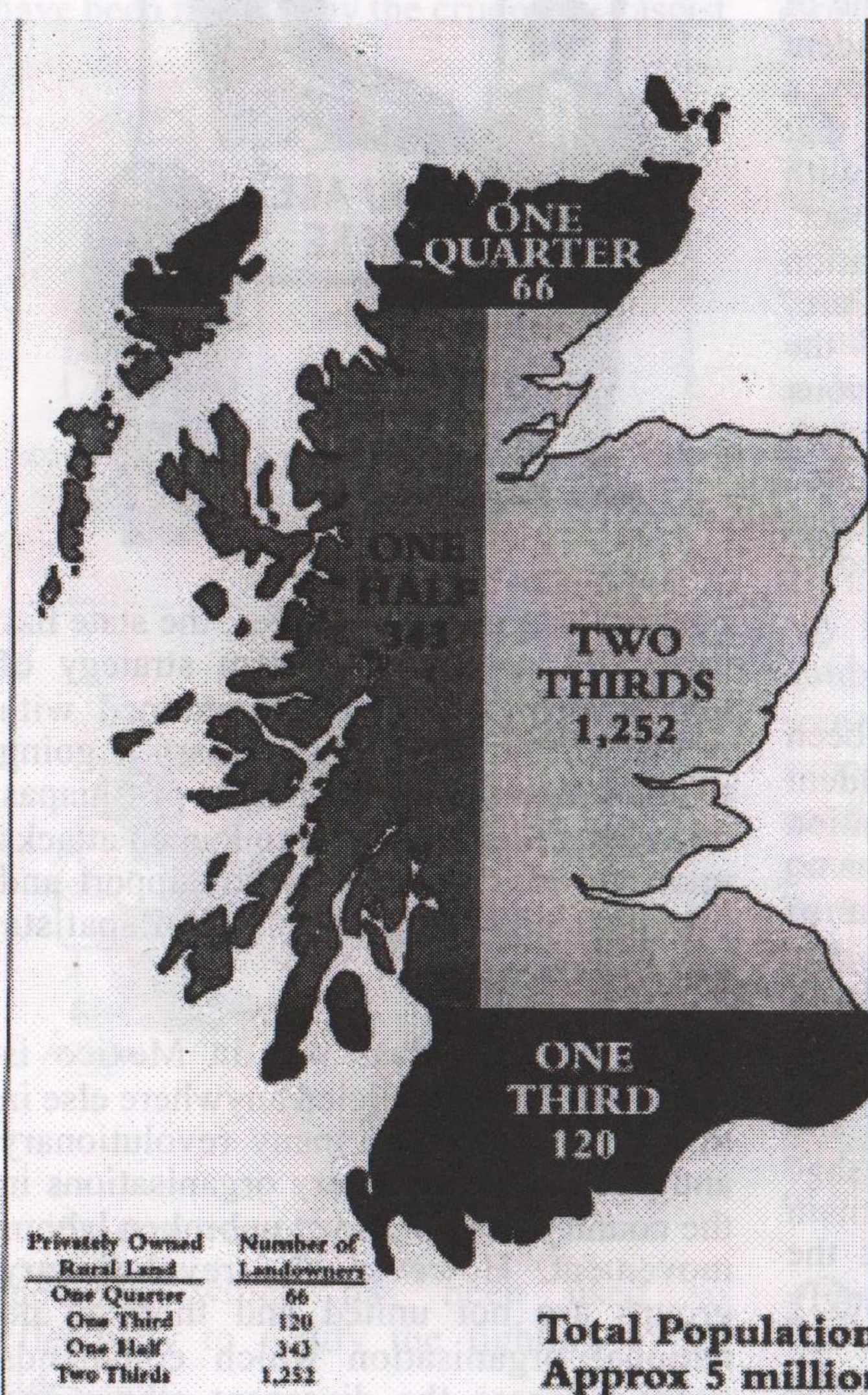
The above was written by an AF member who recently visited Mexico, travelling down to Chiapas and Oaxaca and participating in a demonstration in Mexico city in which thousands of anarchists waving red and black flags took part.

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# LAND REFORM IN SCOTLAND?

## Don't Hold Your Breath!



We continue our series on the land.

The new Scottish Parliament is full of rhetoric about how it's going to make substantial changes to the landowning system in Scotland. Land reform is one of the main pieces of legislation which is to be put to Parliament in the coming session. However, despite the fighting talk, it is clear that the actual intention is very mild indeed, and once the politicians succumb to the usual pressure from landowners,

then even the very modest proposals will be watered down such that the power of the landowners remains.

It is not surprising that land reform is on the agenda. The facts speak for themselves. Scotland has the most unequal distribution of land in western Europe and it is even more unequal than Brazil which is well-known for its land injustices. In a country of over 19 million acres, over 16 million acres is privately owned rural land. Two-thirds of this land is owned by 1252 landowners, (0.025% of the population). And these estates are extremely large. One quarter of the privately owned rural land is in estates of 30,700 acres and larger, owned by just 66 landowners (Wightman: 1999). Part of the reason for the large size of estates is the law of primogeniture where it is the eldest son who inherits the whole estate. Not only is the distribution unequal, land ownership is still based on feudal laws, a system that dates back to the

11th century. This means that the land still officially belongs to the 'Crown' and the landowner is a vassal. However, this vassal can become a 'superior' by 'feuing' land to someone else who then becomes his vassal. Even though the owner has sold the land, feuing means that the superior still has a say in how that land is developed. This has of course caused many problems when people have bought a house and then have to get the permission of the 'superior' before they can do anything. And of course there are many landowners who are ready to take advantage of this situation by asking for money in return for

permission.

Another impetus for land reform has come media coverage of what are called 'bad' landowners. There was the recent case in Knoydart where this very large estate had changed hands many times in a few years, leaving the local community in an insecure position. The landowners were usually absentee who came a few times a year for a dose of killing animals for fun. Things came to a head, however, when the latest owners were done for fraud, one is now in a German jail. The community ended up making a much-publicised buy-out. The same thing happened on the island of Eigg where the owner had been a German artist who had made only two visits in two years. The spotlight has usually focused on foreign landowners, fuelled by the increase in nationalist sentiment. It is these landowners who are seen to not have the best interest of the community at heart. This is compounded by the fact that land ownership is shrouded in secrecy, with land often owned by faceless offshore companies and private trusts.

### Bloodsports

Even the traditional live-in laird has come under attack because of the way estates are managed without any regard to the wider economic and environmental issues. Some estates have managed to diversify but many are still run solely for the purpose of blood sports. Many people have begun to question whether this is a good use of land on a number of grounds. First, some argue that the amount of jobs created and income generated is not as great as the estates claim. Despite the existence of quite a few trigger-happy German, Italian and American rich who

come to do what they can't do in their own country, more income and more jobs come from other forms of tourism that are often in direct conflict with the closed nature of the sporting estate.

Environmentalists and conservationists have also attacked the problems caused by too many red deer for the regeneration of natural woodland and the eyesore caused by all the bull-dozed tracks that carry landrovers full of gun-toting tourists to within a few steps of their target. There have also been cases where gamekeepers are known to have deliberately shot birds of prey because they eat the young grouse. Recently, a gamekeeper in the central Highlands killed a nest of golden eagles as a result of leaving out a poisoned carcass. He claims he did not intend to do this, but such stories only add to anti-laird feeling.

But basically there is just general discontent and hostility from the urban and rural working class for a situation where a few own so much and have so much power- a discontent that has been brewing for centuries, remembered vividly in the Highland Clearances. The wealth of the landowners is contrasted with the low wages of their employees. Two-thirds of households in rural Scotland have income below the Low Pay Unit Poverty Threshold.

### Illusions

Unfortunately, like the illusions in a Labour government, the Scottish Parliament is seen as the means to achieve the long-awaited goal of land reform. Lack of progress before was blamed on the 'English' Parliament with its landowner-dominated House of Lords. Now that this obstacle is removed, land reform is thought it be possible. However, these illusions will soon be shattered. A state is a state no matter what nationality it calls itself and the Scottish Parliament will do what all parliaments do best: manage the country in the interests of the ruling class.

This can be seen already by examining the proposals of the Land Reform Policy group which was set up to make recommendations on land reform. Their proposals were published in January 1999 and are to be the basis for new legislation. When they were first published there was the usual media scare of revolution around the corner, but landowners can rest easy. Andy Wightman in his just published book, *Land and Power*, has exposed the reforms for what they are.

The main plank of the recommendations is the abolition of feudalism. Now this is positive in that there will no longer be

Organise! 52

vassals and superiors and people who buy a house are free from obligations to the previous landowner, but it mainly means that landowners, instead of being seen as vassals of the Crown, are outright owners of the land. This gives them even more right to do whatever they want on their land. So it is not surprising that the landowners, acting like they have just made a major concession, are quite in favour of this reform. There are no proposals for legislation on absentee landowners or for forcing landowners to register their land and making public the terms of any sale of land. This is all for "further study" or for action without legislation. This means, if the landowner wants to do it he can. Landowners will be 'encouraged' to consult with the community and to pursue policies on their land which don't harm the environment. In other words, there is no effective land reform at all. A few landowners can continue to own most of Scotland, and this in secrecy. They can continue the practice of doing what they want with the land, disregarding the local community and environmental concerns.

### Community Right to Buy

The other part of the proposals is to give communities the "right to buy". However, they will only be able to do so when the land comes on the market. There is no provision for compulsory purchase and it is not that often that a suitable property comes on the market. Many of the estates don't have many people living on them anyway and have been developed in such a way that a community would have to put in a lot of investment to make it something that could give them a living. And even if a suitable property did come on the market, the community would have to be very well-organised and would still have to raise a considerable amount of money.

Andy Wightman has correctly pointed out the Emperor's New Clothes aspect of the land reform proposals. However, his own proposals, written in conjunction with a member of the Democratic Left, (the "EuroCommunists") are not much more radical. Yes, he is in favour of getting rid of absentee landowners, regulating the land market and having a tax on land which would make a bit of a dent in the landowners' power, but he doesn't question the very nature of land ownership. He seems to favour the break-up of land into smaller parcels to create a rural society of petit-bourgeois farmers. Looking at countries like France where this is the case, small farmers can be just as reactionary as their larger counterparts.



Don't worry Sir Ogilvie-Brodie-Pratt, good landowners have nothing to fear from the Scottish Executive's land reform proposals

What he fails to realise is that the root of the issue is not *who* owns the land but the fact that it is owned at all! In addition, he seems naive about the term 'community', which masks class divisions and reinforces the idea of 'ownership' of the land. In any 'community' there will be some with more power than others and any community take-over, therefore, will not mean that everyone has an equal say in how the estate would be run. Also, local communities should not be able to do anything they want with the land anymore than a private landowner. What happens if the local community decides to rent land for a nuclear power plant or to ban black people from walking on the

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The illustrations for the Land article are taken from the book *Land and Power* by Andy Wightman.

Other illustrations in this issue are from various sources. Many are by Hema, a comrade from Quebec.

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# IT DOESN'T FALL OUT OF THE SKY!

## THE POLITICS OF WATER

Water is essential for all life on Earth, for the production of everything people eat, drink and use, for washing and sanitation. A third of the world's population do not have access to a supply of safe drinking water (a situation that is worsening); a third of all deaths in the world are the results of water-borne diseases. Water is a limited but endlessly renewed resource; its pollution, mismanagement and overuse by corporations, governments, and ordinary people (functioning as 'consumers' in a world that is not of their making) threatens to turn a global crisis into a long-term planetary disaster. The Vice-President of the World Bank, Ismail Serageldin, stated in 1995 that - 'the wars of the next century will be over water... by the year 2025, the amount of water available to each person in the Middle East and North Africa will have dropped 80% in a single lifetime'. Because it is fixed and stable, land can be divided by hedges, walls etc so it has the potential to be held in common, or to be the foundation of private property, personal wealth and inheritance. Logically it should be a communal asset, because it will not stay still. For thousands of years legal and informal systems have accepted and insisted that there can be no ownership of running water.

### British Privatisation

There is a direct relationship between the size of human settlements and the need for safe water and sewage disposal. The huge expansion of the urban population in 19th century Britain was accompanied by dysentery, typhoid and cholera. The prevailing political orthodoxy was that laissez-faire capitalism would solve all problems; public (state) enterprise was wasteful and wicked: a new crime of water stealing was created. The poor were blamed for cholera outbreaks - the result of their ignorance, lack of hygiene and general moral depravity. Eventually it was recognised that easy

access to a clean water supply was a basic human need, via the Public Health Acts.

In 1971, 14, 100 million litres of water left treatment works in England and Wales: 35% more than 1961, 135% more than in 1940. The Water Resources Board predicted that this would double by the year 2000, with agriculture and domestic consumption being primarily responsible. The 1974 local government reorganisation created 10 regional water authorities. They neglected the repair of crumbling Victorian pipes, sewers, pumping stations and processing plants.

In Britain, the reforms of 1974 brought the supply and disposal of water under the direct control of central government; as a consequence the treasury (under both Labour and the Tories) steadily reduced water authorities spending between 1974-1986. By 1982, the government was only allowing the water industry to spend half of the 1974 sum on capital investment.

Britain is water rich, with adequate rainfall and only occasional water shortages e.g. May 1975-August 1976. At this time water was generally seen as a common good, and water planners saw any form of supply restriction, even a hosepipe ban, as an admission of failure. Regional water authorities pooled their access to water resources, and were making long-term plans for a London ring main, and to recharge aquifers from winter river water. The 'Save-it' publicity campaign during the drought cut water demand by 30% in some areas, and measures such as emergency leak detection and mains pressure reductions resulted in a further 10% of savings. 90% of population reduced their bath, and basin and sink water. As a result of intense co-operation between the water authorities in the worst drought for 250 years, and 'consumer' response, engineers managed to keep the water flowing.

By contrast, in the water drought of 1995, John Gummer repeated the 1976 advice such as recycling washing up water, putting brick in cistern, with little response; the public had now been re-educated to view water as a capitalist product rather than a natural resource.

Water was privatised by the Tories in 1989; despite defeat in House of Lords, the threat of prosecution by Brussels on water quality standards, attacks by environmental groups over standards and the fate of water authorities huge land holdings. The shares were 5.7% times over-subscribed, the sale raised £5.3 billion; the government wrote off £5 billion in debt, and injected £1.6 billion to the authorities with £100 million flotation expenses: a £1.4 billion government (or, more accurately, taxpayer) loss.

The average household experienced an increase in water bills of 67% between 1989-90 & 1994-95; company profits rose by an average of 20% a year between 1989-90 & 1992-93, profit margins rose from 28.7% to 35.6%. Water charges for most British households are linked to the value of the home, rather than consumption; UK trials from the early 1990's show that metering can cut household use by 10-15%. 1995 water industry figures show that 826 million gallons of water were lost through leaking pipes. Government figures show that it costs up to £200 per household to install meters i.e. £4-5 billion cost for consumers; the annual running cost would be £500 million. The highest charging area of Britain, South West water, took 4.9% of income for a household of 2 adults and 2 children, 7.6% for a lone parent & child, 9.1% for a single pensioner in 1994. After 1988, Supplementary benefit claimants had to pay their water bills.

Thousands of households had their water supply cut off. Over 1991 & 1992, in the Sandwell Health Authority area (in the West Midlands), over 1,400 households were cut off, and cases of hepatitis and dysentery rose tenfold. The British Medical Association found that vulnerable groups were those with medical conditions requiring more water for bathing/washing clothes, young children & the elderly. In 1994, 2 million households fell into water arrears, with 12,500 disconnected. Half of the water companies in England and Wales have selectively introduced or are testing pre-payment meters, which need 'smart' cards, recharged on payment at post offices. Non-payers are automatically cut off; the supply is not restored until their debt is paid off. These cut-offs are not classified as disconnections, so they do not appear in the official statistics. 10,000 meters have been installed in Birmingham since 1992: there have been over 2000 disconnections, 147 of them went to court. The Water companies have responded to increasing criticism of their disconnection policies by devoting a tiny proportion of their pre-tax profits to charitable trusts, which help the poorest indebted customers. This is PR; it helps them to reduce disconnections, and is a tax advantage. In the 1980's, and between 1994-1996, anti-Poll Tax style community resistance campaigns defeated attempts to introduce water taxes in Dublin (see issue number 3 of 'Red and Black Revolution' for an excellent activist account/analysis).

If the law of scarcity governed access to water, the price would sky rocket so that the poor could afford none. Government attempts to rule water consumption through price will only work as long as water is freely accessible to the poor: in Lima, for example, where prices are too high, the poor buy water by the drum, the rich bribe the drivers of the tank trucks servicing the slums, using the water to wash their cars with.

A broad, British water companies are hunting for contracts for water supply and sewage disposal: a. Thames Water spokesperson said - 'We are being too soft, and that is why our disconnection levels will rise' (Guardian, 1992). The company was then part of a consortium re-organising the water supply of East Berlin. Both the Suffolk and Essex water companies are owned by the French Lyonnaise des Eaux, which with the larger Compagnie Generale des Eaux are world's largest water distributors. In 1994 Thames announced that it was teaming up with General to bid to maintain and expand

water and sewage system of Lima; in 1993 Anglian Water was part of a consortium led by Lyonnaise to modernise and run the water and sewage operations of Buenos Aires in Argentina. The chief executive of Thames Water explained its involvement in Latin America - 'The aim remains to expand non-utility businesses to provide an earnings stream free of regulatory control'.

Latin America has a long tradition of 'clientelist-populist' politics resulting in the affluent areas of the city having a heavily subsidised water supply built on large-scale 19th century engineering. In most cities the poor do not have access to piped potable water, making them easy victims of the private water sellers: in Guayaquil for example, 400 tankers service 600,000 people (35% of the total urban population). These water speculators buy water at a highly subsidised price and sell it at a price up to 400 higher than that paid by the low volume consumers serviced by the public water utility. The city has appalling hygiene and sanitation problems, but no water scarcity: the average production and supply capacity would allow each inhabitant 220 litres a day; current consumption is an average of 307 litres in affluent areas, and less than 25 litres for the poorest (the internationally accepted standard is 150 litres). Contemporary water imperialism is the result of the requirements of international water agencies that insist on international tender. Bilateral loans are usually subject to buying equipment and using engineering services from the lending country. These arrangements privilege infrastructure investment over institutional or organisational improvements and maintenance projects.

### Fair Access

There is a long history of human societies that have developed elaborate systems to ensure fair access for all to water: the water communities on the bases of Genil, Segura, Jucar, Turia, Mijares, Jalon, Ebro rivers are examples of

solidarity and social co-operation, created by the Spanish on the foundations laid by the Phoenicians, the Roman Empire, and Muslims. The modern technology of pipes, pumps and motive power makes such schemes easier.

For irrigation, local control of water is all-important & effected in many ways. In the centuries-old system in Bali, all farmers taking water from same stream/river are members of a sebak organisation, meeting every 35 days, with its own system of law. It plans planting days, distributes water equitably, and fines cheats. In the small-scale irrigation systems of eastern Spain under the Moors, water belonged to the community and was sold with the land. Continual disputes about its use in times of scarcity regulated by a communal organisation, the huerta of places such as Aragon. Here water belongs to farmers and growers through whose land it passes, each water user belongs to a comunidad de regantes (association) which elects a sindico, the combination of sindicos from each zone constitutes the Water Tribunal. These meet to judge infringements or disputes, and to apportion rations during scarcity; no lawyers or state laws are involved, fines are sometimes imposed and always paid.

Encouraged by a surge of prosperity in 1960's, the Spanish have ignored the fact that they live in a semi-arid country,







much prone to periodic, lengthy droughts. Golf courses have been built for tourists, swimming pools for themselves, and there are many lawns and gardens requiring daily watering. Farmers have diversified from their traditional drought resistant produce such as figs and olives, into water hungry crops like rice and strawberries. The result is that Spain is now the World's 4th highest per capita consumer of water after the US, Canada and Russia. Other factors involved (which apply elsewhere) are the assumption of a global market among producers, of the right to squander resources amongst consumers; and that the centralised State with its control of revenue, command of resources and expertise, and power to enforce policy on citizens, should be the arbiter of the management of resources.

### Mega Schemes

Huge hydraulic schemes are made possible by advanced modern Civil engineering techniques, they result from vast international contracts which are only possible at the level of central governments, international free floating capital & supra-national government organisations. The financiers borrow money and lend it at commercial rates, so they favour large-scale water engineering projects, which promise increasing production for export markets at the expense of local subsistence economies, with disastrous social and environmental effects. Cash crops are grown for export in Africa and Asia at a huge social and environmental cost: major crops demand more nutrients i.e. expensive imported agro-chemicals, leading to groundwater pollution. They also need much more water than local food crops: for example the desire to produce more cotton (a kilo of cotton clothes requires 29,000 kilograms of water to grow it) was reason the behind damming of Nile. Ethiopia's Third Five-Year Plan bought 60% of cultivated land in the fertile Awash Valley under cotton, evicting Afar pastoralists onto fragile uplands, which accelerated deforestation, and contributed to the countries ecological crisis and famine.

Large-scale projects everywhere are the consequence and justification for

authoritarian government: one of America's great dam building organisations is the US Army corps of Engineering. Stalin's secret police supervised the construction of dams and canals; soldiers such as Nasser and Gaddafi, and military commanders of South America are prominent in promoting such projects. Technological imperialism has replaced the empire building of the past: large-scale hydro projects are exported to countries with many inter-related problems — deforestation, intensive land use, centralised planning and inequitable land distribution. Water engineers usually avoid public debate and participation: they present planning as a technical, 'objective' process, and consultation only occurs after schemes are perfected, to avoid questions about their aims and policies.

### Women

Everywhere in the world women are the water managers, and usually carriers, for every household purpose; they are also often responsible for horticulture and animal management. They are frequently excluded from decision making about water management however; most societies also have a tradition that the technology of water supply is too complex for women. Women decide how to use water sources at given times, and through experience make rational decisions based on access, time, effort, water quantity, quality, and reliability. Where there is no pump or standpipe in yard/street, water collection is both time consuming and bad for health: it saps energy (and affects children/family), and is a primary cause of pelvic distortion, which can lead to death in childbirth. In Thailand, miscarriages are higher in dry villages, resulting from women falling on slippery paths of steep slopes while carrying food, water and a baby; in Bangladesh half of a clinics' cases of broken backs were the results of falls with heavy loads.

In Sri Lanka (1992) the disruption caused by the Mahawelli dams and plantation project resulted in the forcible eviction of 1million people, the prime cause of Tamil Tiger unrest which resulted in thousands of deaths as they fought government forces in the eastern jungles from the late 1980's onwards. In 1993 the Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq were threatened by S. Hussein's plans to drain the area — the most heavily populated part of region. Many of the 100,000 inhabitants fled after being warned that any opposition risked death. Selincourt estimates that 3 million people are threatened with the loss of their homes,

livelihoods, land & cultural identity by forthcoming or projected giant dam projects: Kedung Ombo dam (Indonesia) displaced 25,000; the Akasombo dam (Ghana) 80,000 people; Caborra Bassa (S. Africa) 25,000; together with the dams proposed along Mekong river from Vietnam through Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand. The 3 in Lao alone will displace 142,000 people. The proposed Xiao Langdi dam in China would displace 140,000; the 3 Gorges project 1.1 million people. This is appalling human devastation on a par with war, large dams have a chronic record in delivering water and power, or eliminating flooding in downstream valleys.

Nasser built the Anwar High dam 1971. The long-term consequences have been to stop the annual flow of silt onto delta land, necessitating the growing use of expensive chemical fertilisers, and increasing vulnerability to erosion from the Mediterranean. Formerly the annual flooding washed away the build up of natural salts; now they increase the salt content of irrigated land. The build up of silt behind the dam is reducing its electricity generating capacity; the lake is also responsible for the dramatic increase in water-borne diseases. Upstream other countries are developing their own plans for the White & Blue Nile; Egypt is affected by 8 other African countries.

### Disputes and Wars

Large-scale water engineering projects form international disputes (though they are no longer a cold war weapon), and have become economic bargaining counters, for example the Pergau dam in Malaysia. The British government agreed to spend £234 million on it in 1989, in exchange for a £1.3 billion arms deal (they spent £400 million on arms, and a British company won the £400million dams contract). In 1994 the High Court ruled that the aid decision was unlawful.

40% of the world's population depend on water from a neighbouring country, and over 200 large rivers are shared by 2 or more countries. In modern times, the existence of vast cities, irrigated agriculture, and the demand for HEP have complicated the basin-consistency principle (regions should restrict their water use to their own water basins). In disputes upstream, states refer to the doctrine of absolute national sovereignty — exclusive right to all resources within their territory.

The cutting up of rivers by state boundaries has aggravated the problems of responding ecologically as floods; water conflicts become inter-state ones. One of reasons for Turkey's attacks on the Kurds is the importance of water resources in their area. Israel's water transfer agreement with Egypt offered Israel 400M cubic metres a year of fresh water in exchange for the Palestinian solution. Attempts to divert the sources of the river Jordan in South Lebanon & the Golan Heights provoked the Israeli-Arab war of 1967. There is still no agreement over access to water for the West Bank Palestinians, they are barred from digging new wells or renovating old ones since the 1967 occupation. Annually, Israel pumps 600 million cubic metres of water (over 30% of its' supply) from aquifers that lie wholly or partly under the West Bank. 115 cubic metres is allocated to the 1.4 million West Bank Palestinians, and 30 million to the 130,000 Jewish settlers there; the rest goes to Israel. Modern wars depend on the destruction of the civilian populations means of life and livelihood for example as a result of the Gulf War: black rain fell for months on Kuwait, Iraq and Iran, and there were devastating effects on Iraq's agriculture and water. The breakdown of electrical power supplies has created a cycle of contamination: over 90% of sewage treatment plants were disabled, resulting in huge amounts of untreated domestic and industrial sewage being pumped into rivers, creating an increase in water borne diseases. Agricultural production was slashed by the breakdown of the electrically powered irrigation pump network: before the war Iraq produced 30% of its food needs, now the figure is 10-15%.

There is a continuous threat of water wars in South Asia between India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan; big dams are already threatened by loss of the topsoil, and large scale deforestation upstream results in increasingly more widespread flood disasters downstream. Punjab water was an important contributory factor to the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, the Indian storming of the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984 etc. The Punjab presently gets approximately 40% of India's agreed share of the water, the Sikh's main political group are demanding more water for irrigation. The 1992 floods of Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak system killed 10,000 people; ½ a billion people live in the region, nearly 10% of the world's population.

### Safe Water

In the modern world it is possible for people to have access to cars, radio, and television, but not to a safe water supply — for example Bangalore, home of India's computer software industry. There is an

economic argument for minimal public provision e.g public standpipes would provide free/cheap water to poor, this would increase economic efficiency by reducing the time spent in collecting water (and the consequent illhealth and injury), and reducing the health losses caused by polluted water. This is not capitalist economics however, which is based on exploitation. The position of the urban poor has worsened: a United Nations survey of 58 'developing' countries in 1986 found that in 26 a lower proportion of the population had access to clean water in 1980 than 1970; the World Health Organisation estimated in 1985 that 25% of the 'Third World's urban population lacked access to safe water, 100 million more than in 1975. There are 4 categories of water related diseases: waterborne — such as typhoid and cholera; water-washed: where lack of washing affects skin or eyes for example scabies or trachoma; water-based: via parasitic worms depending on life-cycles such as schistosomiasis and guinea worm; water-related insect vectors e.g. malaria and yellow fever. This figure is probably an underestimate as it is based on government statistics. Ward (and others) stress the importance of National - Governmental Organisations and municipal authorities in the provision of (more) appropriate intermediate water and sanitation provision for the poor.

### Dirty Water

Britain pumps over 300 million gallons of sewage into sea every day, and water companies spend millions of pounds on purifying water, 32% of which is then used to flush toilets. Inland cities, due to the threat of epidemic disease, developed elaborate systems of sewage processing and sought to link every household with sewage system. Coastal and estuary towns frequently discharge untreated sewage into coastal water as the cheapest solution, assuming that the sea is big enough to absorb and dilute faeces, industrial wastes and nuclear industry effluent. Since 1990, the activist group Surfers against Sewage

have been demonstrating to oppose and publicise this environmental vandalism. A 1970 government report found that in some areas processed sewage sludge would be too contaminated by toxic meals to be used as agricultural fertiliser.

British governments have undertaken to conform to European Union water standards, but in practice they have done their level best to avoid them. Bathing water standards are based on waters' physical, chemical and microbiological quality. The requirement on the acceptable quality of beaches was circumvented by the (then) Tory governments' (re)definition of beaches as places where



500 bathers were in the water at any one time (or over 1500 per linear beach mile); this definition excluded all Welsh beaches, as well as Blackpool. The EU standard for discharge of urban waste into rivers contained a loophole for slacker standards in 'high natural dispersion areas' where the sea would quickly carry waste away. This led the 1994 Secretary of State for the Environment, John 'let my children eat (mad) beefburgers' Gummer, to declare that more than 30 miles (48km) of the River Humber was open sea, so that it could continue to receive raw sewage from Hull, and save the privatised Yorkshire Water Company the £100 million cost of building a new sewage works to clean up pollution. He made a similar ruling for Bristol on the River Severn, although the High Court ruled in 1996 that both decisions were unlawful. Water suppliers are unwilling to pay for pipes to separate high quality water used for washing and



cooking, from less-treated water for other uses that forms the majority of domestic and industrial consumption. Similarly, the disposers of water borne wastes will not pay for human and industrial wastes to be separated.

### Global Warming

Since the 1970's there has been a steady increase in global temperatures as a result of the build-up of heat-trapping pollutant gases in the atmosphere, causing an increase in the expansion of ocean water which could raise sea levels by 2 feet by the year 2010. The likely climactic effects would be increased rainfall in monsoon areas, and more severe droughts in areas prone to water shortage. Low-lying regions such as the delta portions of Bangladesh, Egypt and Southern China, and low-lying islands in the Indian and Pacific oceans may be flooded or even submerged. These changes will have major consequences for food production, and create many more refugees, with the poorest being most affected, as ever. WAR

The cutting up of river systems by state boundaries has aggravated the problems of responding ecologically to floods; water conflicts become inter state ones. \*\*On the banks of the Ganges, for example, fisherfolk and peasants in India, and the poor peasants living in Bangladesh are connected through the life of the river; the political and engineering structures that threaten their lives and livelihoods, simultaneously bring economic power and political control to national and international elite's. All over the world, irrigation (especially for cash crops) has reached the point of diminishing returns where mineral salts increase the salinity of water and decrease the output: 1990, 30-40% of the world's irrigated cropland is estimated to be waterlogged or suffering from excessive salinisation; the 63% of water used in 1991 is projected to decline to 55% by 2000.

It is now generally recognised that Irrigation projects are most likely to succeed when fallow periods are observed, and they are managed by local communities. The reliance on large-scale irrigation has spread from luxury export crops in dry climates to production of ordinary crops for supermarkets that account for most of British retail trade. Big farmers are encouraged by the National Rivers Authority (NRA) and the Ministry of Agriculture to build their own reservoirs and abstract water from rivers; with a 90% reduction if they do it in winter. Supermarket lettuces have an eight week life which involves drenching them in ¾ of an inch (2cm) of water every week; baking potatoes drink 10 inches. A 1995 NRA

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST AGAINST CAPITAL

# J18

## WHERE WERE YOU?



What were you doing on Friday June 18th 1999? If you were protesting in the City of London then you took part in one of the most important global actions against capitalism that has ever been seen.

Events got off to an early start. At 7 a.m. protesters hung a huge banner off Tower bridge and were chased off by police. From then until midday autonomous groups from all over the country roamed the City causing trouble wherever they went... Five hundred or more cyclists in a 'Critical Mass' caused traffic chaos. At 11 a.m. the Friends Provident building was barricaded and people locked on inside. Another group drenched in fake blood ran into Lloyds bank claiming to have been shot by arms dealers. Others locked themselves inside Nat. West. At the same time 60 people locked onto London bridge bringing traffic to a halt. Haringey Solidarity group hit Reeds employment agency as they are helping Labour implement the great 'New Deal'. Members of the Anarchist Federation and others targeted the offices

of the TUC, highlighting the fact that trade unions help capitalism too... Activists from the North East targeted several centres of international capital including the International Petroleum Exchange and then, after a tour of big banks, ended up at the home of Eddie George, the Bank of England. Georgewas an obvious one for North Easterners after his comments that job losses in the region were a 'price worth paying' for low inflation. What he said was only what everyone other capitalist knows: he was just honest or stupid enough to say it out loud.

The 'Reclaim the Streets' (RTS) was the main event of the day. People had been assembling in Liverpool Street station since noon. Some were distributing free copies of 'Evading Standards' which had been paid for by the compensation paid to protesters by the Met due to wrongful arrests at earlier demos. At 1 p.m. thousands of masks of four different colours were handed out to different sections of the crowd. Then the sections

left by different exits. (The tube had been closed down so the plan for the 'Green group' to use that was altered.) The police tried to de-masks people, but generally failed. Three groups then headed towards the Bank of England in Threadneedle Street and the other towards Aldgate via Middlesex Street. Then the fun really began. A large group heading down London Wall was met by riot police, who retreated when the protesters started throwing things. Protesters emptied a riot van and a line of punks each carrying a police riot shield with a circled A painted on it were reported marching in an orderly fashion from the scene. Others discovered that police riot shields make very good material for little bonfires. Other police vans were graffitied and attacked. Most drove off, spraying CS gas as they went, but one backed over a woman trapping her underneath. This enraged the crowd further. The police even prevented an ambulance entering the street for the injured woman. Finally, 37 minutes later, she was taken to hospital. A man was run over elsewhere and the ambulance was similarly delayed by the police. Around the same time another group attacked MacDonald's in Canon Street, smashing the windows from the inside with chairs. A Merc showroom was trashed. Then it was the turn of the London Stock exchange. Handy metal barricades were used to put the windows in, and protesters ran in to cause further damage. People were all over the City by this point trashing posh cars and financial buildings.

### Business as usual ?

The RTS itself was outside the Liffe building on Upper Thames Street (home of the London Futures Exchange). Soon the inevitable happened as a section of the crowd burst into the building smashing up the lobby, throwing smoke bombs and scrapping with traders and police. The building was closed down; it wasn't 'business as usual' that day... After an hour or so the protesters were ejected. It took police almost another hour to shift them from outside the building: the crowd built barricades with stuff lying around and fended off the police with wheelie bins. Riot police then moved into side streets and began attacking protesters. As the crowd was pushed back along Upper Thames Street, the Dutch Rabobank had its huge windows smashed. Other financial buildings were broken into and files thrown out of windows or burnt.



Elsewhere, Liverpool Street Macdonald's was trashed as was the wine bar 'Le Quai'. By 6 p.m. the main part of the crowd had been pushed over Southwark Bridge and held there. By 7 p.m. most had made it to Trafalgar Square where the festival carried on.

During the whole event, an alternative media in a City back street sent reports to the web. A team of DJs, VJs, webmasters and video activists created a global independent TV, radio and newswire station. Bike couriers brought in the latest digital footage which was uploaded with a commentary on an audio channel from protesters with mobile phones. There were ¼ million hits on the website. As well as in communicating the event, the Internet had been a vital tool in the organising of the carnival in the first place, and also allowed reports from other countries to be circulated around the globe quickly and easily. A lot of the press used and quoted the J18 website, which was very effective. (See below.)

The final days' tally was around £2 million worth of damage, not including the costs incurred by the disruption to trading etc. Right, everything will be insured, and the damage done was a drop in the ocean anyway, but this doesn't mean it was pointless. It was a very obvious display of anger at a system that fucks over the vast majority of people on this planet and it was completely justifiable. Without it the day would have been a waste of time: two lines in the *Guardian* and that would have been it... A recent report on the City Police shows that

they were totally out of their depth and that City slickers feel that the prestige of the City of London has been damaged.

### Lessons

A few lessons need to be learned, however.

- (1) A lot of people had drunk a lot or taken class A drugs. It's not the best thing in the world to be having a bad trip when a riot copper is trying to stove your skull in. Alcohol slows your reflexes and thinking time.
- (2) The police's job is made easier by the fact that so many people weren't masked up. MASK UP!!! There were 15 arrests on the day. Now 50 odd people have been nicked in the clean-up operation because they weren't wearing masks.
- (3) If you decide to defend yourself against riot police attacks, remember that the odds are in their favour. They are extremely violent and are trained to be violent. They also have 'the law' on their side, are not drunk or under the influence of other drugs, and are extremely well protected and armed. No surprise then that out of the fifty needing hospital treatment only four were police...

The 'totally violent' and the 'totally non-violent' both cause problems. Some idiots just attacked anyone/thing in the City, regardless. People that get a kick out of the violence for itself have got problems. 'Fluffies' can also be a problem. Some were at the Futures Exchange trying to stop people from putting metal barriers through the windows. One even got between a protester with a fence and the window and almost went through the window with the fence!!! The same kind





of thing happened for example at Newbury where some 'protesters' tried to unmask others. These people are a fucking menace and are no better than the cops (in some ways they are even worse...) If they didn't like what was happening, then they should have left. (And those masked up don't force masks on others.)

On the up side, the media reporting was pretty good, considering. The fact that the event got so much coverage was good in itself. Even Nostradamus could have predicted that all the mainstream papers would go with the 'peaceful demo hijacked by violent extremists' line. *The Sun*, for example, shrieked: 'mobs of hate-filled anarchists' protested at "morally incorrect" money-makers'. Yet the report did quote the J18 website about the need to stop 'the globalisation of misery under capitalism'. The bit about women taking their tops off in Trafalgar Square was probably for the benefit of their target readership. The fact that there were also actions in the USA and elsewhere was mentioned. (Sun 19/6/99) *The Evening Standard* was a little premature in its headline 'A Ragbag of Causes but no Real Anarchy', but it too quoted RTS saying that the demo was being held 'in

recognition that the global capitalist system ... is at the very root of our social and ecological troubles' (*Evening Standard* 18/6/99) *The Independent on Sunday* gave the same story of the demo being hijacked by anarchists who attacked 'unprotected police' but still it was clear that they were 'protesting against capitalism, saying it is destroying the environment and forcing millions into poverty'. The *Sunday Times* almost got it right claiming the protest was 'against corporate greed' ... whilst the *Guardian* was way off: 'The demonstration began peacefully

in the morning - largely with the aim of promoting the cause of cyclists...' (!?)

#### Anarchists

As well as it being fairly clear what the demo was for, many reports either explicitly or implicitly admitted that the whole thing had been very well **organised by anarchists**. The FT lead on the day with the headline 'Organised Anarchists Attempt to Paralyse City' and gave some interesting detail on how anarchists in J18 organised in 'small cells of perhaps a dozen members' which are 'united by their hatred of corporations and financial institutions whose "profit chasing" they say, is destroying the environment and forcing millions into poverty'. Even the police themselves were prepared to admit that anarchists can be organised. Hart, Assistant Commissioner of the City of London police said that at Liverpool Street 'a very carefully organised crowd split into four parts...' (*Independent on Sunday*, 20/6/99) Bit of a change from the old 'anarchy = chaos and/or disorganisation' crap. Hart also complained that the organisers had conducted a 'cynical and deceitful' attempt to hide information about their

true intentions from the police and that 'information on the Internet is sometimes put out as a distracter'. Another useful tactic. The 'bizarrely titled' Association of Autonomous Astronauts' got a couple of mentions as did the 'Biotic Baking Brigade'.

Of course, you got the stupid stories too. One that gets trotted out every time is the 'protesters paid to protest' one, as if we can't get people along to these things otherwise. The *Sunday Times* claimed that students from Nottingham University told traders at the Liffe building (it's not clear if this was meant to have happened before or after the place was trashed...) that they had been given £30, free transport and a packed lunch (!?) to attend the Carnival. Of course, the desire was to discredit the event. The report ended with an attempt to disgust the 'middle England' readership, noting that the City would have to be disinfected as 'protesters urinated and defecated in doorways' (*Sunday Times*, 20/6/99)

Another very positive aspect was that similar things happened all over the world. Down under, with typical Aussie panache, Melbourne stock exchange was blockaded with wombats (!!!) and cream pies were thrown at politicians. The Aussie bank Westpac was also hit as was, surprise surprise, MacDonalds.... In Sydney hundreds went on a 'scumbag tour' of multinationals. In Brazil a city centre block symbolising the 500 years of 'discovering' Brazil was defaced. In Canada there was an RTS in Toronto and the Stock Exchange was blockaded in Vancouver. Banks and multinationals were disrupted in Prague, the Czech capital. In Germany things were livened up by the presence of the intercontinental caravan of Indian farmers. They had planned to stand outside the venue of the G8 summit in Cologne and laugh at the world leaders. The police were having none of it, refusing to allow 250 of them into the City centre and attacking and arresting others. There was a street carnival in Tel Aviv, Israel. Night long autonomous zones were established in centres all over Italy. A 10,000 strong 'Carnival of the Oppressed' brought Nigeria's main oil port to a standstill. Police in Pakistan used tear gas and baton charges at an anti-nuclear demonstration in Gujarat. In Valencia, Spain, streets, banks and Llandro's, the most hated speculator in the region were closed down. In Barcelona a main road was blockaded and the protesters 'recreated a beach with swimming clothes and towels'. Seven days of action in the financial capital came to a head in Madrid with a RTS. Three hundred people

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# WHY WE HAVE CHANGED OUR NAME

After a lengthy discussion process the Anarchist Communist Federation has decided to rename itself 'the Anarchist Federation'. This does not reflect a change in political direction but rather reflects the ongoing debate within the organisation. It should be noted that the decision was not unanimous and some ACF members argued against the name change because of fears of dilution of our politics, of an interruption in continuity etc. Nevertheless the name change has taken place without acrimony and with no one leaving the organisation.

People have a lot of preconceived ideas about Anarchism (chaos, punk, terrorism) and communism (Soviet Union, dictatorship, lack of freedom). Being associated with both labels, members of the ACF found that they were spending more time convincing people that Anarchist Communism wasn't a contradiction than they were discussing the real issues. Many thought that this was a waste of our energies and holding back

the potential growth of Anarchist ideas here in Britain. Whilst we still hold on to our Anarchist Communist principles we acknowledge that first impressions count. With the name change we hope to create dialogue with those new to revolutionary ideas.

We also feel that now is also a good opportunity to re-affirm what our politics are and where our influences come from. As we enter the new century the traditional differences between Anarchism and Marxism become less and less important, only promoted by ever shrinking sects locked in Marxist - Leninist prisons. Fortunately these groups are slowly fading away but while they exist they continue to distort and disrupt real class struggle.

We however are not a cult only interested in orthodoxy and are influenced by the best of both traditions - those militants who have defended Revolutionary and Internationalist

positions whatever the consequences. The article below will expand on this in more depth. Due to time constraints this article has not been discussed fully by the whole organisation so will inevitably be biased towards the politics of the individuals writing it. For a fully discussed overview of our politics we refer you to our manifesto 'Beyond Resistance'.

We have chosen the word Anarchist to stand apart from the leftists who continue to sell out our class and to show our commitment to the idea of 'Direct Action', the tool with which we (the working class! - not an elite working on our behalf!) can smash capitalism and free humanity.

The AF will continue the work of the ACF fighting for a classless, stateless and moneyless society - Anarchist Communism!

Join the Resistance, join the Anarchist Federation!

# IN THE TRADITION (PART 1)

## WHERE OUR POLITICS COMES FROM .....

The object of the following article is to outline the various political movements, events and current ideas and individuals which have in one way or another, served as influences upon the development of the Anarchist Communist Federation and subsequently the Anarchist Federation.

### Theoretical understanding

This article is neither a family tree nor a systematic overview of revolutionary politics over the last 150 years, but rather an attempt to give recognition to those

who have contributed to our political understanding. An authentic revolutionary theory is always in a state of development, building upon what has gone before it and trying to make a contribution to a core of ideas and practice which remains at the very centre of any revolutionary project. Theory, our understanding of the world, hasn't evolved in a straight line, but has rather developed in fits and starts relative to the class struggle itself. Often lessons learned appear to be 'lost' and then 'found' again years later. Revolutionaries appear to have sometimes spent time repeatedly re-inventing the wheel. Events in one country may remain almost

unknown in others for linguistic and other reasons. Groups and individuals may be approaching similar conclusions from different starting points, unaware of each other's efforts. Ideological animosities often with barely rational bases may mean such efforts never benefit from the cross-pollination of ideas.

The ACF emerged in 1985/86 (as the Libertarian Communist Discussion Group) as an attempt to remedy the lack of coherent class politics and organisation amongst British anarchists. Beyond that objective the ACF had to defend an undogmatic approach, whilst rejecting a



haphazard eclecticism which would guarantee political paralysis.

## The First International

*"The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself"*

This motto of the IWMA, probably penned by Karl Marx, defined the difference between the revolutionaries who viewed the working class to be the agent of revolutionary change (Marx, Bakunin) and those who saw the liberation of the working class as the task of other forces (The Utopian Socialists, Proudhonists and the Blanquists). The division in the International between the 'communists' (the Marxists) and the revolutionary socialists (anarchists) created two 'wings' of socialism. The vast majority of Marxists (social democrats,



Leninists) have paid lip service to the motto of the First International whilst acting to negate it in practice. Despite all manners of confusions, tactical dead-ends and betrayals, the revolutionary anarchists have remained loyal to it.

## The Anarchist Communists

No AF bookstall is complete without at least a few of the classics of what might be termed traditional anarchist communist thought.

Although Bakunin, unable to envisage a communism without the state, had been a collectivist and had defended a form of exchange economy, by the 1880s the anarchist movement had rejected Proudhonistic economics in favour of communism. Peter Kropotkin is rightly

considered the leading exponent of anarchist communism either side of the turn of the 19th Century and his book, *The Conquest of Bread* (1888) is generally regarded as the most cogent work of insurrectionary, anarchist communism. Kropotkin argued that any revolution which failed to immediately communise social relations, expropriate the bourgeoisie and abolish the wages system was bound to recreate a form of private property based, exploitative society. The anarchist communists attacked the notion of a transitional period characterised by the continuation of the money system, even if cash had been replaced by labour vouchers or other tokens. Unlike the social democratic movement, for whom the continuation of wage labour, under state control, was considered a central feature of 'socialism', the anarchist communists argued for a society based upon the idea of 'From each according to ability, to each according to need'.

## The International movement

Anarchist communism had its partisans in most parts of the world. It would be impossible to list even a fraction of who made an important contribution to the early theory and movement but notable are Carlo Cafiero, Sebastien Faure, Ricardo Flores Magon and Kotoku Shusui. Within the movement there existed various tactical differences. At a deeper level there were divisions between pro-organisation currents, such as those around the former social democrat MP Johann Most and Errico Malatesta and anti-organisation currents, such as those around Luigi Galleani. On the question of trade unionism and syndicalism there were also divisions. Although a majority of anarchist communists supported, critically or otherwise, the syndicalist movement, the early critics of any *identification* of anarchism with syndicalism, such as Malatesta, had a profound influence upon the early ACF as we looked at anarchist criticisms of trade unionism. Indeed, Malatesta's pragmatic anarchism has been important to the AF in many areas.

## The Socialist League

The domination of reformist social democracy in the labour movement wasn't only challenged by anarchists. In many countries anti-parliamentarist oppositions developed and in Britain a section of the Socialist League, a split from the Social Democratic Federation defended an *anti-statist* communist position, rejecting equally the policy of nationalisation put forward by social democracy. They condemned "State socialism, by whatever name it is called, whose aim it would be to make concessions to the working class while leaving the present system of capital and wages still in operation." Manifesto of the

Socialist League 1885.

The Anti-statist communists, who included William Morris and Joseph Lane, were amongst the earliest critics of trade unionism, which they likened to the grease that oils the 'machine of exploitation'. In his 'anti-statist communist manifesto' of 1887 Lane described the trade unions as "becoming little better than benefit societies..." and rejected the campaign for the 8 hour day as a 'palliative measure'. For the likes of Morris, socialism or communism wasn't about shorter working hours, welfare relief or better wages, but was about creating the conditions in which people could *live differently*. The desire to *live differently* is central to, for example, our *Manifesto for the Millennium*.

## The Russian Revolution

The Russian Revolutions, February and October 1917, shook the world and sparked a wave of struggles across the globe. These events were inspirational to the working class and to anarchists and socialists who had opposed the slaughter of the 'Great War'. The soviets (councils) and the factory committees, which emerged as organs of working class power in the workplace and in society as a whole, represented a break with parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy. The Bolshevik seizure of power, which had the tacit support of the most active working class militants, quickly revealed itself as an usurpation of power *from* the working class and the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' emerged as actually a dictatorship *over* the proletariat as the Bolshevik government developed capitalism in Russia.

The opposition to the usurpation of power wasn't long in coming from the workers and from revolutionaries, including some within the Bolshevik party itself. The factory committees which workers has organised to run industry co-ordinated resistance and advocated 'workers control' against the introduction of 'one-man management'. The workers hoped to keep decision making at the grass-roots level. Whilst not the same as communisation, these attempts at workers self-management were, at least examples of self-activity and attempts at establishing autonomous working class organisation against the state and the imposition of one-man management as advocated by Lenin.

## The anarchists

The Russian anarcho-syndicalists attacked the bureaucratisation of the revolutionary process begun in February 1917, calling for the "immediate abolition of the state capitalist system and its replacement by a socialist system on anarchist communist lines". Considering the trade unions (which were dominated

organisation.

## The German Revolution and Council Communism

The German revolution (1918-23) saw repeated attempts by workers to set up organs of counter-power such as territorial councils and workplace committees. Communists and anarchists involved themselves in these class movements, trying to push them as far as they would go. The councils were, however, dominated in most areas by social democrats whose aim was to establish a (capitalist) republic and put themselves into power. Where things got out of control the 'socialists' had no hesitation in using the most reactionary militarist elements to murder the rebels and crush the incipient revolution.

The experience of the Russian and German councils led some revolutionaries to view workers councils as the highest expression of workers self-organisation. Most of these advocates of *council* revolution had been on the extreme left of the social democratic parties of Germany and Holland (people like Otto Ruhle, a former social democrat MP) or in small groups in opposition to social democracy and to the world war (such as the International Communists of Germany (IKD)). Originally defining themselves as *left* communists, they were loyal to the Bolshevik revolution and the new Communist international but critical of the parliamentary and trade union policy of the Leninists. Against electoralism they pronounced "All power to the workers councils" and encouraged workers to abandon the trade unions and form 'industrial organisations' that would be explicitly anti-capitalist.

## Hard as Steel, Clear as Glass

The left communists, despite being in a majority, were expelled from the fledgling Communist Party in 1920 and founded their own Communist Workers Party, with around 40,000 members. The new party vowed to be "As hard as steel, as clear as glass", consisting of only the most resolute communists. Simultaneously, it rejected the idea of 'leadership politics', called for the dictatorship of the proletariat, not the party, and opposed the idea of 'injecting' consciousness into the working class from the outside. All of this earned Lenin's ire and his 'Left Wing Communism; An Infantile Disorder' spends much time attacking the left communists' "anarchist" deviations.

Some left communists, who after a definitive break with the Communist International, became known as council communists, rejected the idea of separate

political and economic organisations and created a 'unitary' industrial organisation to parallel that of the Communist Workers Party. Others rejected anything but the loosest form of organisation and ended up being little more than individualists.

Most of the Council Communists considered themselves Marxists and many shared a common contempt for anarchism, considering it a 'petit-bourgeois' ideology. The German class struggle anarchists at this time were very strong, though often divided. After 1925, sections of the Council Communist movement worked together with the anarchists in 'anti-authoritarian blocs'.

The positive legacy of the left /Council Communists must be their theoretical breakthroughs in their analysis of the Trade Unions and parliamentary democracy and in their understanding of the centrality of working class self-organisation in the revolutionary project. Their negative legacy can be summed up in the fetishisation of the council *form*, at the expense of its actual content at any given time. This led to the ideology of 'councilism', which tended to see the councils as the answer to all problems, a mirror image of the Leninist fetishisation of the Party form. Despite their failings, the experience of the workers' councils and of Council Communist theory are very important for the subsequent development of revolutionary politics.

## The APCF

The 'British' contribution to the council communist tradition is mainly the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF), which from 1921 until the mid-1940s defended similar politics to those described above. The APCF, however, described itself as "anarcho-marxian" and attempted to utilise what it saw as the best in both 'traditions'.

During the inter-war years it was the most consistent amongst a small number of groups and individuals who defended a libertarian communist politics and was one of the few currents to oppose World War Two on revolutionary internationalist grounds, describing all the belligerent states, including the Soviet Union, as imperialist.

## The Platform

*'There is no single humanity, there is a humanity, of classes, slaves and masters'.*

The 1926 Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists was without doubt the most remarkable contribution to anarchist politics and practice for perhaps a quarter of a century. Written by Piotr Arshinov, Nestor Makhno, Ida Mett and other revolutionary refugees from the Bolshevik regime, the Platform was



by Menshevik social democrats and Bolsheviks) "dead organisations" they described the factory committees as the "fighting organisational form of the entire workers' movement" upon whose shoulders "the revolution has placed the task of reconstructing economic life along communist lines". Programme of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Conference, Moscow August 1918.

Earlier that year within the Bolshevik Party, the so-called 'Left' communists, criticised the policy of the party which smothered the initiative of the workers saying "socialism and the socialist organisation of work will either be built by the proletariat itself, or it will not be built at all; but then something else will be erected, namely state capitalism." Kommunist No.2, April 1918.

## The Makhnovist movement

In the Ukraine from 1918-1921 the imposition of state capitalism was resisted gun in hand by the Makhnovists, the Ukrainian Revolutionary Insurrectionary Army led by the anarchist communist Nestor Makhno. When not engaged in combat with the land owners, German adventurers, Ukrainian nationalists or the 'Red' army, the Makhnovists encouraged the establishment of voluntary "working" communes of peasants and workers. Although these, like the factory committees, were expressions of working class self-activity they were unable to attempt a total communisation of social relations prior to their destruction by the Bolsheviks. If socialism in one country is impossible, socialism in one region is likewise. Nonetheless, the Russian and Ukrainian revolutions remain an inspiration for us as they show the potentiality of working class self-





uncompromising, coherent and tightly argued. It constituted a turning point in anarchism, a break with the anti-organisational tendencies, which had plagued the movement like a "yellow fever". The Platform argued that the anarchists had to be organised in order to carry out their task as the "organised vanguard" of the working class! Whilst the AF has never described itself as a Platformist organisation, the Platform has served to inoculate us from the "yellow fever" and we endorse its call for theoretical and tactical unity.

### Spanish Revolution

*"There can be absolutely no common ground between exploiters and exploited which shall prevail, only battle can decide. Bourgeoisie or workers. Certainly not both of them at once".* The Friends of Durruti, Barcelona, 1938.

The Spanish Civil War and revolution illuminated two facts. One, that apolitical anarchism is bound to fail. Two, that anti-fascism is used by part of the ruling class to unite the working class in defence of democratic capitalism.

The state of 'dual power' which existed following the early part of the Civil War between the revolutionary working class and peasantry and the Popular Front government in the Republic zone, inevitably gave way to the domination of the Republican-Stalinist-Social Democrat bourgeoisie. The opportunity to crush the republican and nationalist bourgeoisie was a real one for armed workers and peasants but the power of the state remained intact and the initiatives of the anarchists rapidly undermined. The last attempt to re-assert the interests of the working masses took place during the Maydays of 1937. The CNT and FAI, with its 'anarchist' ministers to the fore, called off the escalating class war and the Spanish revolution was dead. The dissident CNT-FAI militants, the Friends of Durruti, summed it up saying that 'democracy defeated the Spanish people, not fascism'. Antifascist Spain had destroyed the Spanish revolution and paved the way for World War II.

**Next Organise!: Socialisme ou Barbarie, Hungary '56, Solidarity, Noir et Rouge, May '68.....**

## LETTERS

### Wrong!

Dear Friends,

I don't know who wrote the little piece on Disneyland, but to label Seton "nature faker" and to see him as a precursor of the Disneyland ethos, shows a gross misunderstanding (ignorance?) of Seton and what he stood for. Seton was a libertarian socialist, a friend of Kropotkin, a staunch defender of native American culture, and one of the founders of both ethology and radical ecology. He knew a lot more about wildlife than Burroughs who hardly left his log cabin on "Slabslides". I enclose some little articles on Seton....The real Seton as opposed to the caricature - cartoon figure! - depicted in your article. Apart the paragraph on Seton I thought that the article was excellent, all best wishes,

Brian M. Lewes, Sussex.

Dear Brian,

Thanks for your letter, and the supporting articles from The Ecologist and New Humanist. I was wrong to group Seton in with the "nature fakers". My source was an article in the New Internationalist (no. 308) by Chris Clarke, entitled 'Nature by Design'.

Yours for Anarchism, A, author of "Disneyfication..." article.

### Wrong again!

Dear Organise!

I'm writing about a few different things, but the main one is your coverage of resistance to genetically modified crops in Organise!51. While it's good to see this important area being covered, especially from an angle of the "imperialism" of multinationals rather than food safety, I have to say that the comments about groups against it were too uncritical. Genetix Snowball in particular has come in for some heavy criticism within Earth First! circles, being basically an attempt by ex/current peace movement activists to prop up their dogmatic pacifism and ideas of accountability (i.e. encouraging people to grass themselves up to the cops and after actions). It has also been pathetically ineffective-they have yet to put a single test site out of use, preferring to dig up "symbolic" numbers of plants as a way of



getting media attention. As for their 'ethical shoplifting', one report sent to the EF! Action Update claimed in all seriousness that they had "successfully removed several packets of crisps."

The threat of legal action by Monsanto etc. has successfully intimidated people away from supposedly "mass" actions that require you to give your name and address to the company and/or the police. While dozens of sites have been secretly trashed (30 odd was the last total I heard) there is also a need for more open mass actions. Some non-accountable actions are coming up, but it's not generally very encouraging to see class-struggle anarchists uncritically supporting Genetix Snowball when anarchists within the the eco-direct action scene are trying, with some success, to discredit their ideas and push radical alternatives. True, not everyone wants to do "scary direct action" and there's nothing wrong with hassling your local supermarket to stop selling GM foods, but suggesting that people get involved in their local Snowball group is almost unbelievable coming from an organisation like the ACF. Several EF! groups are anarchist (while some others are fairly liberal) and offer a far better introduction to anti-genetix activity. I can only think that promoting Snowball came from a lack of information, in which case links between anarchists in the ecological direct action scene and those in more traditional groups like the ACF need building and strengthening.

Well, now that I have finished that rant I just wanted to say that the rest of Organise! was really good!

Jamie, Brighton, Sussex

**Reply:** Thanks for the letter. You raised some interesting points regarding Genetix Snowball and as the person who wrote the article, I have been asked to reply.

On reflection, we probably were too uncritical about Genetix Snowball.

Firstly, I suppose we were influenced by the fact that when we (as a local EF!Group) were organising activities against GM foods up here in the north of England, we got no support from other EF! groups in the area. We did, however, get support from Genetix Snowball.

Secondly, looking back at the time that the anti-genetix campaign was getting going, the work that Genetix Snowball did cer-

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## GREG MINNS



Greg Minns, a young activist from North East England has been incarcerated against his will in a residential home for the mentally ill in Lancashire. Greg was sectioned in March 1998 and admitted to Winterton Hospital. The circumstances around his admittance to hospital leave serious doubts about the safety of his sectioning. Prior to admittance he was suffering from stress and emotional turmoil as a result of malicious and untrue rumours being spread about him.

After he was arrested for breach of the peace in 1998 he was severely assaulted in the police station and then sectioned and taken to Winterton Hospital. He was not read his rights or given a solicitor even though he asked for one. On arrival at Winterton four nurses subdued and gave him an injection in the gluteus maximus that knocked him out for 2 days.

In the hospital, Greg found that some inpatients were being sexually abused. He tried to alert the authorities to this, but they ignored his statements, instead used them as 'evidence' of his mental illness.

Greg's behaviour in hospital has been catalogued by staff. He does not hear voices, does not self-harm, his personal hygiene is good and he is not violent. NMRI Scans and CT Scans consistently found nothing wrong with him and staff and patients were puzzled as to why he was being detained.

The only evidence that they have for his statement that he has "paranoid schizophrenia" is that he said that he had been imprisoned for his political beliefs. Due to the circumstances around the sectioning, and the malicious gossip, some other activists suggested he was being fitted up. When he repeated this to his psychiatrist, this was taken as evidence of 'paranoid delusions'. Greg now finds it unlikely that the authorities are going to frame him.

In his report to the Mental Health Review Tribunal his doctor explained his lack of 'ill' behaviour by saying: "Whilst in hospital he improves well, but this is of course an artificial situation and in no way proves that he is fit to be discharged or could cope in the community". Meanwhile, an independent report criticised the sparsity of information provided at the review. It found little evidence to support the existence of active psychotic illness. It went on "... I find little evidence to support the existence of active psychotic illness..."

In September, after having his review application turned down, Greg was allowed to live in a residential rehabilitation home.

Greg now has a chance to rebuild his life. He is attending college, exercising and working as a volunteer for the Prince's Trust. Greg would be grateful if you could take some time to help him. Write to Dr Klauner asking him not to resection him and asking him to speed up task analysis and self-medication.

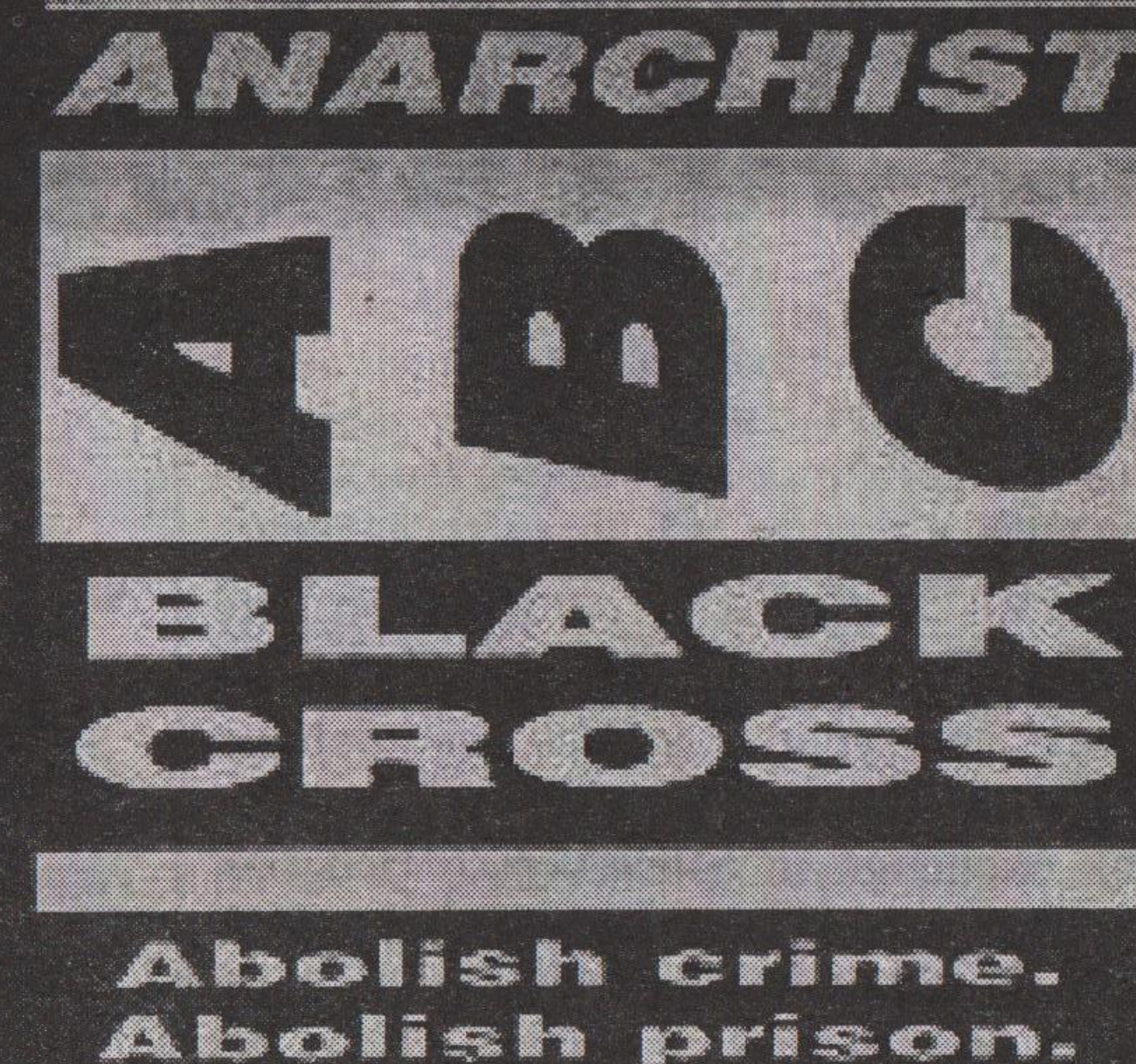
Greg is active in the campaign for legalisation of cannabis. He has never used cocaine, heroin, or crack. In the hospital he was pumped full of drugs every day, causing nausea, headaches, lowering of blood pressure, stomach cramp.

Dr M.A. Launer, Lamont Clinic, Burnley General Hospital, Casterton Avenue, Burnley BB10 2PQ  
Fax 01282 474444  
Letters of support to Greg Minns, c/o AF, Box 127, Oldham OL4 3FE

### Redskin in prison

Thomas Meyer-Falk is an anarchist skinhead imprisoned in Germany. In 1996 he robbed a bank, which he admits. He refused to deny his political beliefs during his trial, for which he received the additional sentence of security custody until 2010. When he called a judge "an example of a fascist judge from a picture-book" he got an extra 7 months of prison. He is now in solitary confinement justified by the charges of suspicion of a planned escape through taking hostages, saying he wanted to kill judges, threat and insult of court and prison officers.

He has been denied university study through a postal course, is only allowed to leave the cell in irons, has daily cell raids, several body checks a week,



(stripped in front of prison officers), has a limit on newspapers and magazines, is not allowed to receive parcels, is allowed use of the exercise yard only if on his own, has strict solitary confinement, and his ingoing and outgoing mail is severely censored

Write letters of support to Thomas Meyer-Falk, JVA Bruchsal, Zelle:3117, Schonbornstr. 32, D-76646 Bruchsal, Germany

### Action Directe and the RAF

The Anarchist Federation has never supported the politics or the strategy and tactics of either the "armed struggle groups" Action Directe in France or the Red Army Fraction in Germany. Nevertheless we must highlight the atrocious conditions which those imprisoned have to face. In France Georges Cipriani, Joelle Aubron, Nathalie Menigon and Jean-Marc Rouillan are denied all visits by friends and family. They are all in total isolation. Their access to exercise yards is severely restricted. Mail is severely censored and often is never received. Both Cipriani and Menigon are in very poor health.

The families of the prisoners are demanding that the four be grouped in the same prison, the end of the severe conditions and restrictions. They demand that Cipriani receive expert medical care.

In Germany a petition is circulating. All the prisoners in the course of the last 10 to 20 years have been given solitary confinement of the most ferocious kind, causing physical and psychological problems. They have struggled constantly against these conditions. Now the organisers of the petition are demanding that these conditions be lifted and the end to what is a form of torture.

Write to Freiheit jetzt c/o Schanzenblitz, Bartelstrabe 21, 20357 Hamburg, Germany.



## J18

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in Zurich occupied a construction site being gentrified and held 'one of the best parties for years' whilst in Geneva anarchists 'washed' major banks. The stock exchange in Montevideo, Uruguay was also hit. In the bastion of global capitalism, Wall Street in New York, there was another RTS and 37 were nicked. There were other actions and police violence throughout the USA. On the west coast, the San Francisco stock exchange was also hit.

So why was the 'Carnival Against Capitalism' so important? Firstly, because it was the biggest riot in Britain since the Poll Tax riot of 1990. Yet this was significantly different to the Poll Tax. On June 18th people were there protesting against capitalism, not a tax which was hitting them in the pocket in the here-and-now... It showed that a lot of people campaigning on environmental, arms trade and a load of other issues are realising that all their struggles are linked by the way we produce and consume in capitalist society, and that if they really want to change anything then they have to get to the bottom of the problem and target the system of wealth and power that dominates and fucks people all over the globe. Actions happened all over the world. This, too, is a promising development. It shows that people globally are starting to wake up and link up. The more capitalism globalises, the more opposition to it globalises.. The whole event was an excellent example of how decentralised, anarchist organising methods can totally fox the police. The use of the Internet in organising, communicating and publicising the event was also very encouraging. The potential of the Internet seems almost unbounded. And where were the other so-called revolutionaries, the Trots et al? Nowhere in sight: June 18th showed exactly how insignificant are these so-called revolutionaries, with their pathetic petitions and paper sales. Anarchist methods and anarchist aims are all that's left for the left. As a Sheffield activist said before the day: 'I don't see us bringing down global capitalism this week. But I think the action will be an important stage in the process'. Let's hope so.....

## THE LAND

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land? In Knoydart, the community is continuing with bloodsports so not much has changed there in terms of how the land is being used.

## Shift

It is clear how much the so-called Left has shifted to the right when even they do not call for the 'nationalisation of the land'. Now as anarchists we would also not be in favour of this, but for different reasons having to do with our analysis of the state. But the fact that no one is even putting this forward as an idea is indicative of the mildness of the Scottish Parliament and the political scene. However, amongst the urban and rural working class, there remains a hatred of the landowners that will not be satisfied with the pathetic efforts of their new Parliament. Perhaps then, they will realise that if they want to seriously challenge landowners in Scotland, they will have to do it themselves, keeping in mind that the same struggle is going on in the rest of Britain

## LETTERS

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-tainly raised issues and generated a lot of publicity. However, having raised the issue and generated the publicity, the tactical needs of the movement changed. Their idea of accountable actions no longer serves any value and the need is to actively destroy as many GM crops as possible.

So I guess we have to hold our hands up and admit to having got it wrong.

In solidarity

LR for Organise!

## THE POLITICS OF WATER

and the world

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report found that spending £300 per family for a new lower flush toilet could cut demand by 13%

## Delights of Water

In many of the world's cities the waterside is a favourite place for families, lovers and contemplative walkers. Children of all ages love water play.

The building of the Embankment along the river Thames in London was a major engineering project that took up decades of the mid-19th century; it was virtually a deliberate attempt to insulate the river from the social life of the city. Sean French had a vision of how it could be –

"one day it will be different. The luxury homes will be demolished, the Embankment ploughed into the soil. The banks of the Thames will be a series of pleasure gardens, boathouses, jetties and beaches. There will be markets and bandstands, landscaped orchards.....Children will swim in the shallows and play in the sand..."

## Conclusion

If the price mechanism determines the allocation of water, the poor will die of thirst; if it decides which crops are irrigated for market – starvation; if it determines the availability of water for personal hygiene, vast numbers of children will die before the age of 5 from prosaic illnesses such as diarrhoea. The contrasting examples of the British public's differing responses to the droughts of 1975/76 and that of 1995; and the numerous examples of solidarity amongst farmers show that people can act responsibly, and that this is inextricably linked to common ownership and control of water.

*This article is based on Colin Ward's 'Reflected in Water: A Crisis of Social Responsibility' (Cassell, 1997).*

## aims and principles

1. The Anarchist 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, lesbians and gays, and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class 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 on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

## £1000 press fund appeal

As you can read elsewhere, along with changes to our name we've decided to bring out our agitational bulletin Resistance on a monthly basis. We're also preparing to republish our Against Parliament pamphlet and possibly other reprints of ACE pamphlets that are nearly sold out. We've recently republished our pamphlet on Japanese anarchism. We've produced a fantastic new poster and we've produced a run of six new AF stickers. Alongside this we're continuing to publish Organise! and have a whole range of wonderful series and one-off articles in store for you. We think you, dear reader, share our belief that the development of theory in Organise! has assisted in the development of the revolutionary anarchist movement in this country, and it's reflected around the world with much enthusiastic correspondence from many countries. Ahem! To do all these things requires mucho dinero, loads of dosh, piles of moolah. That's why we're asking you, dear reader, to help us in the task of producing propaganda. We need make our presence more visible in the streets and in the movements

and struggles. We need to carry our ideas to every corner of this island and beyond it. It is vital that at least a nucleus of a revolutionary anarchist movement is created, at a time when interest in our ideas is increasing.

We need a thousand pounds. Please make cheques, postal orders, IMOs for Press Fund payable to 'AF' Donations from previous issue: £133.15

New donations: £5.00 (Nottingham); £20.00 London E.17; £ 200 Woking; £10 Sheffield. Sub total: £235. Total so far £368.15

As you can see we're barely halfway there. If any of you can afford anything even if it's only 50p please rush it to us. Try to make it so that next issue we can announce that we've reached our target!

Any standing orders need to be changed from our old account. Please contact us at London address. The same for people who would like to start up standing orders.