

Revolutionary portraits

Senna Hoy

Senna Hoy was born Johannes Holzmann in 1882 into a well-off Jewish family.

Hoy is mentioned as a member of Helen Blavatsky's Theosophical circle in Berlin in 1903, when he would have been 18. The following year he broke with the compromise politics of the Social Democrats and their accommodation to the Kaiser's Germany. He took the name Senna Hoy (his first name more or less spelt backwards) and started bringing out a weekly anarchist magazine *Kampf* (Struggle). *Kampf* reached the circulation figure of 10,000 in 1905, which was no mean feat for a political weekly of that period.

Kampf was an amazing publication. Alongside the agitational articles were pleas for sexual freedom, above all gay liberation. Whilst not homosexual himself, Senna Hoy was a pioneer in advocating tolerance of homosexuality. In 1903, in conjunction with Adolf Brand, he brought out a pamphlet, *The Third Sex*, on the subject. Alongside this were articles from artists, writers and poets. Erich Muhsam, who was to become a notable anarchist and end up being done to death in Hitler's concentration camps, began to contribute and was a close associate of Hoy.

Gustav Landauer, another notable anarchist who was to be murdered in the repression of the Munich workers' councils in 1919, also contributed. Trailblazing artists and poets began to contribute, like Paul Scheerbarth, who invented 'sound poems' and the gifted poet and writer Else Lasker-Schuler (she had thought up his new name). Hoy had a profound influence on Franz Pfemfert who was to bring out the magazine *Aktion*, which united revolutionary ideas in politics and art. Pfemfert paid tribute to Hoy when he called him: "A 20-year-old political conscience in Berlin. He did not go in vain into the fight for freedom".

Kampf prophesied a coming war with the British Empire, that the Social

We continue our series, on the lives of those women and men who have done so much over the last 120 years to build the anarchist movement.

Democrats would support it and that it would be disastrous for the German masses. Senna Hoy argued for workers' self-organisation and against the trade unions controlled by the Social Democrats. Anarchists from *Kampf* went to the industrial region of the Ruhr to spread this message in 1905, and their efforts laid the basis for a strong working class anarchist tradition there. A national network around the magazine began to be created, which spread throughout Germany.

Repression

The Berlin police began to take note, and repression against *Kampf* forced Hoy to leave Germany for Switzerland, where he edited the anarchist magazine *Der Weckruf* (The Dawn). A great revolutionary ferment was taking place within the Russian Empire from 1905-1907 and Hoy gravitated to this. In Poland and Lithuania, part of the Tsar's Empire, the anarchist movement was young and vibrant. A secret conference of anarchist-communist groups from these two countries took place in June 1907 and a Federation of Anarchist Communist Groups was set up.

In the repression which followed, 24 anarchists were arrested, among them Senna Hoy, apprehended in Moscow. They were imprisoned for a long time in dreadful conditions. Hoy was tortured and then sentenced to prison with hard labour. Some of the comrades became mad as a result of the appalling treatment they received. In 1911, Senna Hoy was moved to the



notorious Citadel prison in Warsaw, and from there to the criminal lunatic division (with echoes of the treatment of dissidents under the Soviet regime).

Suffering from TB brought on by starvation, he was in a terrible condition. Else Lasker-Schuler, who was in love with him, came to Russia in 1913 to plead for his release. But it was already too late, because a few months later, on 28 April 1914, Senna Hoy was to die at the age of 29. His body was brought back to Berlin. Else Lasker-Schuler wrote a moving poem in tribute to her fallen lover. But let Senna Hoy have the last word in a poem smuggled out of prison in the last year of his life.

*What does it mean to have lived, felt,
known, wanted, sown, reaped?
Soon I will be no more and the world –
who knows? – will last for eons.
Deeds there are, which I haven't done,
thoughts burn – which haven't ripened yet.
Pain, whips, which haven't tortured,
laughter resounds, which I haven't laughed.
There go my gravediggers to their work
with pipes, jokes.
The last thought ices over in the brain,
last desires shriek in the heart.
I regret every crime in my life that I
haven't yet committed,
Every wish which I haven't realised in
my life.*

Senna Hoy had an important part to play in his action and his influence on others in the growth of the German anarchist movement, and his obscurity is unjustified.

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ISSUE 60

MAGAZINE OF THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION

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Organise!

Organise! is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF) and the Anarchist Federation Ireland. *Organise!* is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate debate on ideas not normally covered by agitational papers.

We aim to produce *Organise!* three times a year. To meet this target, we positively solicit contributions from our readers. We aim to print any article that furthers the objectives of anarchist communism. If you'd like to write something for us, but are unsure whether to do so, why not get in touch first.

Even articles that are 100% in agreement with our Aims and Principles can leave much open to debate. As always, the articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the collective viewpoint of the AF. We hope that their publication will produce responses from readers and spur the debate on.

The next issue of *Organise!* will be out in June 2003. All contributions should be sent to: AF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. It would help if all articles could be either typed or on disc (PC or MAC format). Alternatively, articles can be emailed directly to the editors at: anarchist_federation@yahoo.co.uk.

Acknowledgement: Most of the illustrations in this magazine are shamelessly ripped off from other magazines and web sites, however, the photographs generally come from the excellent Indymedia website. They can be viewed, along with much more at www.indymedia.org. We thoroughly recommend it.

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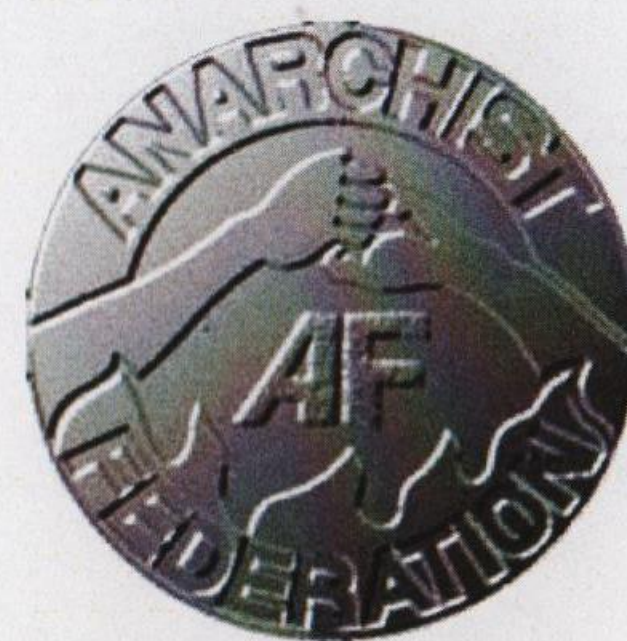
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Back issues

Back issues of *Organise!* are still available from the London address. They cost 20p each plus SAE.

Issue 19: The Poll Tax Rebellion

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Issue 37: Pornography; Booze, cigs and dope; Moral panics

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Issue 46: Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin; Syndicalism

Issue 48: French unemployed; Haile Selassie; Revolutionary unions?

Issue 50: GM Foods; Who owns the land; War in Kosovo; Ireland – the 'peace' process.

Issue 51: War in Kosovo; Roots of our movement; Land and freedom; East Timor
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Issue 59: The Sex Issue: What does sexual freedom mean?; Interview with a dominatrix; Sex workers and industrial organisation; Class Struggle in China; The *Ardititi del Popolo* (anti-fascism in Italy); The Prison Industrial Complex; The Zazous (French youth against the Nazis during the war)

Alternatively send us a fiver and we'll send you one of everything, plus whatever else we can find lying around.

At war with Iraq

*As we send
Organise! off to the
printers, war has
finally broken out*

The USA and Britain have launched their attack on Iraq. We expect this war to be over quickly, with minimum casualties for the USA and its allies, and at enormous human cost to the people of Iraq. The following pieces will necessarily be dated by the time you read them, however they are worth reading as they provide some background to this latest round of dominance games being played by the USA.

We now have to ask, "Who next?" This war is just part of the USA's attempt to reshape the world at the beginning of the 21st century. Certainly Colombia is in the firing line, maybe Iran, maybe even a 'democratic' coup in Saudi Arabia. Only time will tell. One thing they all have in common is enormous oil resources. We do predict that resistance from Iraq will continue, even when the formal war is over. How the USA and Britain will react to a steady trickle of body bags over the months to come is anyone's guess. Short of working class rebellion, we expect this to be the picture of the world for years to come.

The United States prepares for regime change

The State and the ruling class of the United States seem determined to carry out their war threats all around the planet. Whilst the US normally prefers to conquer new territories by the penetration of its capital, there is always the option of a follow-through with military domination if that fails. Other Western powers that wish to increase their influence now see the US in the ascendant. In the Persian Gulf, the chief obstacle to American domination is now Iraq. Up until recently, US interests meant that the Saddam regime was supported and armed. Today, the American boss class needs to sweep away the Saddam regime and establish a protectorate under its military control. If that regime is not dealt with, US capital will not have enough freedom of movement in the Gulf region.

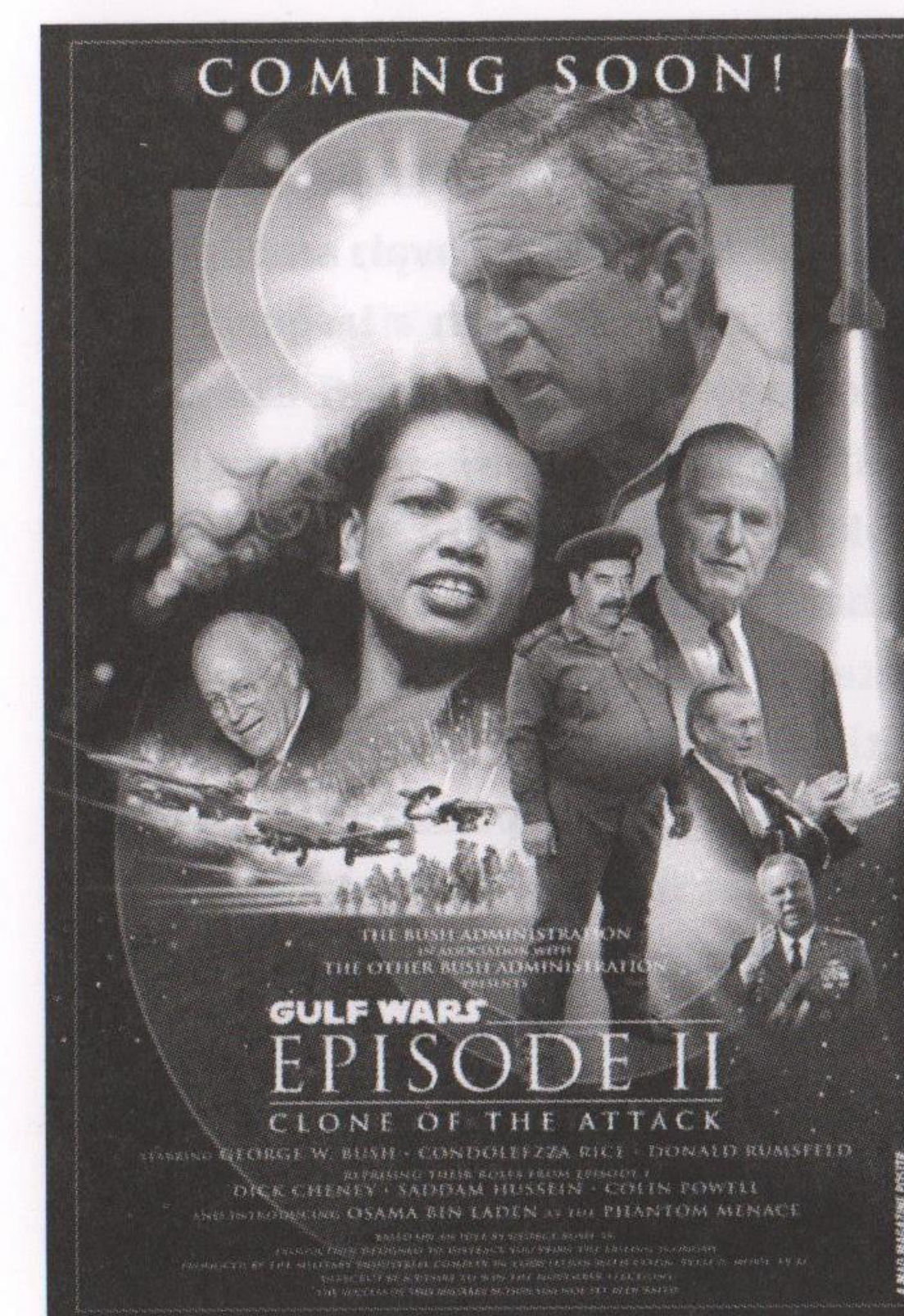
To find a pretext to launch a war, the American ruling class has sought to use the United Nations weapons inspectors, but there have been problems with this, as their reports have not provided sufficient evidence for such an attack.

A series of ultimatums that Iraq cannot accept are to be used in the same way as the Rambouillet accord was used – as a pretext to smash what was left of ex-Yugoslavia.

Not only has the overthrow of the Saddam regime been decided but the USA has decided who to put in its place. This will consist of the Group of Four (the Democratic Party of Kurdistan, The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the main Shiite opposition group, as well as the National Iraqi Accord) and the organisation of ex-military officers of the Baath regime (backed by the Central Intelligence Agency). US support to this Group of Four represents a policy change from support for the National Iraqi Congress, now considered insufficient to the task ahead. This itself points to a more aggressive American strategy, as all these armed groups are involved in smuggling and gangsterism.

The American effort to isolate Iraq has collapsed. Russia is owed vast amounts by Iraq and economic links between the two countries are estimated at billions. The Russian oil enterprises LUKOil and Zarubezhneft and the French company Total-Fina-Elf have major interests in Iraq. Iraq is currently working to reopen its oil pipelines towards the port of Ceyhan in Turkey and in constructing a new pipeline to Jordan and another towards Syria and Jordan. Other countries such as China, India, Indonesia and Vietnam have economic interests in Iraq. Iraq has the second biggest reserve of oil in the world.

The strategic position of Iraq in the Gulf and the reserves of gas and petrol close by in Central Asia mean that the domination of the region is crucial for US interests. As was admitted recently in the *Chicago Sun Times*: "Military victory is



anticipated inside the Bush administration as the tonic that will prompt corporation officers and private investors to unleash the American economy's dormant power. Although it is impolitic to say so, the fact that the United States will be sitting on a new major oil supply will stimulate the domestic economy. That puts a high premium on quickly gaining control of Iraq's oil wells before they can be torched – a major uncertainty in an otherwise strictly scripted scenario."

But there are deep divisions within the US administration on how this can be done. General Tommy Franks in the *Washington Post* predicted that 200,000 military would be needed and an invasion would incur heavy losses. The obstruction of US 'allies' like France and Germany have slowed the American offensive. The Russian ruling class, despite lying prostrate before US military power, is deeply opposed to any military attack on Iraq. Since November 2000, Iraq has preferred to use the Euro rather than the dollar for its oil transactions. In the meantime, the bombing by the US and its British ally has continued. From 17 December 1998 to 18 May 2002, warplanes carried out 38,504 raids and the bombing still continues. The US has systematically destroyed the Iraqi infrastructure.

At home in the USA, the government has acted rapidly to establish a more

flagrant dictatorship of the ruling class and the industrial-military complex. The government no longer needs proof, trial or legal defence. It can put anyone on its territory, with or without citizenship, into its civil or military prisons. The recent arrest of Abdullah al-Mujahir accused of plotting a 'dirty' nuclear bomb demonstrates this, with still no evidence offered by the government. New legislation, like the proposed Patriot Act, will strengthen this.

The US government has revived its old Cold War propaganda and even that of the Second World War. The National Security Agency has launched a campaign with the motto "Loose lips sink ships". Indeed the US and British governments are attempting to re-launch 'anti-fascist' sentiment that proved so useful in gaining popular support for World War II, but with little success so far, as a dictator not even able to rule over the whole of Iraq hardly compares to a confident and expansionist Hitler. All restrictions on espionage and domestic surveillance have been lifted. A huge new bureaucracy is being created under the banner of the Department for Security of the Country, centralising every aspect of surveillance, of application of the law and of public security.

According to official statistics of the US government, foreign investment in the USA has plunged by 60% from 2000 to 2001. This shows the real crisis of confidence in the US economy, because foreign capital is searching for better dividends elsewhere. This is the biggest slump in the USA for more than 10 years. The US administration has to maintain the circulation of capital in the USA in the same way that it has to assure the control of the most important merchandise of capitalism: oil. The only option for the US boss class is war. Using war on terrorism as a pretext, the US administration has, and this is no exaggeration, declared war on the whole planet.

The realisation of this grim fact is an underlying and as yet not fully expressed factor within the huge anti-war movement that has affected so many countries around the world and

which has spread to many sectors of society – with special reference to young people who are taking direct action in their schools and in the streets. So the anti-war movement should not be underestimated in a strategy for developing a revolutionary answer to the war. Hopefully, large numbers of people involved in this movement can become increasingly radicalised. The readiness to take direct action, the fact that a huge movement has emerged even before the war is officially declared, are positive factors.

What about Britain?

Why has the Blair regime sided with the US rather than with the Franco-German bloc? It is true that there are divisions within the British boss class over the war (this explains the favourable coverage given to the anti-war movement in some of the establishment media), but the bulk of the ruling class has traditionally allied itself with the US. The Conservative Party stands solid with Labour on the war, and the core of Labour is totally loyal and compliant. The bulk of the British establishment regards it as political suicide to break with their US allies.

The Liberal Democrats have marched into the ranks of the anti-war movement. But their stance and that of their leader Charles Kennedy is not anti-war as such. They take the side of the Franco-German bloc, and that section of the ruling class in Britain that sees the most fruitful way forward is to develop a strong European bloc in opposition to the dominant US bloc. Their emphasis is on gaining UN approval, and so legitimising a war with a larger percentage of the population. They – and France, Germany, Russia and China – would not be opposed to any war to further their own economic and strategic interests, if it was more politically effective. This would mean better thought-out military strategies that did not involve such mass opposition. Their role within the anti-war movement will have the long-term strategy of confusing and demoralising that movement.

In the long term, the US's aggressive foreign policy may be its epitaph as a

dominant world power. Huge new movements are springing into life, partly based on previous mass mobilisations of the last 40 years. The mass movement of millions of working

class women and men can yet halt the rush to war and barbarism. The key factors are a break with nationalism, with the chloroform of establishment media propaganda, and with the

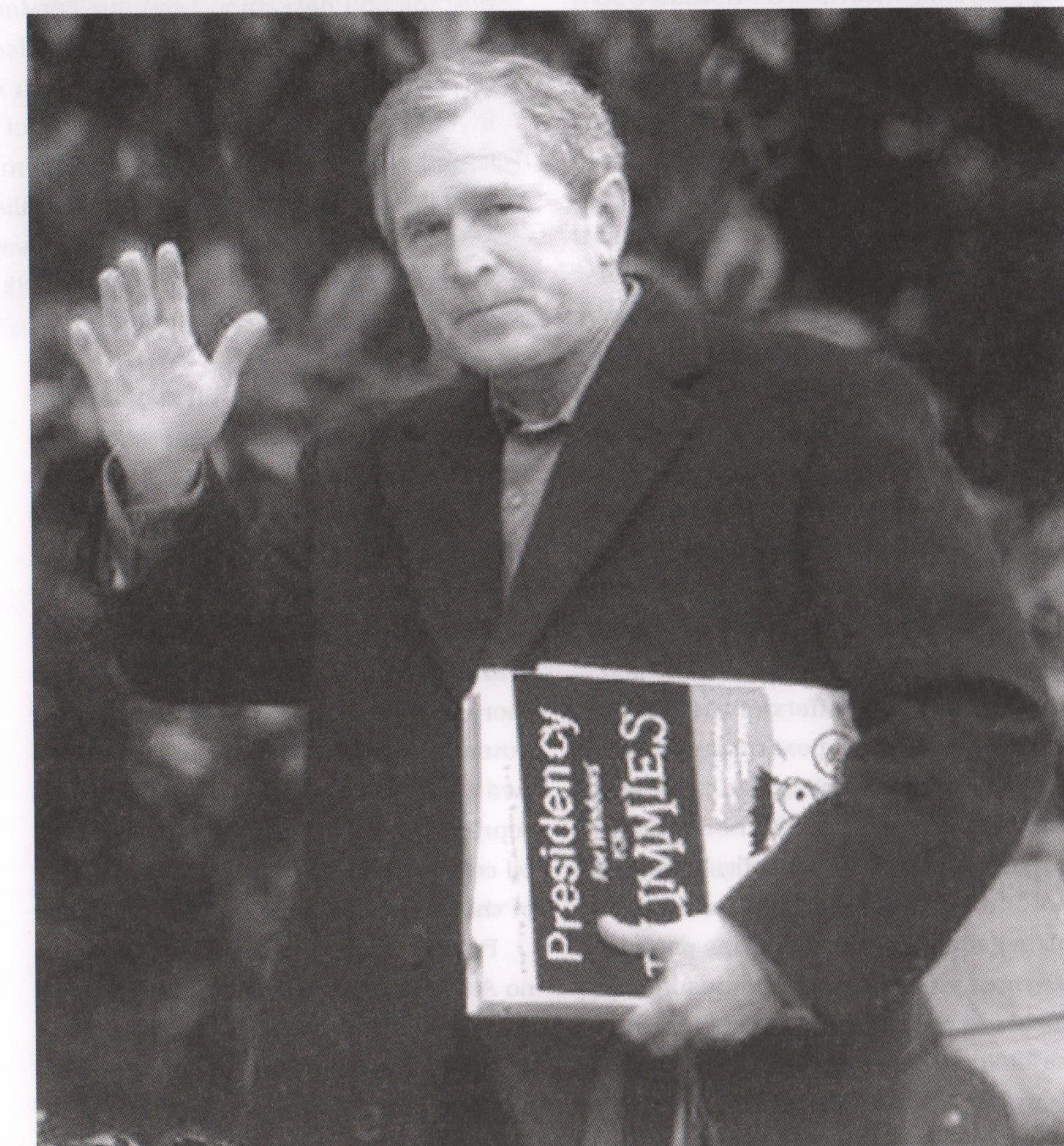
obstacle of dogmatic non-violent pacifism. There is a whole future to be won, and anarchists must prepare themselves to take a full part in helping this come about.

Oil

The following comes from a talk delivered by a member of the AF Ireland in Belfast in February:

The US Department of Energy announced at the beginning of this month that by 2025, US oil imports will account for perhaps 70% of total US domestic demand.¹ US oil deposits are becoming progressively depleted and many other non-OPEC fields are beginning to run dry. "This really means that the bulk of future supplies will have to come from the Gulf region".² Since Iraq has the second largest reserves of oil in the world after Saudi Arabia, it seems sensible to seize them, particularly now that Bush and Cheney are in the White House; both are former oil company executives, while Bush Snr. was founder, in 1954, of the Zapata Offshore Oil Company. Cheney, when president of the Halliburton Company of Houston, sold Saddam \$23 billion dollars of oil field equipment.

In last April's *New Yorker*, the investigative reporter Nicholas Lemann wrote that Bush's most senior adviser, Condoleezza Rice, told him she had called together senior members of the National Security Council and asked them "to think about how to capitalise on these opportunities", which she compared with those of 1945-1947: the start of the Cold War." (John Pilger) "The Bush administration, intimately entwined with the global oil industry, is keen to pounce on Iraq's massive untapped reserves, the second biggest in the world after Saudi Arabia's. But France and Russia, who hold a power of veto on the UN Security Council,



have billion-dollar contracts with Baghdad, which they fear will disappear in 'an oil grab by Washington', if America installs a successor to Saddam." (*The Observer*)

There are a number of interrelated issues here. Firstly, the profits of individual corporations are dependent on relations with the oil producing states. A diversification of oil production – opening up new sources of supply (such as that in Central Asia or by re-bringing Iraqi oil on to the open market) weakens the power of OPEC, the consortium of oil producing states, thereby strengthening the bargaining position of the corporations who purchase from them.

Furthermore, an increase in

American military power in the area will naturally be used to benefit American-based corporations as opposed to, say, French ones. However, if it was just a matter of the interests of individual corporations or sectors of the economy, then market competition would compel them to, for short term reasons, do business with Iraq, irrespective of what regime is in power there; so secondly, and most importantly, the question is where does the profits which have been creamed off the backs of the working class in oil-producing areas end up? It can be re-invested in the world economic system dominated by elites in the West, as we can see in this extract on Saudi Arabia from the *Washington Post*: "Since the 1970s,

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another war is possible

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no war but the class war

Saudi Arabia has shifted from its role as a large oil supplier to becoming the principal US ally and economic partner in the region. In the 1970s and 1980s, it bolstered the international banking system with its oil revenue. Since 1981, US construction companies and arms suppliers have earned more than \$50 billion in Saudi Arabia, according to the Congressional Research Service US. Investments in the country reached \$4.8 billion in 2000, according to the Commerce Department. The US oil giant Exxon Mobil Corp. was recently chosen by the Saudi government to lead two of three consortiums developing gas projects worth \$20bn-\$26bn."

(Washington Post 21/9/01)

However, a nationalist government in power in an oil producing area, aiming to build up a native industrial base – as did most of the rogues in the Middle East that 'the West' has fought against, from Nasser to Hussein – would make for lost profits. The wealth which could go into the coffers of the West's banks, arms companies, construction companies, is instead invested developing local industry. This is bad news, not just because of that lost profit, but even more fundamentally, given that we are talking about areas where lies one of the most valuable commodities in the world – a resource which could form the building block for the development of an imperialist rival to 'the West'.

What goes in Organise!

Organise! hopes to open up debate in many areas of life. As we have stated before, unless signed by the Anarchist Federation as a whole or by a local AF group, articles in *Organise!* reflect the views of the person who has written the articles and nobody else.

If the contents of one of the articles in this issue provokes thought, makes you angry, compels a response then let us know. Revolutionary ideas develop from debate, they do not merely drop out of the air!

AF pamphlets in languages other than English

As We See It is available in Welsh, Serbo-Croat, Greek and now, thanks to our Austrian comrades, in German. They are each available for 70p including postage and packaging from our London address.

The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation is also available in Serbo-Croat for 70p including p&g. If anybody you know in Britain speaks Serbo-Croat or if you have contacts in the countries of former Yugoslavia where Serbo-Croat is understood, then why not send them copies?

German, Greek, Portuguese, French, Italian, Esperanto and Spanish translations of our **Aims and Principles** are also available for 20p plus postage. Write to the London address for orders and bulk orders.

The oil industry, as well as being a source of capital, also produces an important resource. While 'America' is certainly not dependent upon imports of it from the Middle East, large parts of the world, included Europe and Japan, are, and thus the more power Washington has in the Middle East the more influence it has over these potential rivals. Thus, in the second two cases, the American state is representing the interests of not just oil corporations, but the overall interests of the corporate elite.

Furthermore, while today there is no American reliance on Middle Eastern oil, in the future this may be radically different. The US Department of Energy recently announced that, by 2025,

70% of the oil consumed in the US will be imported. It could be argued that this would place the US at a strategic disadvantage. There is, of course, a way around this, not to mention the slightly more pressing problem of global warming, and the rise in asthma due to exhaust fumes – the development of sustainable transport alternatives to the petrol driven motor car. But I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for that from a government of ex-oil executives whose election campaign was funded by big oil.

- 1 "The Looming war isn't about Chemical Warheads", Robert Fisk, 18 January 2003.
- 2 Michael Renner: Worldwatch Institute January 2003.

The USA's earnings from the oil trade

In 1992, the US control of the world's oil economy brought in revenue of \$4,500 billion a year. This was simply a charge for using dollars to trade. Any country wanting to buy or sell oil did so in dollars. These had to be purchased from US banks, and the banks being businesses charged them for the privilege.

This 'commission charge' helps the US finance its huge balance of trade deficit year on year. The emergence of any alternative currency is a threat to this nice little earner. So, the

emergence of the Euro as a potential trading currency adds another imperative for the US to wage this war now.

It also helps explain the opposition of France and Germany to the war.

'Between Iraq and a Hard Place' is an important article, written from an American libertarian communist perspective, analysing the war, its causes and the history of working class uprising in Iraq. It can be found on our Manchester web site: www.af-north.org.

Lions led by donkeys

The Great Firefighters Strike of 2002-03

By the time this article is read, it is possible that the firefighters will have rejected government's 'final offer' and we will be in the middle of a bloody war abroad and a bruising dispute at home.

The firefighters rejected the FBU Executive's recommendation at the Brighton conference, but the result of the ballot of all firefighters about the offer isn't yet known. If the strike is still going on, the FBU Executive will be desperately seeking to make concessions that avoid the strike being declared unlawful and the threat of legislation to make strikes illegal in the Fire Service. But the minimum the government is demanding is flexibility on overtime and rostering, part-time working throughout the Fire Service and the loss of thousands of jobs – an outcome totally unacceptable to rank-and-file firefighters.

Eventually a face-saving formula (on all sides) will be cobbled together and the ordinary firefighter will pay the price. With war raging, the FBU Executive cannot afford to be accused of betraying 'our boys', but they risk the union splitting down the middle. It will be seeking an 'acceptable' form of flexibility, despite the fact that the kind of flexibility being demanded has been resisted fiercely for years.

The FBU Annual Conference that launched the pay claim in 2002 resoundingly declared that no strings – such as modernisation – could be attached to the pay offer. We may be in the middle of an all-out strike. Possibly the latest offer will have been rejected, but strikes suspended for the duration of the war. If so, both sides will no doubt be preparing for a second round: government will be preparing a propaganda blitz and legislation to crush the strike, while the FBU will try to enlist other public sector unions and the TUC in a 'popular front' against a war-damaged Blair.

If the dispute has been settled it's

usual to read its entrails to discover who won the struggle between organised labour and the state. But with war raging or the government in crisis, winners and losers will take second place to more pressing issues. When the dust has settled, at conference time, each side will no doubt claim something. The FBU Executive will put a brave face on the concessions they will have had to make. Tony Blair and his government of management control-freakery will claim to have defeated the 'wreckers', the new 'enemy within'. Whatever the claims by each side, who will have won the strategic victory both sides began to believe possible last year?

Veto

Some people feared the strike was lost even before it began, back in the summer of 2002 when the government vetoed the 16% pay offer. 'Modernisation' (ie cuts) has been the government's agenda for years and as soon as the pay claim appeared on its radar it struck.

No doubt the FBU leadership expected a quick campaign and the municipal employers to capitulate. But national, pre-announced strikes allowed the government to shoulder the employers' aside in defence of their carefully-nurtured image of competence. The suspensions of strike action and the on-off nature of the dispute helped to lower temperatures, encouraged the media to look elsewhere and created conditions where a deal could be done (because the FBU Executive desperately wanted to settle and still does), while all the time keeping the pressure on the bosses with the threat of the strikes resuming. But a concerted programme of wildcat, random, station-by-station strikes would have put far more pressure on the employer at the local level while allowing no national response. With government unable to bear down on the strikers and the prospect of an indefinitely sustainable dispute, the



employers would have been forced to take back the negotiations and settle.

The biggest losers long-term will be, of course, the rank-and-file firefighter and (less directly) all public sector workers. The firefighters, well-disciplined, popular and with a massive democratic mandate – 87% voted yes when balloted in October 2002 – were led to the picket line like lions and staked out for the media vultures like donkeys.

Backing off

As usual, at the end of 2002, while ordinary firefighters called for the 'big push', their generals quailed, cowered and gave in, sounding the recall by suspending first a planned eight-day strike and then a planned two-day strike.

Too late the TUC and ACAS ambulance was rushed to the field to rescue the survivors: the battered FBU leadership and the discredited fire authority negotiators. No doubt the leaders of the TUC hoped to curry some favours, making themselves useful to the government and popular with members and the public alike. They too are firefighters, though of a different sort...

But their efforts misfired: government ministers and their fat cat advisors hated the way they 'rescued' the firefighters just as they were closing for the kill: public support for the strike was waning, the army was coping and Andy Gilchrist went 'over the top' with his "Time for Real Labour" speech. Two planned strikes in December were cancelled: the enemy within had blinked, and were ready to be crushed. Then came the offer of mediation, the closing of ranks, the critical speeches, the hints of disaffiliation. Blair, Prescott, Blunkett and Raynsford will not forget such disloyalty, and it will be the ordinary worker who pays the price.

Early in 2003, a new round of strikes were threatened and Prescott threatened to take powers to end the dispute and force a settlement, effectively nationalising the Fire Service by taking negotiating powers away from the local employers. The FBU Executive went very quiet. The threat of strikes, quickly smothered by the TUC, gave Blair his chance. How easy it was to wrap his government in the flag and

refuse to be dictated to by unreasonable and unpatriotic strikers.

But as Blair's war on Iraq became more and more unpopular, it was less easy to use popular consent and media vilification to paint the firefighters as 'wreckers' or 'the enemy within'. This strengthened the FBU Executive's resolve when it came to debate the (worse than November) offer of 16% over three years instead of two.

The trouble is there is as yet no strategy for winning a pay rise without any 'modernising' strings. The best the FBU Executive can do is hope to postpone the worst and most damaging changes. Even so, sometime soon, perhaps this year, the government will issue a consultation paper on the 'future' of the Fire Service. The counter-attack will be launched. A full-time service (preserved in London and Merseyside) will go and more moderate (and easily cowed) part-timers recruited. Over the next few years flexibility will lead to 4000 lost jobs.

Safety threat

Prescott announced in December 2002 that he wanted to give Chief Fire Officers the sole power to override safety legislation that sets out minimum standards of fire cover. This has been the aim of government since 1980, and as recently as 1999 the employers proposed performance-related pay and local flexibility as the basis of negotiations in the future.

As Bob Pounder, an FBU Executive Committee member, suspended for speaking about the dispute, says: "In Greater Manchester, we face a £5 million cuts package. Prior to this dispute, we were in a strong and militant position. However, unless something changes, the signal will go out that the FBU is a spent force, and this will strengthen the hand of management to implement cuts, which will reverberate throughout every brigade in the country."

Some parts of the fire service will be prepared for privatisation. The corporations delivering public services across the country and for massive sums will be licking their lips. No doubt like the railways, the Fire

Service has many stations in prime sites – 150 are targeted to go. Why buy fire engines? Let the private sector buy them and lease them back! More importantly, who will be able to stand against privatisation, part-privatisation and externalisation when the firefighters couldn't? Who can argue against modernisation now? Expect the pace of 'partnership' to quicken and big contracts for public sector provision to fall into the bloated hands of the corporate fat cats.

Some services will be ripe for privatisation

The screw will tighten around the firefighters: "If you can't talk about service improvements, we can't implement the pay agreement". "If you won't modernise, there will have to be job losses". The FBU will be forced to fight on the government's terms, not theirs. All the dispute has done is put them in the firing line this year and next. If a strike should develop it will be on the battleground of service improvement (always popular with the consumer), not fair pay or safety. The moral high ground will have been lost and the dispute, if one develops, will be fought in the swamp of management-speak about 'performance indicators', 'public-private' and 'output measures'. The public gaze will falter and turn away; the dispute will be lost.

More importantly, Blair's jack-booted ministers, Nick Raynsford and John Prescott, will have won a famous victory, consolidating their iron grip on domestic policy. They will have faced down a group of workers driven to the end of their tether and solidly militant because of it. They will have discredited the Left at the same time as they outmanouvered and baffled the FBU leader, Andy Gilchrist. They will have proved that no public service, however valued or organised, is immune from the modernisation treatment. They will have cowed some public sector workers. The TUC will have lost all credit with government while gaining no credit with ordinary workers – they played

their part in attempting to sell the firefighters a bad deal, then ran for cover. Workers will be further demoralised, anger about pay and conditions deflated, pay demands moderated, privatisation slowed but not stopped. The fix will be in, and no mistake.

Losers

The big losers will be low-paid public sector workers. Tony Blair raised the spectre of 10%, 15% or 20% pay demands if the FBU won. If the strike is settled on harsh terms, the campaign for a fairer share of public sector spending is almost beaten before it can start. Three per cent is more likely than 15% this year. And with all the talk of recession and economic 'hard landings', it's likely that public sector employees will be faced down and accept less – or rather their leaders will.

The most heartening thing about the strike was the sheer determination of the ordinary firefighter (and the public support they got throughout, despite the government and media's

vicious onslaught). They quickly realised the dangers facing them but stood firm, and argued for all-out industrial action to force government to negotiate sensibly and quickly. They also fought to defend the principle that developing public services should be a co-operative endeavour, between those who use and who provide the service.

The service provided on Merseyside has cut fire deaths in half by installing twice the national average number of smoke detectors, a policy championed by firefighters but now threatened by cuts and the breakdown in industrial relations. At the same time, and as a measure of just how corrupt municipal government is, the councillors elected to the Merseyside Fire Authority voted themselves a 50% increase in their allowances (in line with other fire authorities). The Chairman, Peter Corcoran (who got a 52% pay rise), said "independent assessors are saying we should receive proper allowances for the job we do". A sentiment the firefighters would endorse, since their own claim to £30k was based on an

OBITUARY

Michael McLaughlin

The tragic death, aged 34, of our comrade, Michael McLaughlin, came as a great shock to the Anarchist Federation in Scotland and beyond.

Although a libertarian for several years, Michael had only been an active militant of the AF-Alba for about a year. But in that time we quickly grew to realise that he was a comrade of great conviction. And a really good man.

Always practically-minded, Michael took a major role in the organisation of the AF-sponsored Anarchist Dayschool in Glasgow last November and was involved in the AF at all levels of the organisation. Many comrades have happy memories of Michael from last year's National Conference. He was the kind of person who immediately made those around him feel comfortable and valued. He was the kind of person who inspired confidence. When he said he'd do something, it generally got done. We could do with a few more of his kind.

Michael was active in his workplace and was a Health and Safety Rep with the MSF union and also a member of the Clydeside branch of the Industrial Workers of the World. If things were happening, he was generally in the thick of it. His commitment to his social revolutionary politics was rivalled only by his enthusiasm for his beloved Celtic. His first AF meeting was followed by a visit to Parkhead with another AF Celtic-heid (the other three comrades went to Firhill as I remember!).

Michael's funeral took place in Buncrana, Co. Donegal, from whence his family came. We will remember him and carry on the struggle.

On the net

Articles from *Organise!* can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.afed.org.uk>

You can also email us at:

anarchistfederation@bigfoot.com

assessment by the independent Labour Research Department!

What lessons can we learn? Firstly that strikes are best not led by the so-called leadership, unless workers are prepared to compromise from the start.

Second, that once stopped, they are hard to re-start. It is far better to change your tactic to intensify pressure on the enemy while reducing it on your own forces: rolling strikes and guerilla strikes cause an image of 'chaos' and a dispute 'out of control' which will force the bosses on the defensive.

Thirdly, the trade union leadership will always seek to compromise at the expense of workers rather than jeopardise their mediating role between worker and employer. Fourthly, and most importantly, that there are no solutions within the framework of what we call work, our working lives – no solution to low pay, inadequate pay, unfair pay, antisocial hours or working practices, to stress, to alienation, to bullying or indifferent bosses. Many trade unions were formed to enable the worker to seize the means of production – tools, machines, the lorries and looms, the factories and fields – and to enable workers to organise their working lives for themselves and for society's benefit. Now they just sell insurance. Yet workers, and we are workers too, put our trust in them and expect them to deliver us from the not-so gilded cage of a working life, a life of toil with scant reward. We must organise as workers to take back the means of work, in order to free ourselves from it.

Donations

There will be a list of donations to *Organise!* in the next issue.

Argentina: The struggle continues

In previous issues of Organise! we situated the Argentinean crisis in its historical context and examined ways in which the situation might evolve. In this issue we take a look at the forms of working class self-organisation that have been built in the space created by the actions of the participants in the original uprising – particularly the factory and workplace occupations.

On 16 March 2002, armed police and hired goons (including members of the football hooligans' Barra Bravas) forced their way into the Brukman textile factory in Buenos Aires, which had been under occupation since the owner fled four months previously. They were shortly afterwards driven out by the combined forces of the occupying workers, *piqueteros*, members of unemployed groups and local residents. This direct action was one of the first that brought together in practical co-operation the various forms of working class self-organisation that have developed since the December 2001 uprising – a wonderful example of social solidarity put into practice – and one which helped to speed the growth of working class co-operation and autonomy.

One of the most important things about the incredible growth of self-organisation is that the initiatives developed – in the overwhelming majority of cases, outside of any party or institutional influence – are a direct expression of the needs of the participants and the wider community, as against the needs of a particular

political tendency (we're looking at you trots!). Also, they arose on a classic spontaneous model – they were formed to meet the demands of the current situation, they are not simply the mechanical application of forms of organisation that were determined elsewhere in a different struggle. Though it should be pointed out that, to a certain extent, spontaneity is really just the coming to light of previously submerged networks designed to meet collective social needs. *Spontaneity* is what the bosses sneeringly call working class self-activity when they finally manage to see what is going on under their noses.

With 40% unemployment (100,000 jobs lost a month), inflation around 11% (also rising) and the state imposing utility bill increases of 50% on heating gas, 35% on electricity and other essential services, it's unsurprising that the first forms of self-organisation were concerned with meeting the immediate needs of the community. To bypass the supermarkets which were making the most of the crisis by increasing prices, a whole network of communal community gardens producing directly for the community developed. People worked together to clear wasteland or other suitable areas for growing food, which is given to those who have no other means of support, or is exchanged for goods from the occupied factories (see below).

Meeting social needs

Similarly, the *piqueteros* (see previous issue for background on these) dealt with the problem of social housing by simply forming a brick-making factory from whatever material they could find and proceeded to collectively build houses for those in need, whilst being fed from the community gardens and the factories. In return,

the *piqueteros* also turn out to defend them both from state attacks. The *piqueteros*, who were previously looked down upon and called '*le negrada*' (the blacks), are now seen as heroes and great examples by the people they help, who in turn help them – active solidarity is the key.

A similar approach has been taken to health issues. A number of private hospitals were abandoned by their owners during the uprising. These have now been occupied and are operating as profit-free ventures. The same is true of the system of alternative education, which has mushroomed and operates entirely outside of the state system. Cultural spaces have also been opened, where people come to talk about how they can collectively help each other: plays and songs about working class life and solidarity are performed. Crèches, bakeries and canteens are also set up in these spaces. On top of all this, local communities turn out *en masse* to physically oppose evictions and attempts to cut off essential local services. All of this activity is carried on outside of the state and its local representatives.

Active solidarity is the key

A less successful venture was the '*truque*' or barter network that, at its height of popularity, had over 8,000 clubs and three million members. The problems stemmed from the network's use of an alternative currency that soon became the *de facto* currency in many places – soon 90% of the 'certificates' were forgeries and credit inflation was at 40%. On top of these problems, the network was being used to finance small-scale local capitalism, and large-scale producers were taking their goods out of the system and selling them off at inflated prices outside of the network. (These were not local problems – they are inherent in systems of this type, but we do not have the space to deal with that here.)

A significant change in people's behaviour is their view of 'the family',



which has expanded to include not just immediate blood relatives, but all members of the local community. People have grown to see through joint struggles that their problems can only be addressed through collective action. Their answers lie in working with others, hence the almost desperate desire to forge new links with others in struggle as demonstrated by the unprecedented growth of territorial, local, national, occupational and interest based co-ordinations, which magnificently demonstrate the desire for human community – communism.

In the workplace

The movement of factory and workplace occupations has grown rapidly during the past year, from a handful of isolated and under-siege examples at the start of the year, to a full-scale social movement with hundreds of occupations, complete with regional and national conferences, 'National Plans of Action', and attempts at recuperation by state and leftist forces.

The first occupations took place during the December 2001 *argentino*, notably of the Brukman and Zanon factories, which have both played an immensely important role in practical and symbolic terms. These two have become the public face of the occupation movement, providing space for others to work out their own plans of occupation and as a place where the implications of the occupations can be

worked out by those they affect – not just the workers.

Today, there are hundreds of occupied workplaces (and not just factories but also schools, hospitals and other 'white-collar' sites) covering every region of the country. A closer look at how these places work, the different forms the occupations have taken and the state's attitude to them reveals that there are in fact two types of occupation; one that results from communities organising to directly meet their own needs, and one under the control of official 'working class representatives' or of representatives of the local state and capitalist institutions who seek to recuperate this activity and direct it into support for 'stability' and the state as benefactor.

The Zanon ceramic factory in the province of Neuquen is probably the largest occupied workplace still actually producing. Pay remains at the same levels as prior to the occupation (with inflation being taken into account) and the ceramic tiles produced are sold at 60% of their former price through a series of street vendors employed by the *piqueteros* or at the 'popular' supermarkets set up in Rosario and other towns specifically to sell the goods from the occupied workplaces. When new workers are needed, *piqueteros* and other unemployed groups are taken on, and at the same rates as the other workers. Decisions are taken by the mass workers' assembly (with delegates from other



groups present) and production is organised collectively. A technical college for members of the local community has also been established.

One of the first things the Zanon assembly sought to do was to establish links with others in struggle, especially the *piqueteros* and other factory occupations, and to that end they hosted a national meeting of occupied factories in April (more on the various co-ordinations and conferences below) which declared that it would start a plan "of public works, controlled by workers, to construct schools needed by teachers and students, public hospitals, and housing".

State interventions

The Ghelco ice cream factory in Buenos Aires highlights a different approach to the direct occupation at Zanon, one that the state is increasingly viewing as both a way out of its stability problems and as a potential bulwark for co-opting the working class back into its political and structural programmes (*à la* Peron and the unions). The factory was occupied by an order of a bankruptcy judge, who decreed that it should be rented back to the workers. After a set period, the factory was then legally expropriated by the local state and handed over to the workers, thus building up ties between the state and the occupation from the outset, and potentially providing support for capital in any future crisis ("after all you're all bosses now"). The Ghelco workers now earn the same pay as before, but working hours have jumped to twelve hours a day to cover administrative expenses.

The state has offered quiet support for MNER (National Movement of Recovered Factories) which lobbies for legal expropriation of occupied

workplaces, for wiping out debts and for establishing a clear legal framework for further expropriations. The Brukman factory has been forced by circumstances to follow this path, asking the Buenos Aires government to expropriate the factory and re-hire it back to them, and to give them a preferential option to buy the plant after two years, when it will be put up for sale. Provincial and city legislatures are currently drafting a number of bills to create a government agency to assist in the formation of co-operatives and to facilitate expropriations, as presently expropriation is only legally possible if it is in 'the public benefit'. This temporary manoeuvre is designed to speedily introduce stability, all the better to allow the real capitalists to step back into their old shoes when conditions allow. On top of this, many factories are not actually occupied in the classical sense since they are still paying the previous owners' rent or have written off months of unpaid work and owed back-wages.

Communication and networks

This is not to say that the people involved are not aware of these dangers: they are, and a series of conferences and co-ordinations amongst various groups have taken place to discuss these issues. The Brukman, Zanon and Grissinopli factories all held national meetings attended by hundreds of delegates from all of the groups in struggle. 'National Plans of Action', Solidarity commissions, factory committees, National Workers' Assemblies, 'Plans of Struggle' were amongst the initiatives thrashed out at these meetings in order to turn the state's plans to their own use. The co-operation between the groups over the year has built up very strong bonds of solidarity, a solidarity that was highlighted during the important National March by *piqueteros* last December, made possible through the wider networks established in the struggle.

This March lasted five days, blocking highways and organising soup kitchens, whilst passing through towns and cities that have played a

central role in the uprising and in building up resistance (Rosario and Cordoba being particularly noteworthy). The slogan for the march was "Throw the bums out!" and ended up at the Plaza de Mayo (scene of bitter fighting and many deaths last year) on the first anniversary of (President) De La Rúa's resignation.

Solidarity actions under the banner of 'Que Se Vayan Todos' (They All Must Go) took place at the same time in every corner of the globe – Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Ukraine, Uruguay, USA and Yugoslavia. The network now extends far beyond the borders of Argentina, putting into practical effect the demand for No Borders!

Prospects

The current state of affairs is a series of self-organised initiatives that operate to a greater or lesser degree successfully, and largely outside of the state's institutional structures. But there is a growing awareness and willingness on the state's part to make use of these initiatives to put itself back on its feet – to get capital accumulation started again and to introduce a measure of social stability. There are clear efforts being made to split the movements through recognising certain useful sectors as official and taking them under the (local) state's wing.

This should not be a cause for undue pessimism however – as we pointed out in an earlier *Organise!* the dynamic of people organising their own lives and communities logically leads them to organise against the state. The genie is out of the bottle, and the Argentine working class is in no hurry to chase it back in. When collective needs are taken as the starting point for collective activity, without any fuss being made of this – then we can truly say that struggle has changed people (just like we said it would!).

Midnight legislation

Class Struggle in Ireland 1760-1840

How the Whiteboys resisted oppression

During the years 1788-1868, 2,249 political prisoners were transported from Ireland to exile in Australia. Of that number, less than 20% belonged to the well-commemorated nationalist rebellions and conspiracies of 1798, 1803, 1848 and 1867.¹ Who were the rest?

From the 1760s to the 1840s successive revolts of the rural poor broke out across Ireland. These comprised of a variety of underground movements with varying names but common characteristics. They are now called after the first such movement – the Whiteboys. These were movements of the rural poor; wage labourers, those who worked in small-scale industries and cottiers (small tenant farmers).

Labourers would often rent (or be allowed to rent land as part of their wage), while the smallest tenant farmers would supplement their income with labouring. Whiteboys were almost exclusively male and young, usually teenage.

Their organisation was secretive and underground, and also fairly libertarian, with independent groups in each town networked with others to form an entire movement across several counties. Of at least one group, it is said that all its

members had 'equal command'. There was extensive use of ritual – initiation oaths, elaborate pseudonyms, and uniforms, costumes or special insignia.

Direct action was the method of these movements. Typically a proclamation or 'law' would be issued, to the effect that rents, priest dues or tithes were to be reduced, wages were to be increased or 'land grabbing', by which the middle class forced the rural poor from their land, was to cease. If ignored, the laws would be enforced by violence and intimidation. Firstly, destruction of property, mutilation of animals, warning shots fired through windows, and then assaults and murder as the movements became progressively more violent after the 1790s (as did their opponents). The enclosure of previously common land was resisted by the levelling of fences and grasslands were dug up to produce more conacre – the potato plots on which the labouring population relied.

Class structure

Irish history is portrayed as a series of nationalist uprisings and movements against Anglo-Irish rule. In fact, much rural violence and agitation was class-based, of Catholic Irish versus Catholic Irish.



HEIGHT OF IMPUDENCE.

Irishman to John Bull: "Spare a Thrifle, yer Honour, for a Poor Irish Lad to buy a bit of — a blunderbuss with." (Punch, 1846)

Discussion board

The Anarchist Federation now has a discussion board at the following address: <http://flag.blackened.net/wwwthreads>

Log on if you fancy a chat.

The employer and landlord of the rural poor was not the Anglo gentry, but the Irish Catholic middle class of farmers. Even where areas were less developed, a 'middleman' stood between the mass of the population and the landlords. A 'Middleman' being a tenant on a long, stable lease, often Catholic/Irish, and profiting through subletting, but less commercially orientated than the middle class which developed in fertile areas.

Statistics from 1841 show this, and clearly give lie to the popular nationalist view of an Anglo gentry above homogenous downtrodden Irish masses (see the chart opposite).

Living standards of the rural poor

There were localised famines in 1800, 1817, 1822, 1831, 1835-37 and 1842. Prior to 1838 there was no state welfare system. In 1841, two fifths of Irish homes were one-roomed mud walled cabins. In the words of a contemporary observer: "The hovels which the poor people were building as I passed, solely by their own efforts, were of the most abject description; their walls were formed, in several instances, by the backs of fences; the floors sunk in ditches; the height scarcely enough for a man to stand upright; poles not thicker than a broomstick for couples; a few pieces of grass sods the only covering; and these extending only partially over the thing called a roof; the elderly people miserably clothed; the children all but naked."³

Commercialisation of agriculture

Whiteboyism existed in the context of and was a response to the growth in market relations, the development of capitalism and the commercialisation of agriculture. This was not universally true: under-developed Clare was an insurrectionary hotbed for instance. However, typically the centres of Whiteboyism were the most fertile, and thus most commercialised areas, and movements arose as a reaction to what the market was inflicting upon labourers and cottiers. Analysed in this way, the world of the Whiteboys was not so far removed from the world we live in today. From the 1720s onwards,

Adult males and rural class structure circa 1841²

Category	Number	Per cent
Rich Farmers (average holding 80 acres)	50,000	2.9
'Snug' Farmers (average holding 50 acres)	100,000	5.9
Family Farmers (average holding 20 acres and usually not employing labour)	250,000	14.7
Cottiers (average holding five acres)	300,000	17.7
Labourers (average holding one acre, though often without any land)	1,000,000	58.8

Irish agriculture was increasingly commercialised and orientated towards export, firstly to French and British colonies and after to an increasingly urban Britain.

This affected Irish society in two ways: firstly the rise of a farming, market-orientated, middle class. Secondly, people's lives were now subject to the dictates of the market. Increased profitability in agriculture produced higher land values, which led to increased rents and the expansion of tillage or pasture for export at the expense of land for subsistence farming (and the people engaged in subsistence farming).

Counter-culture

Viewed from the perspective of 200 years later, one of the most remarkable things about the society of this period is the extent to which popular culture was beyond elite control. Religion was

not ordered and structured under the control of Rome until after the Famine, and various folk, pagan and magical practices remained popular. The Catholic Church, only gradually becoming a legal institution, was far from being the established force it was to become. Likewise for most of these decades there was no state education system, and children were educated in 'hedge schools' under the control of the community (i.e. not the state or gentry). This freedom from cultural institutions controlled by the ruling class had a positive impact on the persistence of Whiteboyism. Some of the communities which nurtured Whiteboyism also had a collective economic base, through 'rundale', a form of communal land tenure and farming. This was more often found in economically back ward areas but also could be found on poor lands in generally fertile South Leinster and East Munster.

Early Whiteboyism

In the 1750s, the growing market demand for pastoral products led to an expansion of dairy farming and grazing (which required the enclosure of common lands). As agriculture became more profitable, land values rose, and so did the price of conacre (the small plots on which the bulk of the population depended). The rural poor faced ruin. Beginning in Tipperary, a county which was a fertile producer of agrarian unrest, and then expanding into east Munster and south Leinster, the Whiteboy

movement fought back by tearing down the fences and hedges over what had been common land, and digging up pasture so that it could not be used for grazing and could be turned back to conacre. Grasslands were exempt from religious tithes in Ireland and this tax too became the target for Whiteboy resistance as it fell hardest on those engaged in subsistence farming.

Whiteboys & Rightboys

The period up to the end of the 1780s was characterised by anti-clerical actions in addition to the standard Whiteboy activities. Catholic priests were targeted for denouncing the rebels from the pulpit. In Tipperary "the parish priest of Kilsheelan, Fr. Nicholas Phelan, vigorously condemned the Whiteboys and had to flee for his life from his parish. Tradition also states that a Fr. Darcy of Kilmurry, preached against them in Grangemockler, was attacked by a mob and had to flee also from the district."⁴

The aim was also to reduce the fees priests charged for presiding at various religious services.

The Caravat Whiteboys

The most class conscious and violent of the Whiteboy movements, the Caravats arose in Tipperary, as a result of the agricultural boom created by the Napoleonic Wars. Rising land values and higher prices, coupled with an increasing population which hindered the possibility of a rise in wages or employment, squeezed the rural poor. The Caravats demanded that wages rise, rents be lowered, 'land grabbing' to cease, also inflationary practices such as hoarding food to end, all "by order of Sir John Doe, Governor of Munster"⁵, as the notices of these Whiteboys read.

Failure to comply with Caravat demands after three warnings meant a degree of violence greater than that previously used by Whiteboy groups. There were also numerous raids for arms and robbery of mail coaches and such like, as well as a concerted effort to drive migrant workers from Kerry and Cork out of the Tipperary area, and so reduce the supply of labour.

Organisers were sent into the adjoining counties of Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork and Limerick to stir things up there. The Caravats began to move in a less pragmatic day-to-day direction, and according to some reports had as their ultimate goal a re-division of the land.

This episode was unique in the response of the middle class. From 1806 an organised violent retaliation, in the form of the Shanavests – a remnant of the nationalist United Irishmen-Defender organisation of the 1790s, and held in readiness for a French landing that never came – was directed against the Caravats. Apart from individual assassination, this conflict consisted of fights at fairs and other public gatherings (where both organisations tried to recruit), involving hundreds and even thousands of participants armed with traditional wooden clubs, home made swords or spears and sawn off shotguns. This was the most pronounced expression of the struggle between labourers and the farming middle class. By 1811 the area was flooded with troops – more than had been there during the 1798 rebellion and a 'special commission' sent to investigate. The Whiteboy-Shanavest conflict appears to have persisted until the Famine period.

In the 1820s discontent was channelled into the Catholic Association, a middle class organisation aiming to end the remnants of the Penal Laws which discriminated against Catholics, specifically the ban on Catholics sitting in the House of Parliament. Led by the right wing nationalist Daniel O'Connell, and employing the 'moral pressure' of 'monster meetings', i.e. mass rallies, this body saw its goal achieved in the 1829 'Catholic Emancipation'.

People soon became disillusioned, as aptly described by one priest: "I have often heard their conversations, when they say, 'What good did Emancipation do for us: Are we better clothed or fed, or our children better clothed or fed?' As a Whiteboy put it: "Emancipation has done nothing for us. Mr O'Connell and the rich Catholics go to Parliament. We die of starvation just the same".⁶

A new wave of Whiteboyism broke

Resistance!

Resistance is our monthly news sheet.

Our widespread distribution of *Resistance* means more and more people are coming into contact with revolutionary anarchist ideas. This is at a time when the Labour Party, the Trotskyist and Stalinist left are spiralling rapidly downwards into decline. There is a real chance of building a credible anarchist movement in this country – with consistent and dogged hard work.

If you would like the next 12 issues of *Resistance*, then send POs, cheques for £4 payable to 'AF' to: AF, PO Box 375, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2XL. Better still, take a bundle to distribute!

AF Ireland produce their own regular newsheet, *Resistance Ireland*, which is available from: Anarchist Federation (Ireland), PO Box 505 Belfast, BT12 6BQ. Phone: 07951 079719.

out, with the Terry Alts and Lady Clares in Clare, Galway and Roscommon, and the Whitefeet in Leinster. This is the first outbreak of Whiteboyism for which there are police statistics, which record for Clare and Connaught (and most of this was happening in the single county of Clare) the following 'outrages' in 1831: Administering Oaths (952), Assaults (566), Attacks on houses (1,684), Homicides (72), Cattle Maiming (125), Illegal Notices (875), Levelling (244), Robbery of Arms (571) and Demand of Arms (135).⁷

The social class which produced Whiteboyism was devastated by the Great Hunger at the end of the 1840s, and by the emigration that followed. Whiteboyism continued in some of the more backward areas, those untouched by commercialisation and which had not seen Whiteboyism before, e.g. West Ulster. But the Famine can be said to have been its end, and just a shadow persisted. The rural working class was



CAPTAIN ROCK'S BANDITTI SWEARING IN A NEW MEMBER

silent for decades afterward until a brief adoption of syndicalism in the early 20th century. Whiteboyism was to a small extent exported with emigration, most famously with Pennsylvania's Molly Maguires.

The Whiteboy phenomenon was contemporary with the beginning of the long march of the Irish bourgeois to state power, aka 'national independence'. During 1760 to 1840, the two historic faces of national liberation had their first outings. The 1790s saw the radical, non-sectarian, secular, revolutionary, republican of the United Irishmen-Defenders and the 1820s the narrow, Catholic reformism of Emancipation. At the same time a proletarian struggle existed in opposition to both, rather than as a subsidiary of either.

Class struggle continued irrespective of national flag, and the nationalist movement, as a movement representing bourgeois interests, fought the class struggle against the proletariat.

On those occasions where the bourgeois successfully managed to marshal the rural poor behind their flag, e.g. Catholic Emancipation, the people got nothing out of it.

The non-existence of Whiteboys in history, as it is written, remembered, televised and commemorated, is instructive of the role played by nationalism in 20th century Ireland. That is, as part of the hegemony of ideas, aiming to paper over class divisions with a heroic myth of national oppression and national redemption. It is for this reason that we remember 1803, 1848, and 1867 while the Whiteboys go down the 'memory hole' into oblivion.

- 1 *Police and Protest in England and Ireland, 1780-1850*, Palmer, p58.
- 2 *Ireland since 1800, Conflict and Conformity*, Hoppen, p38.
- 3 Quoted in *The Great Irish Famine*, Campbell, p18.
- 4 *Carrick-On-Suir and its People*, Power, p83.
- 5 Quoted in *Irish Peasants, Violence and Political Unrest*, Clark and Donnelly, p86.
- 6 Quoted in *Ireland since 1800, Conflict and Conformity*, Hoppen, p19.
- 7 *Police and Protest in England and Ireland, 1780-1850*, Palmer, p326.

Fatherhood

Or, some mad rad dad rants

Children, the most joyous, innocent and playful people, in my humble opinion need not just 'equality' with adults, but often in today's 'civilised' societies, children should take priority over adults. Children obviously need to be cared for and they need to be nurtured; most basically they require love, and lots of it. You certainly don't have to be a parent to know that, but to fundamentally understand it in principle helps a lot.

The word father was never in my vocabulary prior to becoming one, for a variety of reasons. The word father sounds distant, formal and it implies hierarchical authority: father figure, head of the family, Our Father Who Art In Heaven.

I'd never used the word father and I'd certainly never thought about any concept of fatherhood. How badly prepared the male of the species is for one of life's greatest gifts. Volumes of books have been written upon fatherhood exploring many issues. Recommended is: *Fatherhood Reclaimed* by Adrienne Burgess, which gives an empathic perspective to the subject.

With men particularly de-sensitised to the core, parenting is still for many little more than a duty-bound, long-term chore, bringing with it a compulsion to work and a financial liability with no payback. The idea of totally giving ourselves to our kids, playing with them, listening to them, learning from and with them, requires comprehension that totally overcomes conditioned masculinity (and conditioned femininities too). Both sexes are equally capable of transcending 'father absence' and – just as important – 'mother dominance', if only the effort were made.

The overwhelming majority of men do not begin to struggle to be 'new' or PC – why should they? Yet the status quo portrays men as self-absorbed, authoritarian, workaholic, drinkaholic,

football crazy, emotionally untouchable, fevered egos. A recipe for disaster that currently has to be dealt with and then cleaned up afterwards as best as can be.

There is urgent need to understand and acknowledge the extent of the uneven deal that men frequently receive. Most men miss out on so very much, competing endlessly and aggressively, wrongly asserting how 'right' we are. We speak only of absolute facts all the time, with a tendency to beat ourselves (and other people) up, physically and mentally, much of it verbal, often violent. In reality, men are fallible, vulnerable, emotional and do possess all the capacities for empathy and compassion.

Abuse

One outcome of conventional parenting/educating is that two to three children are killed every week in this country, usually by a parent! Care homes for the most vulnerable kids are increasingly found to be riddled with child abusers... The parents who think they are doing the best by their kids by giving them 'everything'. It seems much more likely they are taking everything away from them, profoundly denying their true identity. Children in consumer societies are abused in a wide range of ways. So many discarded children, with a distraught Planet Earth unable to meet their needs.

The necessity some people feel for assuming power and control to suit their egos results in gross imbalances throughout our lifetimes. Consequently, every interaction, communication and intimacy is likely to be affected. There is a desperate global need to transcend all oppressors, authoritarians and control freaks. The human race is suffering great collective illness, nature made sick and requires healing... Only with a substantial authentic 'equality of parenthood' can the foundations for putting an infant's best interests first

and foremost ever be implemented. Association and discussion are every bit as essential as loving is for children. And we need to deflate our adult egos, if we are to deliver what some of us preach, the primacy of children.

Where does 'parenting' stop and 'educating' start? It's a complex, grey area, and perhaps they are even the same thing. Most parents 'home educate' until they send their kids off to school... It seems the secret to 'successful' parenting is to go all out to really be oneself. Not always easy, at times incredibly difficult. How few people really know themselves, whilst truly loving their friends, family, extending to the broader environment they live in, the world at large? It's tough trying to maintain daily contact with every little feeling and emotion, even after years focused trying. Maybe the revolution of everyday life is the everyday life of revolution...(hmm).

Becoming a parent can present the future in a clearer, brighter light. I want to suggest being a caring parent is deeply rooted and revolutionary, as starkly amazing as any other aspect of life. Thoughtful contemplation and the practise of fatherhood (growing together respectfully and sensitively) could eventually become a full frontal challenge to patriarchy, the regulation male domination of everything, power, organisations, wealth etc. Looking after babies and children could play a direct part in changing societies towards harmonious (complex, chaotic, creative, co-operative) fulfilling, gratifying natural spaces... The world over is seeing through the redundancy of the capitalist system. Observe at first hand its continuing failures: legal murder (wars), persistent harangues by hideous leaders with fingers twitching on nuclear buttons. Why shouldn't we dare to consider alternatives? Apathetic/crushed/damaged/sore people could help quicken the beginnings of new communities that people might want to live in...

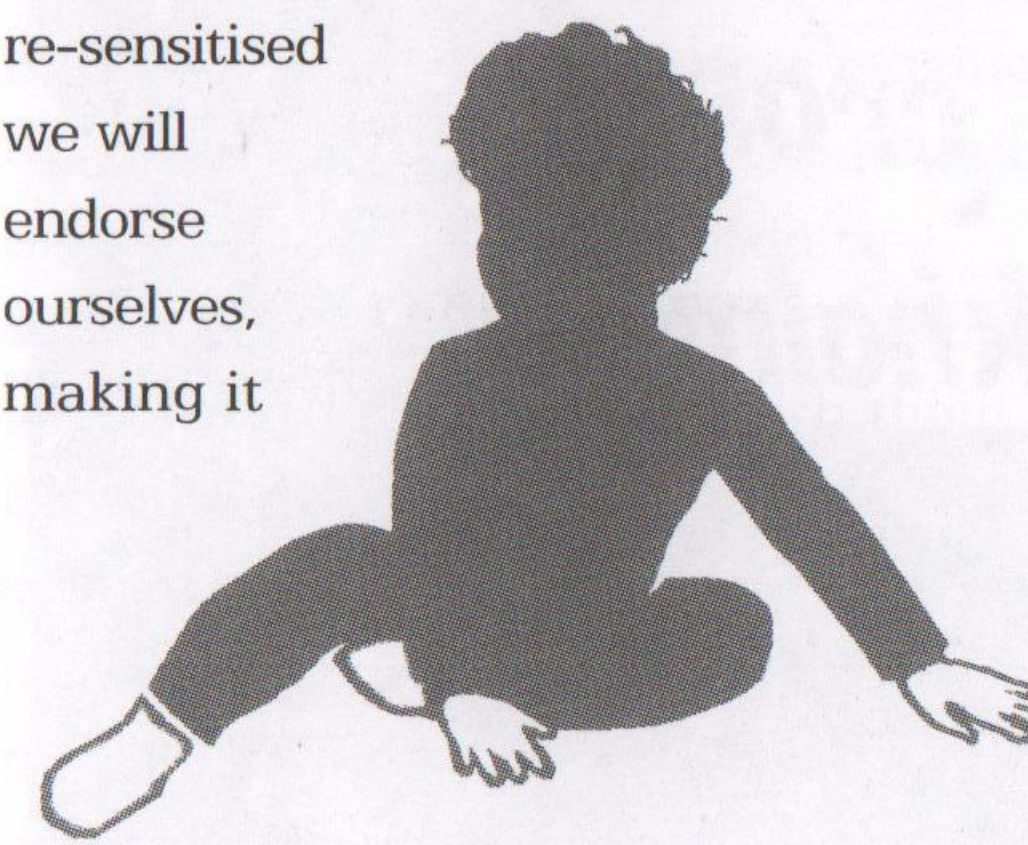
After years of routine-type meetings, demos etc there's a feeling of being less restricted, less robotised as a militant now I'm a dissident dad. Often preferring now to work with women and have female friends, I relish the

distance from conventional militancy – competitive, aggressive egos struggling for status, dominant influence, 'non-hierarchical' leadership.

Elites of un-powerful power-mongers, blindly critical, guilt-tripping, regurgitating and putting people down, rarely offering useful, constructive, positive and healing remedies of any variety or substance. Empathy, sensitivity, compassion and a rational determined reverence for the remarkable variance of life or continue with hastening degradation?

The lunatics are running the asylum, they care nothing about the multitudes of common people as they threaten to press buttons that could end everything we 'have' and have known. Maybe there never was any hope in these environments where free will and up-front equality might never be even vaguely considered, never mind 'understood' or realised. Same old shit... Until all are free, everyone remains in chains, physical, mental, spiritual. Men and a few women might have a lot to lose, yet humanity and nature have everything to gain. The current fetish for 'freedom', 'justice' and 'equality' are horrific in actuality and worse in result: women copying 'successful' men and claiming equality. How sad, demeaning and utterly vulgar. All oppression becomes more firmly fixated, more stagnant, more engulfing.

It seems basic gender equability is very rarely openly talked about, except for some crazy, unconventional anarchistic type people. If adults got to really know themselves intimately, to understand the damage incurred and recognise a need and desire to heal and visibly move forwards, then could begin the transcendence of this de-sensitised humanity. In becoming re-sensitised we will endorse ourselves, making it



impossible not to love and care for all children everywhere.

Perhaps, in an ideal world, all adults would care passionately, would relate like parents to every child. Wow, how does that sound? All those caring, nurturing, multiple influences... Nobody with love to give yet living lonely lives, isolated and unsupported. Nobody need ever work at looking after children because of the accident of birth, if they were not up to it for whatever reason. No more obligation. Everyone gains, adults, kids, the planet and the phenomenon that is LIFE.

Learning from play

So much can be learnt from children. Play has phenomenal learning potential, yet today it is seriously undermined, as is the inventiveness of questing children. Where does 'play' end and the process of 'learning' start? To help children to play freely we must start to comprehend ourselves as adults, what has been hurt, warped, damaged and/or lost in each of us, men and women. With a healthy support network of friends, family, and perhaps therapy, counselling, yoga or massage, etc, we could re-adjust perspectives against the enforced mainstream. Then we can begin to do justice to the children and inspire through our 'being', our selfhood, with children. We can learn to play again amongst ourselves, and could perhaps for the first time really learn how to learn... If we dearly love our children, if we were to respect our 'partners' past, present and future, then things will change. We can undoubtedly all grow every single day of our lives, the potential profound. If we don't sacrifice our kids to the horrors of establishment schools and instead home educate them, if we take children seriously and make efforts never to coerce them, chances are good they will develop into centred, rounded, creative, co-operative free-thinkers. Those free-spirited kids could live their lives as they choose voluntarily, respectfully and virtually spontaneously. Rich, deep, fulfilling, whole lives, with inner and outer peace for themselves, each other and all of nature... an ideal worth striving for?

Yelensky's fable

A history of the ABC *by Matthew Hart*

For close to a century, anarchists have united under the banner of the Anarchist Black Cross, for the sole purpose of supporting those comrades imprisoned for their commitment to revolution and to the ideas of anarchism.

Who would have suspected that a few men supplying boots, linen, and clothing to deportees in Bialystok would have been the beginning of an organisation that has spread throughout the globe?¹

Recently, statements have been made referring to the history of the Anarchist Black Cross as mere folklore. But a dedicated search for the organisation's history uncovers information that is far from fairy tale. Hundreds of pages filled with facts regarding the history of the organisation are being assembled by members of the Los Angeles branch of the Anarchist Black Cross Federation in hopes of one day publishing it.

The Anarchist Black Cross dates back to the politically turbulent times of Tsarist Russia. Due to the cruel aristocratic rule of the Tsar, many Russians began to search for answers outside of existing political institutions. The words of Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin created a massive stir within the soul of the Russian people and their desire for freedom lead many of them to rebel against the toil and serfdom that defined their very existence. With the rise of political opposition to the Tsar, many anarchists, socialists and revolutionaries paid for their desire for freedom by imprisonment, exile or death.

Conditions within the prisons were terrible and political prisoners faced cruel treatment.² A prisoner's aid organisation called 'Political Red Cross' was formed to support prisoners within Tsarist prisons or labour camps. This organisation not only provided aid to prisoners, but many times assisted escapes from prison or places of exile. The great anarchist thinker, Peter Kropotkin, was one of the many former political prisoners that owe their freedom to members of this organisation.³

Although the PRC was non-partisan, it wasn't long before the Social-Democrats (the followers of Karl Marx) gained control of it. Aid to anarchists or others not associated with the Social-Democratic Party began to dwindle. When anarchist supporters became aware of this they were infuriated at this divisiveness.⁴ The only way their comrades would receive help was for the anarchist community to create their own aid organisation and the Anarchist Red Cross (ARC) was formed.

The exact year of the Anarchist Red Cross' formation is unclear, but it is

estimated by Rudolph Rocker that it was formed during 1900-05. The organisation came about during a meeting in London with Vera Figner, who was the treasurer for the political prisoners of the Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries.⁵

If this is true, then the ARC appeared no earlier than 1905, the year Figner was released from prison. The only known visit by Figner to London was in June of 1909, but by then ARC groups were already established. During the visit a meeting was held and it was agreed that the ARC would support both Anarchist and Socialist-Revolutionaries in prison and in exile since both had been excluded from the Political Reds.⁶ Unlike the Social-

Democrats, as long as prisoners were social revolutionaries they would be supported.

Chapters

By 1906, the ARC had groups in Kiev, Odessa, Bialystok and other cities, probably as a response to the mass arrests by the Tsar following the 1905 Revolution. Trials of revolutionaries took place throughout the land, including at least six members of the ARC for their involvement in the 1905 Revolution. Many fled the country and those who managed to escape started ARC chapters in other countries. The first was in London in 1907. The organisation collected funds from other chapters throughout Europe and sent them to political prisoners in Russia. Those involved in the London branch included Peter Kropotkin, Alexander Shapiro, V Cherkezov and Rudolf Rocker. The following year, the first North American chapter was started in New York and soon other chapters were formed in Chicago, Philadelphia, Brownsville, Detroit and Baltimore.⁷

One of the more interesting groups in early ABC history was the Lettish section of the ARC. In 1914, the anarchist community became enraged when John D. Rockefeller ordered National Guardsmen to attack the striking workers and their families in Ludlow, Colorado. Several miners, women and children were killed and anarchists planned to give Rockefeller the same treatment.⁸ Members of the Lettish section of the ARC drew up a plot to assassinate Rockefeller. Sadly, on the morning of the planned assassination, the bomb planned for the industrialist went off in the apartment where the anarchists were staying, killing ARC members Charles Berg, Carl Hanson and two others. The bomb showered the street below with debris and body parts. Dozens of people were injured and repression after the incident increased heavily. This event became known as the 'Lexington Avenue bombing'. The plot involved non-ARC members and one other ARC member, Louise Berger, who had left the building minutes before and got away unharmed.⁹

With the outbreak of the Russian

Revolution of 1917, the ARC in the United States disbanded after news was received that all the political prisoners had been released. Several ARC members went to assist the revolution in Russia, where they were warmly met by the political prisoners they had once supported. But, before long, the Bolsheviks began arresting 'counter-revolutionaries'.¹⁰ With the rise of a new dictatorship, the ARC was forced to reorganise in 1919 as the Anarchist Black Cross, to avoid confusion between them, the International Red Cross and the Political Red Cross.¹¹ In the Ukraine, the Black Cross was organised as defensive units to protect cities and villages and organise resistance to pogroms led by Cossacks, White Guards or the Red Army. Many of those involved in these units were members of the Nabat Confederation in the Ukraine or had previously been active in the ARC in the United States.¹²

Because of their activities, Anarchist Black Cross members experienced constant harassment by the Bolshevik government, including the seizure of goods, imprisonment for belonging to an illegal organisation and murder of ABC activists. By 1924-1925, the organisation in Russia was virtually destroyed.

Several members of the ABC, like Lea Gutman, Helana Ganshina and Aaron Baron, were arrested and killed by the Bolshevik government. Others were arrested but due to international campaigns by anarchists abroad were later released.¹³ At least two ARC members converted to Bolshevism but later lost their lives during the Stalinist purges.

Several individuals who got out of Russia met in Berlin and reorganised the ABC. The organisation stayed in Berlin for several years before moving to Holland and then Paris. Chapters in the United States re-emerged to support the comrades still in Russian jails, but by 1936 contact with them began to dwindle and by 1940 all contact with prisoners in Russia ceased. Later it emerged that most, if not all, anarchist political prisoners were killed during Stalin's purges.¹⁴



International focus

By this time the Spanish Civil War and then Second World War broke out in Europe, and the organisation switched to a more international focus. ABC worked to aid anarchists fleeing Fascist persecution and those arrested in the resistance movement. Most ABC members at this time were Russian Jews, so being caught in Europe during this period meant almost certain death. Once again, Social-Democrats refused to assist ABC in helping their comrades escape and caused hundreds of Jewish anarchists to die in Nazi concentration camps.

By 1939, most of the chapters in the United States and Europe collapsed under the work needed to support thousands of anarchist prisoners in Europe and the organisation seems to have disappeared. As the ABC this may have been true, but it actually continued for two decades under different names: The Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia, Society to Aid Anarchist Prisoners in Russia, Relief Fund of the International Working Men's Association, Chicago Aid Fund and the Alexander Berkman Aid Fund. All these organisations were continuing the work of the ABC.¹⁵

Towards the end of the war, only a few groups remained active. The Berkman Aid Fund in Chicago, one of the few groups able to organise serious aid operations, organised a Paris branch, where C.A.R.E. packages were sent to anarchists in serious need of funds and support. This work went on



for many years but eventually it was forced to discontinue activities after 1958.¹⁶

In 1967, the organisation re-emerged in England, where it initially helped prisoners of the Spanish resistance. The London ABC promoted the concept of the Black Cross and during the International Anarchist Conference in Carrara. Their call for an International Anarchist Black Cross was answered. Other chapters emerged throughout Europe, the United States and Australia.¹⁷ But the early success of the organisation was also met by repression. Members were arrested, tried and even murdered. Stuart Christie, one of the founders of the London chapter of the organisation was arrested several times and on one occasion held for more than a year after being accused of having been involved in the Angry Brigade, an underground group active in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. In the end, he was found innocent of all charges and released.¹⁸

On 12 December 1969, Guiseppi Pinelli, member of the Milan chapter of the Anarchist Black Cross, was arrested after several bombings in Italy. Not for the first time. Pinelli was interrogated for three days and on the third day, 15 December, he was thrown from the fourth story of the police station and killed. The authorities claimed Pinelli had admitted the charges against him but later it emerged that the bombings were the work of neo-fascists, backed by the CIA and NATO.¹⁹

This 'strategy of tension' involved planting bombs to destabilise the government, discredit the Left and allow the fascists to take power. Pinelli was targeted because he was a well-known anarchist and was investigating a planned fascist coup prior to his murder. It became necessary to kill Pinelli to ensure the plot's integrity.²⁰ In 1971, Georg von Rauch, Secretary of the ABC in Germany, was pulled over by the police and, while resisting, von Rauch was shot.²¹

Several months later, Augsburg police closed in on two known radicals and during the arrest, Thomas Weissbecker, another ABC member,

was shot. Both Weissbecker and von Rauch had been associated with the 2nd June Movement, the most prominent left-wing German urban guerrilla groups of the '70s. Both lived very short lives and their involvement in the movement can be described as short but intense.²²

In the late 1970s, members of the Anarchist Black Cross in Huddersfield were tried in what became known as 'the Persons Unknown' trial. Another UK member, Phil Ruff, was accused of inciting the Gartree Prison Riots in 1978. Stuart Christie, mentioned earlier, continued to remain 'Public Enemy #1' in London and in Spain during the '70s, and was constantly under police harassment.²³ Members of the Irish ABC, Noel and Marie Murray, took part in several armed actions in Dublin. In September 1975, during a robbery at the Bank of Ireland in Killester, an off-duty police officer was killed and Noel and Marie were given the death sentence, later commuted.²⁴

In 1979 Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, an anarchist political prisoner in the US, issued a 'Draft Proposal for an ABC Network' in hopes that it could build a movement to assist anarchist political prisoners. He believed the ABC should be a united mass movement rather than

individual collectives. His initiative influenced the growth of the Anarchist Black Cross, but no unified organisation developed. However, in 1989 some unity did develop with the setting up of the 'Emergency Response Network' (ERN). This was a response to political raids, crackdowns, death sentences, hunger strikes, torture or killings of members of the ABC or the communities they worked with. Following police action, ABC groups around the world would send telegrams, make phone calls or hold demonstrations within 48 hours. Sadly this idea was not widely taken up and the ERN faded away.

Although ABC groups continued to undertake support work, a united ABC front never materialized; there was little common focus or unity. In 1994, a conference of ABC groups was held and once again the ERN was set up. In 1995, four ABC groups (New Jersey, Bronx, Washington DC and Brew City) got together to form the ABC Federation. Other groups joined, but, in 1996, issues of direction and goals caused a split. Those leaving the ABCF would soon create the Anarchist Black Cross Confederation but this organisation only lasted a couple of years. The ABCF continued and after seven years is still very active. Other networks

emerged such as Raze the Walls, which was very successful for a number of years but disappeared around 1998-1999. Remnants of it remain in Seattle. Networks in Europe, such as the one in Poland, have recently emerged and seem to have a bright future. And an even more recent creation has been the Anarchist Black Cross Network in Texas and a few other places.

The history of ABC is far from a fairy tale. This article is only a small portion of the history that has been discovered by just a handful of people and we are sure more information is waiting to be found. We welcome the assistance and aid of anyone interested in searching for the past of the ABC.

As for the title of this piece, Boris Yelensky was a man who for over five decades dedicated his life to political prisoners throughout the world. He fought tirelessly for his fallen comrades and is a man who should not be lost within the pages of history. Nor is he a man whose work should be forgotten or discredited as myth or folklore. He should be remembered and respected

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as one who has gone before us; one who helped pave the way. Boris Yelensky, once wrote, "The work is not done for the glory, but because we believe in Mutual Aid". We must take these words to heart and continue our work in that spirit. We are always reminded of the words of Ojore Lutalo (an anarchist political prisoner currently held in Trenton State prison): "Any movement that does not support its political internees is a sham movement". Free All Political Prisoners!!

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- 12 *Bulletin of the Anarchist Black Cross*, London, July 1967.
- 13 *Bulletin of the Anarchist Red Cross*, New York, 1924.
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- 24 *Times*, December 21 1979.

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NEFAC, the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists. Probably the group closest to us politically. Write to either NEFAC (English speaking), Roundhouse Collective, c/o Black Planet Radical Books, 1621 Fleet St, Baltimore MD 21231, USA or NEFAC (Francophone), Groupe Anarchiste Émile-Henry, C.P. 55051, 138 St-Valliers O, Quebec G1K 1JO, Canada. Alternatively, you can link to them through our website.



A question of organisation

Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968

by Alexandre Skirda, translated by Paul Sharkey

AK Press

Reviewed by Geert Dhondt, Valley Anarchist Organization, Western Massachusetts, in *Northeastern Anarchist* #5

In the name of the principles of individual autonomy and freedom of initiative, every stable organisational tie was repudiated as being authoritarian and thus anti-anarchist. Gaetano Manfredonia

It will be readily appreciated that I cannot remain indifferent to the nonchalance and negligence currently obtaining in our circles. On the one hand, it prevents the creation of a coherent libertarian collective that would enable anarchists to take their proper place in the revolution, and on the other, it permits a making-do with fine phrases and grand notions, while shying away when action is called for. Responsibility and collective discipline should not cause alarm: they are the fellow travellers of the practice of social anarchism. Nestor Makhno

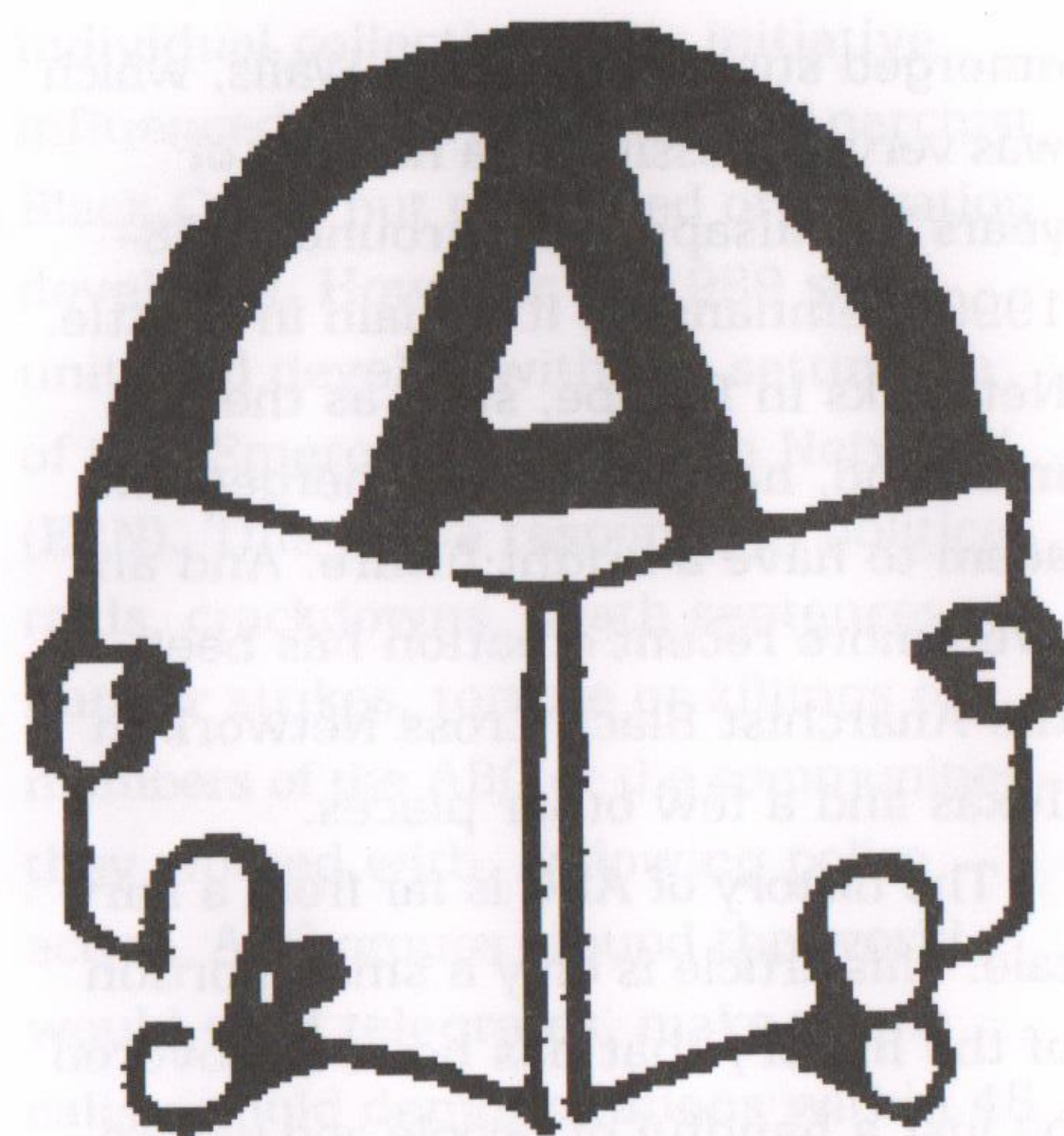
"Anarchy! Organisation! These are contradictory." I heard these comments, with fellow comrades from the Valley Anarchist Organization (VAO), at a gathering in Western Massachusetts. These confused and misguided rantings did not come from an ISO initiate or Trotskyite prankster, but from an unsuspecting individual who came across VAO's literature table. He seemed to possess little or no knowledge of anarchism, or other revolutionary traditions. He was, however, echoing a common misunderstanding that anarchism has absolutely nothing to do with organisation, that "anarchism and organisation are opposites – how can you have a group with a name such as Anarchist Organization?" Unfortunately, given the current trends in radical politics, there exists a general reluctance by anarchists to educate non-anarchists about what anarchism is, and a refusal among many anarchists to attempt to come to a consensus definition of anarchism.

These comments do not only come from those unfamiliar with anarchism, this narrow and misinformed perspective is also to be readily found within the awkwardly emerging anarchist movement. Recently, I've read and heard from people who take the labels of 'individualist', 'insurrectionist,' and 'primitivist' that they are highly suspicious of the new revolutionary organisational efforts of North Eastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) and the Bring the Ruckus (BTR) draft proposal, specifically because of the strategic organisational structures that these groups advocate. Individualist anarchistic tendencies mistrust of anarchist organising is nothing new. It has existed since the debates amongst the 19th century anarchists.

The book, *Facing the Enemy*, is new ammunition for anarchists who want a greater understanding of the history, successes and failings in anarchist organising, and the debates and controversies that plagued our 19th and 20th century radical predecessors. This book is for those who are interested in creating truly revolutionary organisations. Organisations that are absolutely necessary for those not just interested in 'fucking shit up', but for those who are fighting to win. What a timely book.

The focus of *Facing the Enemy* is on anarchist organisations in France, Russia and Spain. It is divided into 20 chapters, plus an appendix of about 100 pages of original documents (such as *The Organisational Platform*) and a bibliographic list of names. The book starts off with Stirner and Proudhon, continues with chapters on Bakunin, bakuninist organisation, The Alliance and the First International, propaganda by the deed, anti-organisationists and bombers, the rise of syndicalism, international congresses, World War I, the Russian Revolution, and a large part on the Dielo Truda group (a group of Russian anarchists in exile in France), their *Organisational Platform of Libertarian Communists* and the debates around the *Platform*, the CNT-FAI and as well as some more recent anarchist organisations in France.

In *Facing the Enemy*, Alexandre Skirda historically and theoretically analyses why it is that anarchism



throughout history has failed to bring about a new and free society. "Torn between strident individual autonomy and a sometimes lumbering collective approach, libertarians have regularly failed to leave a definitive liberating imprint upon events and upon the movement of history."

Skirda believes that a reason why anarchists have failed to make an imprint on these events is because anarchists have failed to build effective organisations. The main focus of the book is the organisational platform of the Dielo Truda group. The book builds up the writing of the *Platform* as the highlight of anarchist organisation, drawing on the lessons of the Makhnovists during the Russian Revolution and the following chapters discuss the influence of the platform on those organisations.

Skirda contends that the *Organisational Platform* is directly in line with Bakuninist organisation. The *Organisational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists* was written in 1926 by the Dyelo Truda group, an assemblage of Russian anarchists living in exile in France in the aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution. Drawing upon their experiences in the anarchist movement for more than 20 years and analysing the failures of the anarchist movement during WWI and the Russian Revolution, the *Platform* was written as a proposal to form an organisation, one that would be able to respond to crises, such as war or a revolutionary situation, and then take advantage of these crises to build a free society.

Facing the Enemy is an important tool

to be used in the current debates in the anarchist movement around organisation and synthesis vs. platformist and cadre organisations. The platform organisation, as detailed and analysed by Skirda, was subject to every sort of criticism and accusation of being anti-anarchist. In similar fashion to the attacks against the platformists in the 1920s, NEFAC, which seeks to federate anarcho-communist collectives, and the Bring the Ruckus proposal, which calls for the formation of a revolutionary cadre organisation, are facing anti-anarchist criticisms by some of today's anti-organisational, self-proclaimed anarchist factions.

A whole chapter covers the debate around the *Platform*: attacks on tactical unity and collective responsibility by Malatesta, synthesis vs platformist debate with Voline, as well as a debate that the *Platform* was the 'Bolshevisation of anarchism'. Interestingly, the strongest opposition to the *Platform* came from anarchists who stood by the synthesis position. This synthesis idea is not to differentiate your position from different anarchist tendencies, but instead that those who hold contradictory positions can work together in a meaningful way. The aim of this process is to try to fuse the different anarchist tendencies and be as inclusive as possible. This synthesis position is exemplified now by social ecologists working in the modern movement.

Taking the perspective put forth by *Facing the Enemy*, anarchists will find insight into the problems plaguing the success of NEFAC and the Bring the Ruckus document. I find that these groups are the current versions of the platformist (NEFAC) and cadre (BTR) traditions of anarchist organisations. These two groups, though utilising different issues, come forth from a tradition including Bakuninist organisation, the Alliance, the *Organisational Platform* and the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation). Bakunin thought that a revolutionary anarchist organisation should be the grouping of a small group of well-disciplined revolutionaries that would act as a sort of 'general staff' in the revolution, who "would take great care not to supplant the people in its struggle for emancipation". This organisation was to

guide the revolutionary masses in an anarchist direction.

The aim of the revolutionary organisation was, according to Bakunin, "to assist the people's self-determination on a basis of absolute equality, and full and multifarious human freedom". The Alliance was the Bakuninist organisation within the context of the First International and while both these groups were pursuing the same ultimate goals, their strategies were different. The International had as its mission to organise the workers into one body, while the Alliance had as its mission, "the endowment of those masses with a genuinely revolutionary direction". The *Organisational Platform* picks up the tradition where Bakunin left off.

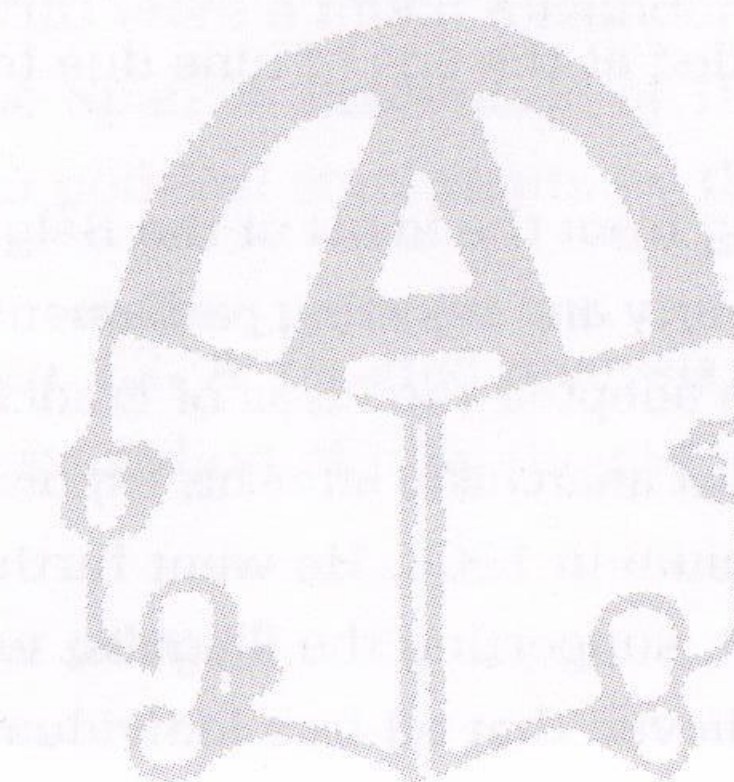
As Skirda explains, "The chief reason for the anarchist movement's lack of success has been the absence of firm principles and consistent organisational practice". Anarchism had to "marshal its forces into an active general organisation, as required by reality and the strategy of the social struggle of the classes", which was in tune with the Bakuninist tradition and the wishes of Kropotkin. This organisation would lay down a general tactical and political line for anarchism, leading on to an "organised collective practice". This does not mean that they believed that all anarchists should unite under this one platform; from the very beginning the Dielo Truda group stated that this would be impossible and undesirable. There exists a wide variety of tendencies within anarchism which are often contradictory. The *Platform* was written to "make an ideological and political selection of anarchism's homogeneous forces and at the same time differentiate themselves from anarchism's chaotic, petit-bourgeois (liberal) and rootless elements".

The creation of an organisation of militants on the bases of a theoretical and practical programme, differentiating themselves on the basis of ideology and strategy from other anarchists, is the core of the *Platform*. Similarly, the creation of the FAI in Spain in 1927 is the continuation of these ideas of organisational practice. The FAI was created to keep the CNT (National Confederation of Labour), a large union, anarchist. The FAI goal was to keep

watch over the "CNT's doctrinal orthodoxy", a relatively small group of anarchists who worked to steer the CNT into an anarchist direction. The objective of the *Platform*, the formulation of the FAI, NEFAC and the BTR, is to organise along the lines of a theoretical and practical programme. It is not the purpose to take control of any movement but instead it is the strategy of the formation of such groups to influence and steer autonomous self-activity of oppressed people into a revolutionary and anti-authoritarian direction.

I have found this book extremely relevant if not invaluable to my understanding and approach to the issues we face in today's anarchist movement. But the book is much, much more than that. It is a complete and easy to read history of anarchist organisations in 19th and 20th century Europe. It covers the struggles our deceased and beloved comrades faced and how important anarchist figures related to organisations. *Facing the Enemy* also includes interesting details and anecdotes (such as a police-paid-for anarchist paper in Paris, police infiltration of anarchist 'propaganda by the deed' groups or how Voline translated the *Platform* to French from Russian to give certain important words different meanings in an attempt to undermine the *Platform*).

Skirda exhibits full control of the subjects he discusses and the book is full of quotes, interesting analysis and insights into the events that shaped 20th century anarchist theory. Skirda's invaluable historical account is written in a serious and sometimes witty style. *Facing the Enemy* also gives an accessible overview of how different trends within anarchism developed throughout the last 150 years. I sincerely hope that this important book will be widely read.



The Bolsheviks' pet anarchist

Victor Serge: *The course is set on hope*.
Susan Weissman. Verso. 2001.
£22. 364pp

Verso seem to want to cash in on the awakened interest in anarchism around the world. To quote from their press release: "A spectre is haunting the world, the spectre of anarchy... condemned as a 'travelling circus' and even a fascist threat to democracy, the anti-globalisation protestors summon up a spirit that has been vilified by both left and right... Victor Serge, the subject of this timely political biography, perhaps best articulates this revolutionary spirit. Here is a man who genuinely deserved and relished the 'anarchist' label."

Fortunately the writer of the book is a little bit more objective than the author of this puff, putting Serge's break with anarchism in 1913 (whether this itself is true, we'll look at later).

Victor Serge has been popular in this country among Trotskyists eager to adopt a 'libertarian' veneer in order to recruit anarchists to their cause. This was certainly the case with Peter Sedgwick (translator of Serge's superb *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*) and David Widgery (both members of International Socialism/Socialist Workers Party and both now deceased). They held up Serge as an example of a 'libertarian Bolshevik'. Indeed Widgery, through his writings for both *Socialist Worker* and the hippy underground papers *Oz* and *International Times*, attempted to don this apparent mantle of Serge, himself posing as a 'libertarian Bolshevik' when in practice his devotion to the SWP was slavish.

Serge, whose real name was Kibalchich, was born in Belgium to two exiled Russian revolutionaries towards the end of the 19th century. His family's precarious existence meant that he experienced hunger from early on, and in the course of his life he was to have a long acquaintance with hunger: his younger brother died at the age of nine due to a bad diet.

Moving from the ideas of the Belgian Socialist Party and rejecting parliamentary action, he adopted the ideas of French individualist anarchism after his expulsion from Belgium in 1908. He went further than most, supporting the illegalist wing, which believed that all free individuals

were justified in turning to theft and robbery to maintain themselves.

Individualist anarchism was greatly influenced by the thinkers Stirner and Nietzsche. In many ways it reflected the defeats and repression suffered by anarchism and the workers' movement in Europe, a turning away from the class struggle, the social anarchism of Bakunin and Kropotkin, and revealed the penetration of bourgeois ideas into the movement, even though in the main it was made up of working class people.

Rather than looking to social action, it turned to the individual, who through thought, action and life-style would achieve some sort of liberation. It had a disastrous effect on the anarchist movement in France, Italy, Germany and Argentina and, in my view, contributed to the development of the anti-organisational wing of anarchist communism around the Italian anarchist Luigi Galleani; this represented a frightful synthesis between the ideas of anarchist communism and anarchist individualism.

The extraordinary personality of Albert Libertad was one of the architects of individualist anarchism in France. Serge became an orator at *Les Causeries Populaires* – the People's Chats – that had been initiated by Libertad and were a series of lectures well attended by the Parisian working class.

It has to be remembered that this form of individualist anarchism, unlike later varieties, at least looked to the long-term goal of an anarchist communist society. Through vegetarianism, and indeed veganism and fruitarianism, teetotalism, giving up of tobacco, coffee and tea, and through regular physical education, this school of anarchism, Serge wrote, "demanded everything of us and offered everything to us". At this time Serge thought that "the anarchist is always illegal – theoretically. The single word 'anarchist' means rebellion in every sense". In the illegalist milieu some dodgier types even justified prostituting their girlfriends.

Serge began to write for *l'anarchie* (in lower case, because capitals were hierarchical!) and unlike Lorulot, its previous editor, who at least looked towards some anarchist communist future, exalted illegal acts and the cult of the individual.

From around this magazine emerged the Bonnot Gang, who began to rob banks,



moving on to shooting down bank employees. One of the Bonnot Gang, Garnier, justified this by writing, "Why kill workers? They are vile slaves, without whom there wouldn't be the bourgeois and the rich. It's in killing such contemptible slaves that slavery will be destroyed".

Serge, as one of the theoreticians of this movement, wrote in *l'anarchie* the article "I am with the bandits" on January 1912: "I find that their role is the beautiful role... the bandit is virile". The Bonnot Gang were either shot down by the police or were to face either the guillotine or long years in prison, which many did not survive. Serge was implicated and at the trial broke solidarity with his co-defendants by trying to say there was a vast difference between theorists like him and the illegalist gun-toters. That he was accidentally involved in an affair in which he was innocent. Yet he had been its main cheer-leader!

Spotting Lorulot, who had rejected illegalism, in the audience during the trial, he demanded that he too should be charged for having mixed with and lodged illegalists, going so far as to falsely accuse him of informing. This did not stop Serge from getting five years in prison, portrayed in his excellent novel *Men In Prison*. Unfortunately these strange political contortions are glossed over in Weissman's book, which devotes about three or four pages in this biographical work.

Following his release from jail, Serge went to Barcelona, involving himself in the Spanish anarchist movement and the failed uprising there in 1917 (which became the subject of another of his fine novels *Birth of Our Power*). Again, this

part of Serge's life is given short shrift and I would disagree that Serge had broken completely with anarchism in 1913, as he at least attempted to associate with an anarchist movement looking towards the masses and social action.

Arriving in Russia in 1919, he enthusiastically joined the Bolsheviks. Serge's writings of this period are shallow justifications of the Bolsheviks' authoritarian rule and appeals to anarchists to join the Party.

When the Kronstadt sailors rose against the Soviet regime in 1921, Serge agonised but failed to resign from the Party. He had attempted to become involved in mediations between the Kronstadt sailors and the regime via the anarchists Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman. Serge's ambiguous attitudes and vacillations earned him the contempt of both the anarchists and the Bolshevik leadership.

It could be said that the jump from individualist anarchism to Bolshevism was a quantum leap. Yet both shared a contempt for the masses and Serge was not the only individualist to sing the praises of Bolshevism. Lorulot, for example, was to write in 1918 that: "in time of revolution, a measure of dictatorship is necessary" and by 1921 was arguing for an "iron dictatorship of the proletariat", a "dictatorship of elites over brutes". Other individualists like Armand, Mauricius and Charles Auguste Bontemps also spoke sympathetically of the Bolsheviks' methods. As Stalin began to establish his rule, Serge became associated with the Left Opposition within the Party and with its leader, Trotsky.

It would be fair to say that whilst Serge worked with Trotsky he never really regarded himself as a Trotskyist per se. For this he suffered persecution, exile in Siberia and imprisonment in dreadful conditions. Weissman's book, a large one, deals in the main with this part of Serge's life. Indeed, Serge's final years in exile in Mexico are assigned one chapter, so that the book as a biographical work seems oddly unbalanced.

Serge showed remarkable courage as an oppositionist, it must be said. What is particularly valuable is the depiction of the relationship with Trotsky. He is shown as unspeakably arrogant, intolerant and narrow-minded, and Serge falls out with him over many things. Yet he still remains oddly impressed with 'The Old

Man' in spite of his behaviour, seeing him as one of the great figures of the Russian Revolution.

Serge at least offered later insights, in 1937-8, into the course of the Revolution, when he admitted that the suppression of the Kronstadt Revolt was a dreadful mistake, as was that of the Makhno movement and that the establishment of the repressive political police, the Cheka, was the beginning of the end.

Serge was a great writer, and his novels must be regarded as some of the greatest works of 'proletarian literature', as indeed are his *Memoirs*. The realism of his works is flecked through with great sensitivity. He saw most of his generation of revolutionaries dead in combat, executed, or forced to commit suicide and he remained alive through some fluke of luck. This immense tragedy had an effect on his revolutionary morale. Though supporters of Serge have defended his final

statements, where he seems to be accommodating himself to the Gaullist regime in France, my opinion is that he was turning to some form of social democracy and had lost hope in the power of the working class to overthrow capitalism through a social revolution.

Serge was an immensely interesting character, but the sketchy description of key parts of his life fail to do justice to him. This is not the definitive biography.

Sloppiness in research gives us some real howlers too. At the risk of sounding like one late writer on anarchist history, I'd like to point out the following. Elisée Reclus, the French anarchist thinker, is given as Recluse (this is repeated in the index); the Black Guard, an anarchist grouping organising in Moscow is confused with the movement around Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine; the great poet Yesenin is given as Yesinin, and the French sycophant of Stalin, Vaillant-Couturier is given as Vaillant-Couturior.

Other Anarchist Federation publications

Anarchism As We See It, £1. Describes the basic ideas of anarchist communism in easy to read form.

The Anarchist Movement in Japan, £1.50. A fascinating account of Japanese anarchism in the 20th Century. Japan had an anarchist movement of tens of thousands. This pamphlet tells their story.

NEW: **Aspects of Anarchism**, £1. Thoughts and commentary on some of the most important issues that anarchists must confront. Collected articles from the pages of *Organise!* on the fundamentals of anarchist communism.

Against Parliament, for Anarchism, £1. Insights into the political parties of Britain and why anarchists oppose all parties.

COMING SOON: **Where There's Brass, There's Muck**, Price to be announced. Our newly-revised and extended pamphlet on ecology.

Basic Bakunin, £1. This revised edition outlines the ideas of one of the 19th century founders of class struggle anarchism.

COMING SOON: **The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation**, £1. This 2003 reprint explains the concept of revolutionary organisation and its structure. All libertarian revolutionaries should read this fundamental text.

A Brief Flowering of Freedom, £1. An exciting account of the Hungarian uprising against the Stalinist monolith in 1956. Also includes a history of the Hungarian anarchist movement.

The Friends of Durruti, £1. The Friends of Durruti were a much misunderstood group who attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Included are an historical introduction and two political statements by the Friends themselves.

Beyond Resistance – A revolutionary manifesto, £2. A detailed analysis of modern capitalism and the state and our understanding of how they will be overthrown.

For all pamphlets, the price includes the cost of postage.

Don't Back Down, Revolution Now Press
Gr Distro, 808, 14th Street, Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan, Canada S7N 0P8, no
price

Don't Back Down! is a detailed and
highly informative manual of how to take
direct action and avoid the consequences
for the serious activist.

It provides information on equipment
and supplies, getting people together for
action, tactics during and after riots and
other actions, first aid for people
gassed/sprayed, techniques for staying
calm, to stay focused, looking after other
people and generally having a successful
'day out'! This short pamphlet/zine is
packed with information, easily carried
on the day or photocopied to be
distributed among people up for direct
action and protest. It's a very valuable
work, with lessons for all no matter
where you are, and clearly written by
people with a lot of experience to share.

As the Distro says: "there's no
fucking way the revolution will be
transmitted via the internet. Paper zines
can be carried in your back pocket, read
in the crapper and passed to anyone on
the street. Paper zines slide below the
class lines, phone lines and picket lines.
Paper zines don't give a shit about the
cyber gap....". Get it, and pass it on!

No price is given but the Distro asks
everyone to make five copies of the
pamphlet and accept donations from
those able to make one.

Catalogue

South Chicago ABC Zine Catalog, PO Box
721, Homewood, Illinois 60430, USA

For those interested in supporting prisoners,
this catalogue of zines, newsletters and
pamphlets provides the basic tools to
understanding the oppressive nature of
the US prison system in detail and the
ways in which it is resisted in depth.

All publications are written by
prisoners, their relatives, supporters or
friends and explore not only the prison
system and its effects but also the views
of political prisoners for whom 'release'
will only come via a libertarian revolution:
ideas from some of the most oppressed
people on the planet. All the publications
are extremely cheap and the publisher is
a clearing house for other zines and
pamphlets on anarchism, feminism and
anti-racism.

Letters

Dear Organise!

Many thanks for publishing my letter in
Issue 56. I have had similar letters
published in *Class War*, *Green Anarchist*
and *Republican Communist* (Scotland),
but as you can imagine, not in mainstream
predominantly Trotskyist papers. This is
partly because groups like the SWP, SSP
and SLP and their allies do not wish to
disturb their relationship with the masses
by appearing 'ultra green', 'loony left'
etc. This is understandable, because at
the present time capitalist ethodology
has made the car a functional feature of
its population and the means of urban
and regional distribution, as well as a
status symbol. The old crafts of horse-
drawn ploughing, inshore fishing and
machine shop production, with stable and
widespread community use is, to capitalists,
an anachronism. Significant in this respect
is their denunciation of 'Eastern Bloc'
inefficiency in production and farming
practice: 'whereas the East German
regime employed ten thousand in a factory
we need only one thousand'. They also
mention the inefficiencies of Soviet labour
distribution. Even their hero Ford is no
longer a model, as robots replace human
skill in order to increase profits. Ford, of
course, created the human robot, but
human labour is now only viable at third
world slavery rates.

The Labour and Tory parties are able
to sustain votes without interacting with
the people outside of a TV screen. This is
because the masses in Britain are intent
on obtaining cars and other 'first world'
luxury items, even though many workers
can only afford second hand cars. I refer
to the car as the 'vehicle of alienation'
because it is devisive and sustains
capitalism, destroys the environment, and
separates the First from the Third World.
In China there are over 600 people to one
car. Communism, to function successfully,
must collectivise transport and that will
include bicycles.

Grass roots action has been very
successful in building experience in
community and debate. As the crisis of
capitalism intensifies, yet again there will
undoubtedly be an increase in resistance.

Best wishes
AC, Edinburgh



Dear Organise!

I was surprised at the inclusion of a text
by the group Stop Huntington Animal
Cruelty in the letters section of issue 59
of *Organise!* Their statement was
reproduced complete with address,
website and telephone details – a fine
endorsement of SHAC's politics.

Why no Editors' reply?
SHAC's comparisons between the
Nazis and people who work in the
laboratories at Huntington Life Sciences
are reactionary bullshit. The ludicrous
ideas that they spout about individuals
with feathers or fur are hilarious but
should they be given any space in a
revolutionary anarchist magazine? This
ongoing association of anarchism with
animal rights in this country acts as a
hindrance to the development of an
anarcho-communist movement. Why
help perpetuate the idea that
contemporary British anarchism is linked
with these sorts of idiots?

For communist anarchy
Dan. East London.

Dear Organise!

I'm starting a project that I was hoping
maybe some of your readers could help
me with.

I'm looking at 'Anarchism in the North
East of England, 1945-1995' for a North
East Labour History Society project that
will hopefully become a chapter in a
book next autumn. There is too little
attention paid to the British anarchist
movement by historians, especially in
the post war period, and I'd appreciate
any help in an attempt to at least begin
to rectify this. Obviously, before anything
goes to the publishers, I'll anonymise
contributions (if that's what contributors
want). If anyone can help me with this in
any way, I'd like to hear from them at
this address:

PO Box ITA, Newcastle, NE99 ITA
Or by email to: paletinyo@yahoo.co.uk

In solidarity, Lewis

Aims and principles

1. 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 of a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work
for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

WANT TO JOIN THE AF?
WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

I agree with the AF's Aims and Principles and I would
like to join the organisation.

I would like more information about the Anarchist
Federation.

Please put me on the AF's mailing list.

Name

Address.

Please tick/fill in as appropriate and return to:
AF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.
Anarchist Federation (Ireland), PO Box 505 Belfast,
BT12 6BQ.